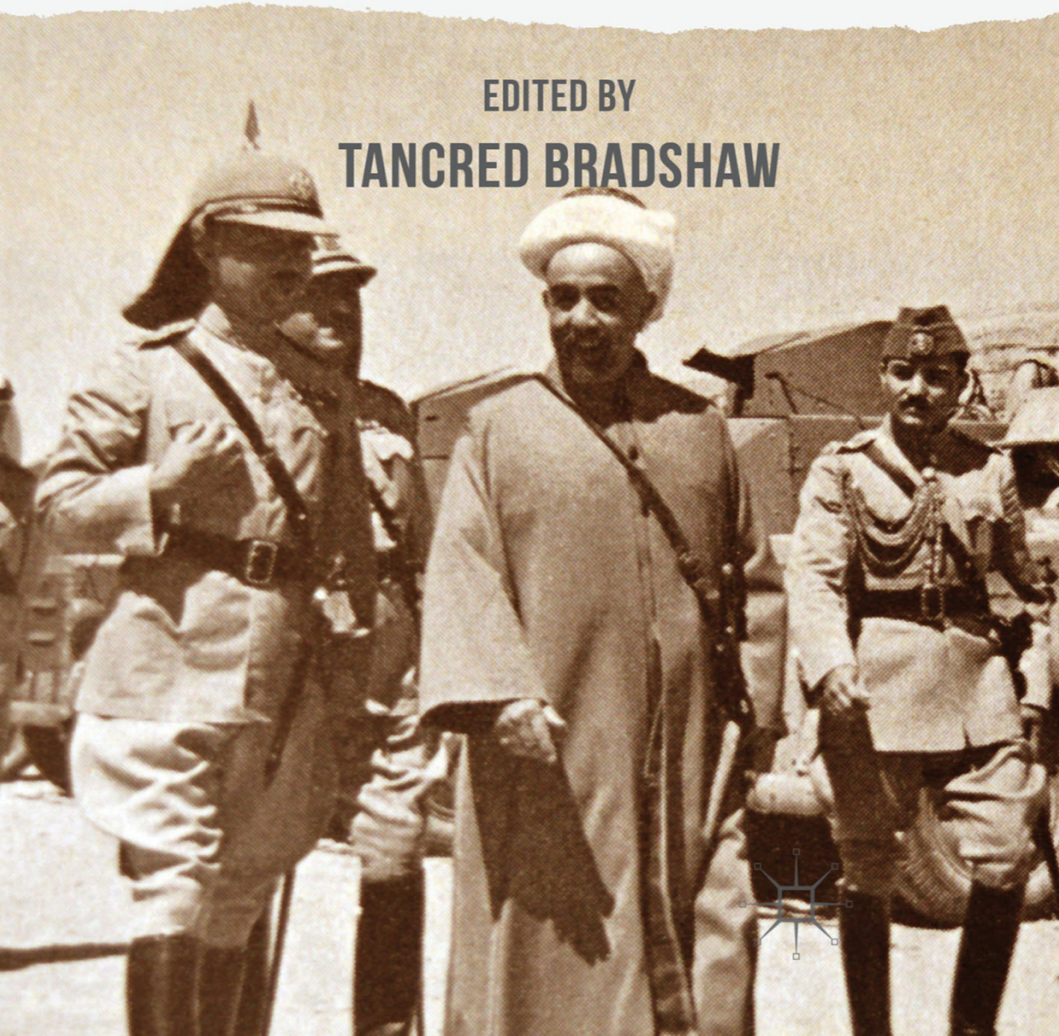
BRITAIN AND THE WORLD

THE GLUBB REPORTS: GLUBB PASHA AND BRITAIN'S EMPIRE PROJECT IN THE MIDDLE EAST 1920–1956

EDITED BY

TANCRED BRADSHAW



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Tancred Bradshaw

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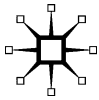

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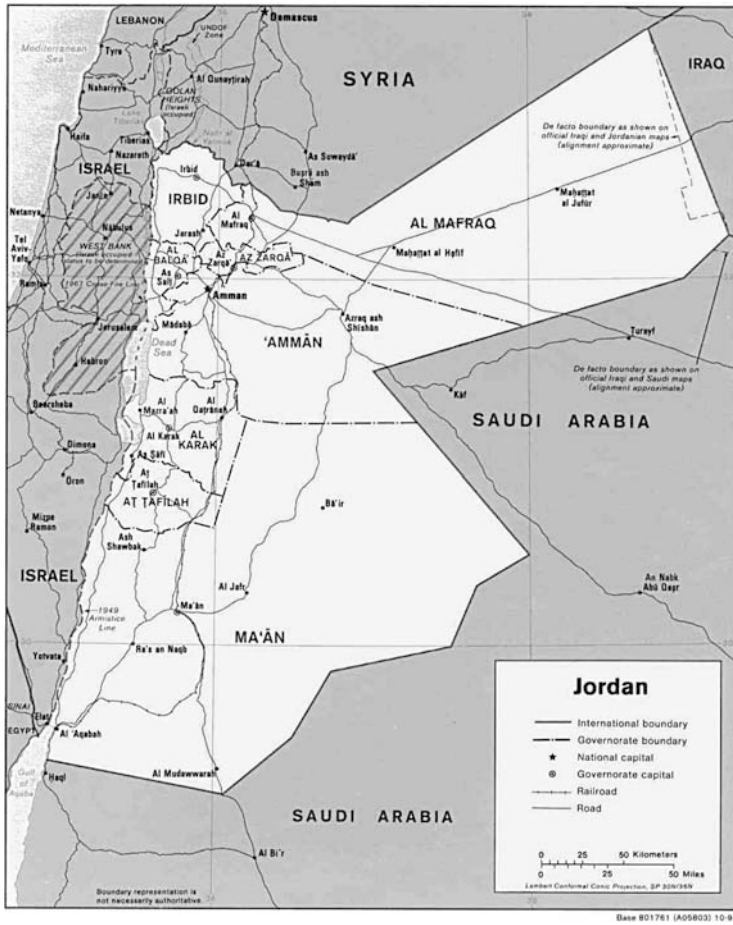
Abbreviations

BMEO	British Middle East Office
CAB	Cabinet Office
CIGS	chief of the imperial general staff
C-in-C	commander-in-chief
CO	Colonial Office
COS	chiefs of staff (British)
DEFE	Ministry of Defence
DOS	State Department (United States)
FO	Foreign Office
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	general officer commanding
HH	his highness
HMG	His Majesty's Government
HSTL	Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
LHCMA	Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London
MEC	Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford
MELF	Middle East Land Forces (British)
MT	motor transport
NACP	United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland
NCO	non-commissioned officer
PREM	Prime Minister's Office
RAF	Royal Air Force
RG	Record Group (United States National Archives)
SSO	special services officer
T	Treasury
TB	tuberculosis
TCB	Tribal Control Board
TJ	Transjordan
TJFF	Transjordan Frontier Force
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London

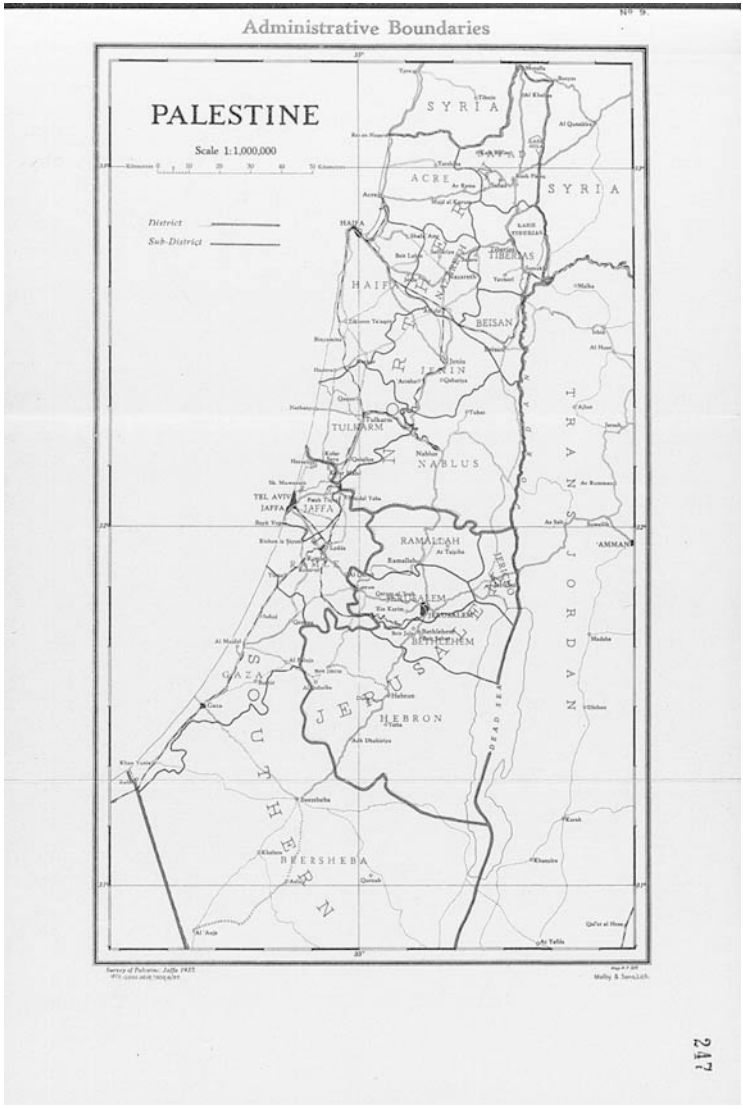
UN	United Nations
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UNSCOP	UN Special Committee on Palestine
WO	War Office
W/T	wireless telegraphist

Maps

Map of Iraq, 1999. Used by permission of the University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin



Map of Jordan, 1991. Used by permission of the University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin



Map of Palestine's Administrative Boundaries, 1938. TNA: CAB 24/270, CP 163 (37). Courtesy of Crown Copyright

Introduction

Lt-Gen. Sir John Bagot Glubb (commonly known as Glubb Pasha) was one of the most distinguished British Arabists.[1] He is best known as commander of the Arab Legion,[2] a force that was established by the British in 1923, and became the most effective army in the Middle East. This book examines the official papers written by Glubb during his career in Iraq and in Jordan.[3] He wrote a remarkable array of papers between the mid-1920s and 1956. Some of these reports pertained to his formal role in the Arab Legion, though many of the documents examined in this book were unsolicited memoranda that addressed pressing political and strategic events of the time in the Middle East. The Glubb papers released from the mid-1980s onwards provide a remarkable insight into regional developments during the era of British ascendancy in the Middle East.

Glubb's literary career started in the 1930s when he penned articles addressing the role of the Bedouin (predominantly desert-dwelling nomads divided into tribes), which were published in the journal of the Royal Central Asian Society (currently the Royal Society for Asian Affairs), an organisation whose membership consisted of high-profile servants of the British Empire. Glubb wrote 22 works of military history, histories of the Arab world and several autobiographical works. His personal papers, which contain numerous boxes of proofs, provide ample evidence of his attention to detail.[4] Glubb's official reports are characterised by literary flourishes in contrast with the dry tone of those written by his colleagues, such as Sir Alec Kirkbride, who served in Jordan almost continually between 1918 and 1951.[5] Nonetheless, the reports were often very long and repetitive and would have benefited from editorial assistance.

Why Glubb?

In 2012, I published a book on Anglo-Jordanian relations, and during the course of lengthy research for that work I read some of the documents cited in this book.[6] Subsequently, more of Glubb's papers came available, and it was clear that a detailed account of his writings would be worthwhile. Glubb is an important figure in the history of British imperialism in the Middle East because he made a significant contribution to various policies in Iraq and Jordan. This book shows that his approach to desert control in Iraq and Jordan was remarkably successful. He also played a key role in the transformation of the Arab Legion into a highly effective fighting force; the most capable Arab army of the period. Glubb's political views on subjects such as the Palestine mandate, the nature of government in Egypt and Iraq, and strengths and weaknesses of British imperialism in the Middle East were often strident. They are important because he was the man on the spot for a remarkable period, and his views were read, sometimes ignored, but increasingly respected by the official mind in Whitehall. Glubb was therefore an important figure because his reputation and standing in tribal circles was regarded in London as 'unique' and 'unrivalled'.[7]

This book is not a biography of Glubb.[8] Instead, it provides an insight into how he understood and sought to explain regional developments to officials in Whitehall. Furthermore, this book disproves his assertion 'that I had no official connection with the British Government at all'.[9] Between May 1948 and March 1956, Glubb commanded the Arab Legion but he did not hold a formal role in the British military hierarchy in the Middle East. Nonetheless, his correspondence with senior officials and generals in both the Foreign Office and the War Office, including the chief of the imperial general staff (CIGS), the professional head of the British Army, and the headquarters of Middle East Land Forces (MELF) in Egypt, were extensive.

John Bagot Glubb

Glubb was born in 1897 and was the son of Major General Sir Frederick Manley Glubb. He was educated at Cheltenham and the Royal Military College at Woolwich. Like his father, he was

commissioned into the Royal Engineers (in April 1915), and he served on the Western Front with distinction. In 1917, he was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry, and he was wounded on several occasions, including a serious injury to his jaw, which led to the Bedouin nickname 'Abu Hunaik' (Father of the little jaw).

Glubb married Rosemary Forbes in 1938 and their only son Godfrey was born in Jerusalem in 1939. In 1944, the Glubbs adopted a Bedouin daughter named Naomi, then two Palestinian refugees, John and Mary, in 1948. According to Trevor Royle, Glubb was a family man who enjoyed gardening, reading and horseriding in his spare time.[10] General Glubb died at his home at Mayfield, Sussex, in March 1986, and at the memorial service held at Westminster Abbey the following month, King Husayn of Jordan read the eulogy in which he praised the Pasha.

In person, Glubb appeared to his British contemporaries as 'reserved, slightly aloof to the point of shyness and yet entirely self-contained'.[11] He had 'little patience with anyone, and British officers in particular, who sought the lighter and arguably less reputable forms of relaxation. He found it difficult to make allowances for those whose standards of enthusiasm and conduct fell marginally below his own.'[12] In contrast, Glubb was totally dedicated to the welfare of his Bedouin soldiers, and had a 'patriarchal way of conducting business', enjoying considerable prestige in the desert.[13] Although he had a retiring personality, he was courageous, self-confident, and he possessed ample physical and mental energy. However, he referred to himself as a 'bogus general' because he was a policeman rather than a soldier, and his rank was specific to Jordan; the highest rank he achieved in the British Army was that of a captain. Not surprisingly, Glubb suffered from an inferiority complex in relation to British generals because he never attended the British Army's Staff College at Camberley, and he himself suggested he had insufficient experience of conducting combined arms operations.[14]

Sir Alec Kirkbride, who served in Jordan and Palestine between 1920 and 1951, and was highly respected in Whitehall for his political judgement and extraordinarily close relationship with King Abdullah I, regularly commented on Glubb. He tended to be guarded in his official correspondence, but he argued that Glubb's views tended to be simplistic, such as ignoring the importance of economic issues. Kirkbride criticised Glubb's decision in the summer of 1948

to massively overspend on the Arab Legion without authorisation.[15] In October of that year he commented: 'Glubb is very like the Arabs in his alternating waves of optimism and pessimism.'[16] Kirkbride was not the only person who observed that Glubb became increasingly strained by his politico-military duties, that he was 'easily depressed and easily cheered',[17] and that in the aftermath of King Abdullah's death in July 1951 it was clear that Glubb was tired and strained.[18]

Glubb's Arabist career began when after leaving England he volunteered for service in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 1920, where he initially served as a sapper. In March 1922, he was attached to the RAF as a special services officer (SSO) at Nasiriya in southern Iraq. The role of the SSO was to collect intelligence on the topography and population, and in the event of a rebellion his job was to identify and designate which villages and encampments were hostile or friendly.[19] Glubb's role as an SSO was important because it led him to develop a comprehensive knowledge of Arabic, and a lifelong interest in the territory. At the end of 1922, he was briefly posted to Ramadi, which is west of Baghdad. James Lunt argues that this was a formative experience for Glubb because 'he came under the spell of the desert and first discovered his interest in the Bedouins'.[20] Between 1924 and 1930, most of Glubb's time was spent in the desert, and in response to raiding from Najd he was appointed SSO for Akhwan defence established to counter the threat of tribal raiding from central Arabia, which had affected Iraq since the early 1920s. Raiding was an ancient tribal tradition, which led to widespread deprivation among the tribes of southern Iraq, and threatened to undermine the stability of the desert area. Glubb became an expert in dealing with the problem of tribal raiding and desert control, which involved the gradual assertion of government control over the hinterland. In 1926, he took the precipitous step of resigning his commission. Had he not done so he would have been forced to return to England and resume his regimental duties. He described this decision as an act of 'lunacy',[21] which could have had serious ramifications for his career. Glubb argued that he stayed in Iraq because of his affection for the Bedouin: 'my decision was largely emotional. I loved them.'[22]

Glubb remained in Iraq and in March 1928 he was appointed to the newly created but nebulous position of 'Administrative Inspector of the Southern Desert'. Glubb was awarded a ten-year contract, but his service was terminated following the signing of the Anglo-Iraq

Treaty of 1930, which led to removal of British officers from Iraq. Events in neighbouring Jordan meant that Glubb's skills were in urgent demand in order to curtail tribal raiding from Hejaz and Najd (provinces of contemporary Saudi Arabia). These raids impoverished the rural population of the country, and had diplomatic ramifications for Britain's relations with its Hashemite allies in Jordan and with the Saudi regime. The Foreign Office was forced to adjudicate competing claims for compensation, and to demarcate regional frontiers, such as the Hadda Agreement of November 1925.[23] That agreement established the border between Jordan and Najd, but raiding questioned the viability of the frontier that crossed tribal boundaries.

Glubb was posted to Jordan in November 1930, where he enhanced his reputation as an expert on tribal tradition and custom, and was unquestionably successful in dealing with challenges related to human intelligence with scant resources. He took the unprecedented step of recruiting the sons of tribal shaikhs who formed the basis of the Desert Patrol of the Arab Legion. Glubb and the Desert Patrol played a central role in pacifying the tribes of Jordan during the 1930s. He spent the rest of his career in Jordan, becoming the commander of the Arab Legion in 1939, and during the course of the Second World War he played a key role in expanding and transforming the Arab Legion from a gendarmerie (soldiers employed on police duties) to a fully fledged fighting force.

Events in neighbouring Palestine had a considerable impact on Britain's standing as an imperial power in the Middle East. After the Second World War Britain's declining position in Palestine, and the ramifications for Jordan, which became a nominally independent state in May 1946, were dominant themes in Glubb's reports. As these demonstrate, he was determined to use the crisis in Palestine as a pretext to argue that the Arab Legion should be expanded at British expense. He succeeded in his advocacy, and with the able assistance of Sir Alec Kirkbride, who was serving as Britain's minister at Amman (1946–1951), he persuaded Whitehall that it was in Britain's strategic interests to fund the Arab Legion's expansion.

Glubb's greatest challenge as a soldier-politician came in 1948 during the First Arab-Israeli War, which broke out immediately after Britain's shambolic withdrawal from Palestine on 14 May 1948. There is little evidence of Glubb's involvement in operational soldiering prior to the war, so it is hard to avoid the assertion that he was

more a policeman than a soldier.[24] Nonetheless, the 1948 war posed a series of military and political challenges, including the following: fighting a numerically superior Israeli army, the refusal of the Arab governments to agree on a combined war plan, and the British Government's decision to promptly impose an arms embargo on its Arab allies. As a result, the British Government was precluded from supplying its Arab allies (Egypt, Iraq and Jordan) with arms and munitions during the course of the war, whereas the Israelis simply ignored attempts to impose an arms embargo on the belligerents and received a large quantity of weapons. These circumstances had potentially disastrous implications for Glubb, and there is clear evidence that in light of these events, King Abdullah I would have accepted his resignation without demur.

Glubb's tenuous position in Jordan can be attributed to the British embargo, and the fact that he was responsible for substantial Arab Legion overspending without authorisation. He managed to maintain his position in Jordan. The ramifications of the 1948 war, which included attempts by Palestinian refugees to re-enter the territory of mandatory Palestine and reclaim their property, dominated the last eight years of Glubb's career in the country. The Israelis tended to respond to infiltration by applying overwhelming force against Jordan.

During the 1950s, the Arab Legion underwent continual expansion at British expense, and this proved to be a major challenge for Glubb and the British officers who commanded all the main units of the Arab League. Glubb's role as the British commander of a foreign army in the era of Arab nationalism became increasingly untenable, in particular in July 1951, following the murder of King Abdullah I, who was Britain's core ally in the region. After the rise to power in 1953 of the successor, King Husayn, Glubb's position became precarious. The new king, who was 18 years old when he assumed the crown, sought the advice of nationalist-orientated officers who demanded that the army should be commanded by Jordanian officers regardless of their experience. Not only did British diplomats in Jordan fail to identify the likely impact of this trend but so too did Glubb. These events in part account for the shock of King Husayn's sacking of Glubb in March 1956. Glubb's dismissal concluded a series of events that had been entirely unforeseen and marked the beginning of the end of Britain's imperial position in Jordan.

Glubb magnanimously accepted being sacked and urged his supporters in Jordan and London not to take precipitous action. Sir Anthony Eden, the British prime minister at the time, was persuaded not to act against the king, but it has been argued that Glubb's sacking was the precursor to the Suez Crisis in the autumn of 1956. Following his enforced retirement, Glubb continued to correspond with senior officials in the Foreign Office and government ministers, and he became a prolific journalist and author. He wrote a series of articles for *The New York Times*, and a number of books about his service in Jordan and about the history of the Arabs.

The British Empire in the Middle East

Glubb's service in Iraq and Jordan occurred during the heyday of the British Empire in the Middle East. Britain's interests there increased significantly after the First World War, but there was a lack of coherence in London concerning which government department was responsible for the region. This meant that there was no unified policy, and different departments pursued contradictory policies. Britain's interests in the Middle East were defined by strategic considerations, which were underpinned by the need to defend India and the Suez Canal. In addition, the British were determined to preserve their supremacy in the Persian Gulf, which originated in the early 19th century. The significance of the Persian Gulf expanded following the development of oil fields in Persia in 1909 and the construction of an oil refinery at Abadan in 1912. The strategic importance of oil gradually expanded, but unfettered access deepened in 1911 when the Royal Navy began its conversion from coal to oil. The British also had an interest in protecting the Muslim holy places in Mecca and Medina because of the empire's large Muslim population.[25]

The British Empire in the Middle East was complex because it consisted of territories with varying levels of British intervention and rule. The Persian Gulf shaikhdoms (known as the Trucial States) were 'protected states', and the Government of India was concerned about maritime security but declined to interfere in the internal affairs of the shaikhdoms. In April 1919, the Paris Peace Conference approved Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which introduced the concept of a 'mandate'.[26] The covenant applied to former

Ottoman dependencies including Lebanon, Mesopotamia (part of contemporary Iraq), Palestine and Syria. The Levant was divided between the British and the French at the San Remo Conference in April 1920. The French were awarded a mandate over Lebanon and Syria, and the British took control of Mesopotamia, Palestine and Jordan. The mandatories were responsible for preparing the territories for independence, but Palestine was unique because Article 2 of the mandate required the British to establish self-governing institutions instead of independence. The mandatory was a cloak for the expansion of British and French influence, and no reference was made to the wishes or interests of the populations of these territories.

In practice, the mandatory system varied considerably because in Iraq the British imposed the Hashemite King Faisal who had no local ties. The model of constitutional government imposed on Iraq has been described as a sham or farce because a small ruling clique exercised power until the monarchy was brutally overthrown in 1958.[27] It is hardly surprisingly that Glubb condemned this farcical state of affairs. In contrast, the British ruled Palestine directly and autocratically on account of the Balfour Declaration and the commitment to establish a Jewish national home. The contradictory interests of Arabs and Jews were irreconcilable, and the requirement to establish self-government in Palestine was an abject failure. When the British withdrew in May 1948, they left no functioning government, and the Palestine mandate proved to be disastrous for Britain's prestige in the Middle East.

In theory, Jordan was part of the Palestine mandate, and successive high commissioners for Palestine were responsible for the territory. Jordan was conceived as buffer zone that was intended to protect Palestine from tribal raiding, but financial considerations had a significant impact on successive administrations that were determined to run the territory on the cheap. The British secured their interests in Jordan by compelling Amir (later King) Abdullah to sign various agreements and treaties that fettered his independence. This was an effective mechanism of exerting influence, and it was in accordance with the agreements that regulated Britain's relations with the shaikhdoms of the Persian Gulf, and the treaties that were signed with the Egyptian and Iraqi governments. The British spent very little on Jordan's economic and social development, but they did fund the expansion of the Arab Legion because it was in their interests to do so.

Jordan was therefore an imperial convenience that was run with limited British interference, and Amir Abdullah was given considerable latitude to run the territory so long as he followed the advice proffered by successive British residents. Jordan was a contrived state with no significant resources, such as oil, but against the odds it proved to be remarkably successful because of the interaction between three centres of power: Abdullah and his government, the British resident and the commander of the Arab Legion. Glubb's reports include numerous commentaries about the strengths and weaknesses of this complex and unplanned imperial success story.

Location of the reports

This book is based on over 4,000 pages of documents that Glubb penned during his long career in Iraq and Jordan. His reports are dispersed between several archives, and researchers cannot be certain that they have read the quantum. Many of these papers were located at the National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office) at Kew. Glubb's reports can be found in the records of the Colonial Office, which cover his service in Iraq and in Jordan until 1946. The vast records of the Foreign Office also contain a significant proportion of his unsolicited writings, along with his correspondence with the War Office. It is important to bear in mind that there is some overlap in the papers for the simple reason that they were distributed around Whitehall.

The Middle East Centre Archive at St. Antony's College, Oxford, holds over 100 boxes of Glubb's writings. These are divided into two accessions, the first of which mainly covers his service in Iraq and in Jordan until the end of 1947. The second collection, which was donated by the Glubb family in 2006, is a truly remarkable collection of documents, manuscripts and photographs. Although there is some overlap between the papers held in Oxford and those in the official records, the unofficial collection fills a significant gap for the period 1948–1956. Nonetheless, the Glubb papers at St Antony's have at the time of writing not been catalogued, although there are handwritten lists available for both collections.

I was very fortunate to be granted access to the papers of Colonel Robert Melville, also held at St. Antony's, who served as the Arab Legion's senior liaison officer in London (1949–1956). He was

responsible for maintaining contact with both the Foreign Office and the War Office. The Melville papers contain correspondence and memoranda produced by Glubb and the Arab Legion staff about issues such as plans to expand and reorganise the army during Glubb's final years in Jordan. Many of these papers are not available at either Kew or in the Glubb papers.

The Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives at King's College, University of London, possesses the rarely cited papers of General Sir Harold Pyman, who served as chief of staff at MELF headquarters between 1946 and 1949. The Pyman papers are important because they contain significant correspondence between Glubb and Pyman concerning the First Arab-Israeli War, and the Pyman diary in which he discusses the conflict. Finally, the Imperial War Museum holds the papers of Lt-Col. F.G. Peake (Peake Pasha), who was Glubb's predecessor as commander of the Arab Legion. The Peake papers consist of reports and correspondence on the Arab Legion and the situation in Jordan, and they provide some commentary on Glubb's role. The Imperial War Museum also holds a number of oral histories, some of which are available online.[28]

The contents of the reports

The reports' content varied over time, a reflection of changing political and strategic circumstances. During the late 1920s and well into the 1930s, the focus of these reports was on the problem of tribal raiding and desert control. In 1931, Glubb started to write monthly desert reports, which contain a wealth of information about tribal customs, how the authority of the government was extended to the margins of the state, and the gradual development of the Arab Legion.[29] In 1936, as a result of the outbreak of disorder in Palestine, the desert reports became increasingly political because they focus on issues that had little to do with Glubb's formal role as a desert policeman. During the Second World War he wrote detailed accounts of the Arab Legion's role in the invasions of Iraq and Syria, but more significantly he penned unsolicited discourses about the Middle East after that war, and British imperial strategy in the region. Glubb's views were surprisingly critical of British policy, particularly in Iraq, because he believed that the expansion of education and the creation of democracies were an unmitigated disaster. He argued that education led to the urban

administrative class, known as effendis, to ape Western values, which undermined their traditional culture and led them to resent British domination. He also argued that Iraq's monarchical government was a failure because a clique of self-serving politicians dominated the country.

Glubb consistently commented on what he believed to be the virtues of the model of imperialism developed in Jordan, and continually advocated expanding the Arab Legion. He argued that the British succeeded in Jordan because they contributed to the establishment of an authoritarian regime that was politically stable and pro-British. He believed that the Arab Legion played a central role in establishing the authority of the government in Amman over the tribal population. Moreover, he argued that it was in Britain's strategic interests to fund the Arab Legion because Jordan was Britain's only reliable ally in the region.

After the Second World War, Glubb's reports were dominated by events in Palestine and the threats to Jordan's existence. Some of his proposals were highly controversial, including plans for Jordan's occupation of Palestine, which was contrary to the established policy of the Foreign Office. His support for the partition of mandatory Palestine came to the fore as a result of the First Arab-Israeli War in 1948–1949, in which the Arab Legion played a central role. Glubb's position as commander of the legion became increasingly precarious during the war because of persistent allegations that he was acting on instructions from London, and because he significantly overspent on funding the war without the authority of King Abdullah I and his government.[30] In the aftermath of the war, Glubb's reports focused on several related issues, including the continued expansion of the Arab Legion in order to counter the possibility of Israeli aggression, and the impact of border wars with Israel caused by the presence of several hundred thousand Palestinian refugees in Jordan. He made every effort to persuade the Foreign Office and War Office to expand the Arab Legion, which inevitably meant a significant increase in its annual budget. During the last decade of Glubb's role in Jordan, the British Government spent £70.3 million, of which £61 million funded the Arab Legion.[31] Another significant theme in the reports was the growing role of British officers serving in the Arab Legion, either on secondment from the British Army or on fixed-term contracts. Hitherto only a handful of British officers served in the Arab

Legion, but as it expanded, more British officers were needed to fill technical positions, and command some of the infantry and armoured units.

Finally, Glubb's reports addressed the political situation in Jordan following the murder of King Abdullah I in July 1951, and his relationship with the young King Husayn. During his final years in Jordan, Glubb and the Foreign Office blinded themselves to the changing political circumstances in the country, which explains why his dismissal in March 1956 was unforeseen. These events raise the following question: Did Glubb 'go native'?

Glubb used this phrase in correspondence,[32] and his reports adopted a Jordanian perspective of regional events. He served two masters as commander of the Arab Legion. Officially he was a servant of the king and the Jordanian Government, but he clearly regarded himself as an *ex officio* servant of the British Empire.[33] This is clearly borne out by his correspondence with senior officers at the headquarters of Middle East Land Forces in Egypt, and with Whitehall.[34]

Glubb considered and documented his future in Jordan. In 1946, he wrote a plaintive letter about his future prospects, suggesting that he should leave Jordan in order to find alternative employment. More significantly, he contended that it was unlikely that the Jordanian Government would want a British officer commanding its army for another 15 years; his prediction was wrong by five years.[35] The greatest challenge to his position came in July and August 1948 when King Abdullah accused him of surrendering the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramle to numerically superior Israeli forces.[36] Glubb contemplated resigning,[37] which was regarded as potential disaster for the Arab Legion and British prestige in the Middle East.[38]

Glubb and the Foreign Office addressed his future on a number of occasions prior to March 1956. He thought that his successor would be the last British commander of the Arab Legion who had to fulfil two incompatible qualifications as a 'capable Arabist and an efficient soldier'. Glubb explained that his successor's role would be 'rather more than of a go-between to ensure mutual understanding between the government and the army, deal with politics, major policy and the budget', rather than being responsible for training and operations, duties which could be delegated to formation commanders and the staff.[39] This summed up his role very well – first and foremost an

Arabist rather than a soldier, an assumption that the Foreign Office accepted without demur.[40]

Structure of the book

This book is organised chronologically, and each chapter covers a variety of themes. Chapter 1 discusses Glubb's views of tribes and his service in Iraq between 1920 and 1930, where he established his reputation as an expert on tribes and desert control. Chapter 2 covers the period 1931–1945. It examines Glubb's approach to desert and tribal control in Jordan, the role of the Arab Legion's Desert Patrol, the impact of the uprising that occurred in Palestine from April 1936, and his support for the model of imperialism that was applied in the country. During the course of the Second World War, Glubb wrote several memoranda that discussed his attitude towards Arab politicians and the armies of Egypt and Iraq. Chapter 3 discusses the period 1946–1949. It discusses the implications of the British withdrawal from Palestine in May 1948, the post-war expansion of the Arab Legion and the First Arab-Israeli War. Chapter 4 examines Glubb's twilight years in Jordan from 1950 to 1956. It deals with the impact of the First Arab-Israeli War, which included the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank in 1950 and the problem of Palestinian refugees crossing the ceasefire line with Israel. It also discusses the expansion of the Arab Legion during the early 1950s that was intended to counter the threat of an Israeli invasion. Finally, it addresses Glubb's relations with King Husayn, and the circumstances of his dismissal in March 1956.

Each chapter has a short introduction that explains the context within which the reports were written, and a critique of Glubb's strident opinions. Large parts of the chapters are verbatim excerpts of some of the more interesting and revealing reports. The documents are numbered and organised chronologically, and they are also referenced in parentheses in the introductory text.

1
Glubb, Tribes and Iraq, 1922–1930

Introduction

This chapter discusses Glubb's attitude towards tribes and his experience of desert operations in Iraq during the 1920s. The reports contain numerous comments on the nature of Bedouin society and the problem of raiding, and desert control, which dominated the early years of his career in Iraq and Transjordan. Glubb held the tribes and their customs in the highest regard, but he was well aware of their weaknesses. His experience of tribes and desert control were fundamental because he formed his ideas about how to control the desert. He argued that the Iraqi Government failed to comprehend the problem, and that technology, including vehicles and radios, gave the authorities an overwhelming advantage over the tribes. Furthermore, Glubb realised that the most effective way to establish control over the tribes was to recruit tribesmen. He applied the lessons he learnt in Iraq with great success in Transjordan.

Glubb and the tribes

Glubb was a distinguished example of a British officer who was fascinated by the Bedouin. His writings show that he was infatuated by life in the desert:

> The charm of the desert nights never palls. Only those who have experienced them can understand the joys of evening in the desert, seated in a circle round the campfire in the clean soft sand, beneath the sparkling Arab starts or the still white light of the full

> moon. In the glowing embers stand the brass coffee pots, from which are poured again and again the little cups of bitter coffee. Every now and then a new bush is thrown on the fire, which flares up suddenly to a bright flame illustrating the lean figures seated around and filling the air with a sharp aromatic fragrance. The talk may last until after midnight, quiet, unending, unembarrassed, without subservience or familiarity. Indeed, the most attractive quality of tribesmen of the old school is that they are almost unaware of social distinctions, and thus are always natural. At first local politics, grievances, poverty or raid losses may be discussed. But as familiarity increases we forget the poverty, misery and the uncertainty of today, and outcome the tales of the good old times, of deeds of raiding prowess, of noble gestures and fantastic hospitality.[1]

Glubb adopted a romanticised impression of the tribes and life in the desert:

> The great attraction which they exercised on the occasional Europeans who met them lay in the fact that they lived in a different world, which was neither class-conscious nor race-conscious, and so suffered neither from the aggressiveness nor from the alternative servility of those communities whose members were constantly obsessed by doubts as to their own value in comparison with other groups with which they came into contact. A complete lack of self-consciousness – to be perfectly natural, as we say – was one of the most attractive human qualities. The Bedouins thirty of forty years ago were unaware of the existence of class or racial inequalities. As a result, they unconsciously treated all en as equals, without any mental embarrassments or reservations.[2]
>
> Many British officials tend to 'prefer' tribesmen to effendis. Perhaps this is due to the fact that effendis are imitating us, and we natural see the errors in that imitation. Perhaps even more, British officers resent effendis because the latter compete with them, and intrigue against them. The tribesman is so different from the European that he does not compete or clash.
>
> If, however, the present analysis is to be of any value, it is essential for us to preserve an Olympian impartiality, and on no account

> to be swayed by parochial prejudices. Except for an admixture of Turk, Kurd, or Circassian in certain big cities, the effendis are much the same race and the tribesmen, talk of 'liking' one class or the other is irrelevant.[3]

Glubb believed that the Bedouin were a race apart because of their reliance on the camel, which could not be raised in well-irrigated areas. This meant that they could only live in the desert. The Bedouin were therefore separate from farmers and townspeople, and were forbidden from mixing with or marrying the settled population. Life in the desert was particularly harsh, which produced 'extreme individualism' caused by the precarious nature of Bedouin life characterised by the constant threat of starvation and thirst, and the likelihood of being attacked.[4] Glubb argued that 'a Bedouin in the strictest sense, is a camel-breeding nomad of certain specified tribes',[5] or 'purely nomadic tribes living by camel breeding'.[6] According to his definition, Transjordanian tribes such as the Beni Sakhr, Howeitat and Sirhan were not purely nomadic because they owned land, but they did migrate to the desert part of the year with their livestock, including camels.

One of the notable features of the Bedouin was the ancient tradition of raiding, (1) which Glubb referred to as a 'sporting game'. (3) Sir Harold Dickson, in his remarkable study of the Bedouin, argued that tribal warfare followed strict rules of conduct, especially regarding the inviolate status of women. He noted that 'raiding is the breath of life to the Bedouin', and the tribesmen must have raids because it denoted to them 'everything that is manly and sporting'.[7] Glubb believed that there was a close parallel between Bedouin warfare and the chivalric fighting he associated with Richard Coeur de Lion and the Crusades: 'When an Englishman, in these days, comes into intimate contact with the Arab nomads, he discovers in their customs, perhaps rather unexpectedly, an amazing similarity to the customs and outlook of European chivalry of the feudal period.'[8]

The Bedouin developed a system of fighting that resulted from tribes wandering the desert and coming into conflict over scarce grazing and water supplies. The tribes' main possession was their livestock, and in a conflict, each side would seize animals (usually camels) from each other. This process encouraged counter-raiding in order for the tribes to recover their livestock. Glubb believed

that the Bedouin's reliance on their animals meant that resistance was impossible, forcing them to surrender to their opponent. However, the Bedouin's mobility on camels and horses made them well suited to offensive operations and guerrilla warfare. Glubb argued that tribal conflict was a form of sport and to the 'Bedouin . . . war provided excitement, glamour, fame and heroism, in lives otherwise monotonous with the dull routine of herding animals and watching them graze'.[9] The ambitions of the Bedouin warrior were to perform noble deeds – 'glory, not the safety of his community is his object'. This meant that the method of fighting counted for more than victory, and that 'competition in performing heroic deeds becomes the life passion of the nomad'. This resulted in a complicated code of rules for war.[10] It is therefore not surprising that Glubb held the Akhwan[11] in contempt for their routine breach of this code of conduct because they were responsible for massacres. (3)

Desert control and the tribes in Iraq

One of the main problems the British faced in Iraq was the assertion of the state's authority in the desert hinterland. In Iraq, the British authorities sought to rebuild and solidify the power of the shaikhs, which they believed had been diminished during the Ottoman era. There were practical reasons for the adoption of this policy, which was heavily influenced by the British experience in India. British officials, such as Sir Henry Dobbs (high commissioner for Iraq, 1923–1929), believed that enhancing the authority of the tribal leaders would undermine the authority of the urban politicians and balance the power of King Faisal I. The British also relied on the shaikhs because they wanted to assert their authority at the lowest possible cost. Instead of deploying large numbers of troops, they sought to take advantage of the traditional division between the tribes and the townsmen.[12]

British officials misunderstood the nature of the tribes in Iraq,[13] but Glubb was very critical of government policy on the desert. In one of his earliest reports on the problems caused by Akhwan raiding, he argued that the government in Baghdad was too slow to realise the nature of the situation in the desert, and that it had completely failed to defend the nomadic population against Akhwan raids. (1, 6) Glubb also believed that government policy on the tribes was

based on the fallacious argument that there 'is little more similarity between the old-fashioned Bedouin raid and modern Akhwan methods of warfare, than between international rugby football and a European war. The opponents are the same, but one is sport, governed by rules and involving little danger while the other is ruthless warfare.' (2)

Glubb fervently argued that one of the fundamental problems in dealing with raiding was the attitude towards the Saudi ruler Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (commonly known as Ibn Saud), who founded Saudi Arabia in 1932. Glubb was convinced that Ibn Saud was instigating raids across the Najd–Iraq frontier, which led him to argue that Ibn Saud 'is a completely unscrupulous Oriental monarch, whose intrigues are guided solely by what he considers to be his interest'.[14] He believed that British officials had succumbed to the 'provocation theory', which assumed that the presence of government forces in the desert provoked the Akhwan. Glubb contended that Ibn Saud opposed the presence of British forces in the desert because if the government appeared to be strong his tribes would join the authorities.[15] (4) He remained antagonistic towards Ibn Saud well into the 1940s, which may have been a reflection of the long-running tension between the Hashemites and the Sauds. However, the tribal situation was nuanced, and Ibn Saud went to great lengths to remove suspicion of his complicity in ordering raids and to avoid British intervention by blaming the Iraqi Government for raids.[16]

Glubb consistently warned about the threat of Akhwan raiding, which belatedly led the Iraqi Government to introduce a more interventionist policy in the desert. He argued that the establishment of government control in the desert was a necessary and inevitable step, but he believed that desert operations were hindered by the failure of the security forces to cooperate. He also believed that the policy of using aircraft, known as 'air control', to intimidate and attack recalcitrant tribes was an expensive failure. He summarised tribal warfare in straightforward terms: 'Bedouin war is like war in the air, the best defence is to hit back harder'. (5) During his time in Iraq, Glubb developed several methods that were the precursor to the 'humane imperialism' that he applied in Transjordan.[17] His attitude towards the tribes was clearly influenced by Sir Robert Sandeman's[18] policy of dealing with tribes in Baluchistan in the late 19th century that

relied on treating these communities with sympathy, light taxation, the payment of subsidies and tribal law.[19]

Glubb argued that desert control was based on the authorities penetrating the desert, and that 'the old principle of desert control, however, remains as true as ever, namely, keep in touch with every district and strike successfully in each area with a mobile force'.[20] In contrast with previous experience, technological developments, including vehicles and radios, made it much easier for government forces to enter the desert and overcome tribal resistance.[21] Glubb believed that technology gave the government unprecedented mobility, which paralysed the tribes' room for manoeuvre. He proposed that the government should maintain a permanent presence in the desert by building forts adjacent to wells, which would allow the security forces to exert influence over the tribes. His ideas required the government to establish law and order in the desert, and to punish raiders, but he argued that it was essential for the authorities to work with the paramount shaikhs. Experience also showed that regular forces were quite unsuited to the harsh conditions in the desert, and that officers serving in desert units had to have an intimate knowledge of the tribes. In September 1928, a camel force was established in the southern desert of Iraq. (7) This unit was recruited almost entirely from the tribes, and according to Glubb this 70-man force, using trucks armed with machine guns, played a central role in preventing Akhwan raids from penetrating southern Iraq.[22] This small force was the precursor to the Arab Legion's Desert Patrol, which he raised in 1930.

Glubb's critical reports of events in southern Iraq received a mixed reaction in Whitehall. Although his expertise was acknowledged, senior officials in the Colonial Office, such as Sir John Shuckburgh,[23] expressed doubts about his judgement.[24] Members of the Foreign Office's Eastern Department, which was responsible for relations with the Saudis, accused Glubb of 'an excessive bias' against Ibn Saud and accused him of using 'intemperate and unreasonable language' about the Saudi ruler.[25] These views reflected sharp differences between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office concerning the role of Ibn Saud as a regional leader, and diplomatic problems associated with cross-border raiding. More significantly, Glubb's reports show that he was willing to challenge the official mind in Whitehall, but this approach failed to endear him.

Conclusion

Glubb's reports on desert control and administration in Iraq are an essential precursor to understanding the policies that he adopted in Transjordan. The reports listed below are notable because they provide the reader with an insight into his developing ideas about tribes and how the government might control them by peaceful means. His reports from Iraq also show that he was unabashed in criticising the government's assumptions about the tribes and its failure to curtail raiding. Nonetheless, Glubb was well aware of the benefits of technology in assisting the authorities to penetrate the margins of the state with unprecedented ease. The establishment of desert forts adjacent to wells, and the use of radios and armed vehicles, gave an overwhelming advantage to the security forces compared with the tribes that relied on camels. The reports also provide early evidence of Glubb's paternalist attitude towards the tribes. He adopted a humane approach to controlling and then incorporating the tribes into the state. However, the excerpts below highlight a key weakness: his tendency to overwhelm officials with reports in which he overstated his case.

1. MEC: Glubb Papers, box 3/8, winter 1924–1925

Report on defensive operations against the Akhwan

It is frequently asked why nomad Arabs, who have been accustomed to raid and be raided for untold centuries should now suddenly require government protection. The answer is two-fold: 1) According to old Arab custom, tribes raid each other for loot, as few casualties as possible being inflicted. The Akhwan have inaugurated a new policy of conquest – they will kill in cold blood all males over 8 years of age. 2) In the natural course, terrified by this ferocity, the Iraq tribes would have secured their immunity by a payment of tribute. The Iraqi government, however, punished such shaikhs as adopted this course.

Simplicity of desert administration

The idea has been widely prevalent since the days of the Turks that nomads are wild and ungovernable savages. This is a pure delusion. Nomads on the whole, are the easiest to govern of all

Arabs. To familiarise himself with them, however, the official must resign himself to a good deal of physical discomfort in the desert.

In the desert communications are both bad and slow and the comforts of life are almost entirely lacking. As a result in Turkish times, officials were exceedingly loth to visit the desert tribes, which remained consequently completely unknown to them. Partly in order to excuse themselves for this neglect, partly because these unknown tribes genuinely alarmed them, the Turkish officials originated the fable of the ferocious and ungovernable nature of the semi-nomads and Bedouins. However, the maintenance of this myth served to gain credit for the officials. On such rare occasions as he was able to kidnap a chief or gain a little revenue, he was able to loudly to sound his own trumpet, as the subduer of a ferocious enemy of the government. Since the occupation, few British officials have had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with these tribes, and as a result, the old delusion still largely persists.

In fact this idea is a completely reversal of the truth. The nomad, moreover, is a simple savage, quite lacking in that 'I'm as good as a man as you are' insolence which is characteristic of the slightly more civilised.

Thus the savageness and ungovernability of the nomad may be written down as a myth. The discomfort of desert work, however, to some extent remains.

Types of administration most suitable

That type of government known as patriarchal is prevalent amongst the nomad. They are accustomed to the idea of a single governor but are slow to appreciate the intricacies of government organisation. The most suitable form of government for such primitive tribes would therefore appear to be that of a single man, whether a political officer or a paramount sheikh, who would control them purely by their own customs. The great distances which divide those tribes from the government towns on the river has been one of the greatest obstacles to their proper management. It is therefore essential that any form of government established be in the midst of the tribes themselves.

The absence of any efficient organisation for administering the desert causes government infinite trouble in the end.

2. MEC: Glubb Papers, box 5/4, 3 July 1928

Police work in the desert

It should always be borne in mind, that the chief difficulty encountered in dealing with Bedouins is not the possibility of their resistance to government, so much as their elusiveness. That is to say that a Bedouin who is dissatisfied with the actions of government towards him will rarely offer resistance, but will normally simply escape out of reach, a course which he can adopt the greater ease because, being nomadic he can take his family and all his worldly possessions with him.

3. TNA: CO 730/137/9, 6 September 1928

Glubb to Cornwallis

Plans for the forthcoming raiding season

Firstly a study of the operations undertaken during past raiding seasons reveals a noticeable lack of careful forethought, organisation and cooperation, as between the tribes, police and civil authorities on the one hand, and the military and RAF on the other. Secondly, no attempt has been made in the past to organise or control the Iraq tribes, either for attack or defence, and thus I must admit that I am feeling my way somewhat in the dark. Moreover, the situation vis-à-vis the Akhwan is very obscure.

Common Fallacies

It appears firstly to be necessary to dispel two very common fallacious arguments:

1) It is said that the Iraq tribes have raided and been raided for hundreds of years, without any assistance or protection from a government. There is therefore no reason why now, all of a sudden, they should claim such protection as essential. The fallacy lies in the fact that there is little more similarity between the old-fashioned Bedouin raid and modern Akhwan methods

of warfare, than between international rugby football and a European war. The opponents are the same, but one is a sport, governed by rules and involving little danger while the other is ruthless warfare.

2) It is frequently stated that the Iraq tribes are less warlike than the Ikhwan, as men. This is an error. The Iraq Bedouins are just the same human material as Mutair and Harb. It is organisation, discipline, and the habit of victory which have given the Akhwan the upper hand.

Cause of the Akhwan victories

It must be borne in mind that a Bedouin camped in the desert has with him his women and children, his camels, sheep, mare and tent. In a word everything which he possesses and everything which he loves in the world. While it is true that, under the old system of raiding, his camels, and sheep were periodically in danger, yet (a) only small numbers of cattle were usually looted, because the attack was not pressed home. (b) He could raid back and get other camels without any great danger. It was a sporting game. (c) Most important of all, there was no danger to his women and children.

MASSACRE. The Bedouin children (more especially his son) are as dear to him as are those of other races to their fathers. The Akhwan, however, if they break into a camp, kill all males in cold blood, including even babies in arms. The first thought therefore for an ordinary Bedouin, sitting in his tent in the midst of his family, on the approach of an Akhwan raid, is to save his dearest relatives. If cornered or surrounded, he would fight to protect them, though such fighting would probably be useless against superior numbers. But if a way of escape remains open, he takes his son up in front of him on his mare or camel, and escapes, driving his camels in front of him (the Akhwan do not kill the women), instead of turning to help his fellows against the enemy.

This therefore is the first great advantage which the Akhwan enjoy over the Iraq tribes. The Akhwan massacre all males, from babies in the breast to old men. They themselves being always on the offensive have no such non-combatants with them.

The Akhwan victories have not been caused by their individual bravery, but by:

(a) The policy of massacre, which demoralised the Iraq tribes who are accompanied by their families.
(b) Organisation under their chiefs, who are issued with supplies and arms, and maintain paid retainers to enforce their orders.
(c) The advantage of the initiative, whereby they always surprise and largely outnumber the Iraq tribes in battle.
(d) Religion, which supplies a power whereby the whole is cemented together and discipline enforced.

4. TNA: CO 732/36/7, 20 October 1928

Intimidation or provocation: A note on policy

It is not always perhaps realised to what extent, for the past eight years, the Akhwan have morally terrorised the desert. This state of affairs has been largely caused by the government policy of warning the Iraq tribes to run away whenever a rumour of an impending raid arrived. As a result, all the inhabitants of Najd entertained the deepest contempt for the government, whom they believed to be afraid of them.

The provocation theory, which now forms the cornerstone of the policy of HMG [His Majesty's Government], depends purely on the word of Ibn Saud. His reasons for propagating it are not far to seek.

It must, I think, be admitted with regret that Ibn Saud no longer trusts the intentions of either the Iraq of British governments. His chief fear is that Najd tribes will go over to Iraq. At the same time, the trouble, which he has taken in the past with the Dhafir, Dahamshah and shepherds, proves that he attaches considerable importance to the possibility of his being able to win over more and more Iraq tribes to Najd.

It is a fact that Arab tribesmen always join the side, which looks like winning, which is causing him all his anxiety. If the inhabitants of Najd were prepared to die in the last ditch to defend their homeland, as he claims under the provocation theory, there

would be no fear of their going over to Iraq. But we all know the reverse.

Ibn Saud bitterly opposes the appearance of government forces in the desert, because he fears that, as soon as it becomes apparent the government is the stronger party, his tribes will join it, and all the Iraq tribes will return to Iraq.

Ibn Saud believes that he can only retain his tribes and continue to steal ours, if government continues to appear weak. He himself knows quite well that government is strong, but strains every nerve to persuade government to remain in appearance weak.

Hence the provocation theory, which appears to have been swallowed whole by His Majesty's Government. The trouble is that the Arab does not understand moderation. If he thinks himself the stronger, there is no end to his outrages. As soon as he decides that he is on the losing side, he tries to change over. The real trouble is that Ibn Saud mistrusts us.

I am inclined to believe, however, that the present policy of His Majesty's Government is exactly diametrically opposed to that required to secure peace. As long as government studiously endeavours to appear weak, so long will Akhwan raids continue. As soon as we make a display of overwhelming force, raiding with cease.

It is only action by a weak enemy, which is regarded as provocation by the Arabs. As long as government appears weak, the presence of a single touring car in the desert may be resented. As soon as government shows itself strong, the Akhwan threat will be exploded. But it must show itself strong enough. The movement of 20 policemen might be resented, where the movement of 20 armoured cars would ensure peace.

Provoking Ibn Saud

I am inclined to think that the idea that the appearance of strong government forces in the desert 'provokes' the Akhwan, is contrary to all past experience of the Bedouin mentality, yet I do not advocate an immediate policy of frightfulness. As long as Ibn Saud is ruler of Najd, he can give us a great deal of trouble if he is 'rubbed

up the wrong way'. Moreover, it is my personal belief that he, to some extent, genuinely mistrusts out intentions. I believe therefore that we should make every effort to overcome his suspicions and his fears.

The reason why we have to protest at so many petty incidents, is because we studiously show ourselves weak, and have hence lost the confidence of our own tribes and incurred the scorn of the Akhwan. The desertion of Iraq by many of the Iraq tribes is due to their lack of confidence in government defensive measures.

The Bedouin, of which Ibn Saud struck me as a typical example is a very plain spoken individual. He is no respecter of persons or titles and know nothing of diplomatic forms and addresses.

Whether agreed or not, I should then move strong government forces into the desert, which would cause all Iraq tribesmen to return forthwith to Iraq, and should violently eject any Najdis trying to enter Iraq.

Summary

(1) The theory that the appearance of government forces in the desert 'provokes' the Akhwan to attack, is, I believe, opposed to all experience of Bedouin mentality.
(2) I believe that the theory was invented by Ibn Saud, for his private ends. He fears that, if government moves into the desert in force, his tribes will join the stronger side, and he mistrusts our intentions.
(3) Amongst tribes, it is only aggression by the weak which is resented. To surrender to one stronger than oneself is no disgrace, and is indeed the course which they always adopt.

5. TNA: CO 730/140/8, 15 January 1929

Glubb to Cornwallis

It will doubtless be asked how the tribes defended themselves in the past, in their centuries of tribal war. The answer is 'they did not and never can'. The whole nature of nomad tribes, and the necessity they are under to scatter makes the passive defensive absolutely impossible. In their old wars, however, nobody

prevented them from raiding back. Bedouin war is like war in the air, the best defence is to hit back harder. The Bedouin will acquiesce in suffering sudden flights, retirements and raids, if in return they can inflict similar losses.

6. TNA: CO 730/140/8, 12 June 1929

Note on the causes which make it essential to establish and maintain a permanent administration in the desert

It is a fundamental error to imagine that the measures taken in the desert in the last two years have been necessitated only by a temporary crisis in the relations between Najd and Iraq. Had no such crisis occurred, the establishment of government control in the desert was a necessary and inevitable step, which had actually been commenced before the recent rebellion in Najd broke out.

Necessity of governing the Bedouins

From 1920 to 1927, the Iraq government evaded and postponed the task of governing the Bedouins. It hoped that the Bedouins, if left to themselves, would remain in their deserts and leave other people alone.

Unless the Iraq Bedouins are governed, a constant stream of diplomatic incidents with Najd, Transjordan, Syria and Turkey will result. The Bedouins are afraid only of the occupation of his home deserts by the government.

For the past two years, not a single raid by Iraq Bedouins has occurred. When the Iraq government entered the desert, raiding ceased instantaneously. Were the Iraq government to retire from the desert, forty fresh raids would set out.

Buildings and cars

The first obstacle encountered in controlling the desert is that of the great distance involved. The problem has been overcome by the use of police, and other, patrols in cars. The mobility of the car has paralysed the Bedouin, because he knows that his home camp is now accessible to government at any time, in a few hours.

Stability of buildings

The chief lack of the desert is stability. Armies have periodically invaded the desert in the past. In the presence of an army, the Bedouins surrender, with intention of resuming their habits of raiding and pillage when the army is withdrawn. Force sent out temporarily in a crisis, or camped in tents, do not convince the Bedouins that the days of pillage and khawa are over, nor persuade them definitely to abandon such schemes and become loyal citizens. But if these forces erect buildings in the midst of Bedouin diras, they realise that that government is permanently established, and compelled finally to abandon hopes of raiding and loot, and seek to obtain cultivation and gain favour of their government.

Moreover, the control of government is based on buildings in the desert, which prove that government has become permanently installed. In two years, the Bedouin raiding problem, which caused so much trouble from 1920 to 27, has ceased to exist.

Defence against the Akhwan

All the above considerations affect the internal administration of Iraq, its law and order, and its revenue and commerce. These considerations would not only justify but demand the establishment of a stable administration in the desert, did not threat of Akhwan or other external attacks exist.

It has taken the Iraq government nine years of continuous Akhwan attacks, to evolve a system of more or less calculated to protect its frontier. To perfect such a system must take years, because it means not only purchases of material, but the formation and training of men in the use of scientific weapons.

As a modern government, Iraq cannot continue to neglect or betray her subjects. This is from a moral point of view, apart from cash losses to Iraq herself.

Measures of ensuring the policy and defence of the desert were: 1) police car patrols, which penetrate to every point of the Iraq deserts, 2) buildings, which are essential as bases and stores for the patrols, and which ensure stability as outward and visible signs

that government has come to stay. 3) The establishment of settlements in the desert besides the posts, which will act as centres of trade. This will spread a form of town civilisation in the midst of the desert, and make life more tolerable for officials and police whose duties lie in the desert.

The penetration of the Iraq deserts is a great progressive administrative step, such as has not been undertaken in Arabia for 800 years. Najd, Transjordan and Syria are still quite incapable of controlling their Bedouins, who raid and rob each other, and hold travellers and merchants to ransom. Unfortunately the Iraq government does not always realise how efficient it is, or how remarkable an achievement it has performed.

7. TNA: CO 730/168/8, 1 May 1929 – 16 May 1930

Report on the administration of the southern desert of Iraq

The Southern Desert Force was formed in February 1928. They received their first cars, though without machine guns, in March 1928. From 1920 when the Akhwan attacks began to March 1928: 1) no Akhwan raid had ever been met and repulsed before delivering their attack, 2) no loot had ever been recovered from an Akhwan raid in the desert, 3) out of thirty odd raids in this period, only three had been engaged at all and that only by aircraft, which did not prevent their escaping with their loot. Armoured cars had never once engaged raiders.

From April 1928, to the present date, in a period of hostilities of unprecedented intensity, not a single Akhwan raid penetrated Iraq and escaped with its loot.

The reasons for this success were principally moral. In strength, the Southern Desert Force was negligible. From March 1928 to June 1929, it was only 90 strong, in face of Akhwan raids of three thousand men. It was never properly trained. From March 1928 to June 1929, it had no officer at all in the field. The men were principally, almost entirely recruited from tribes, who had been ruined by the Akhwan.

2
Glubb and Transjordan, 1930–1945

Introduction

Glubb's arrival in Transjordan in November 1930 marked the beginning of a remarkably long period of service in the kingdom. His early years there were dominated by desert control and raising the Arab Legion's Desert Patrol. The policies that he applied in Transjordan were heavily influenced by his experience of desert control in Iraq. During the early 1930s, Glubb's most significant contribution was the peaceful prevention of tribal raiding that had blighted the country. He adopted a system of desert control that relied on winning over the tribes rather than coercing them.

Following the outbreak of a revolt in Palestine in 1936, Glubb started to comment on political matters that had nothing to do with his formal role. He accurately argued that the government had to employ various techniques, such as paying subsidies to prevent the spread of disorder to Transjordan, which were successful. He became commander of the Arab Legion in 1939, and during the Second World War the legion played a role in operations in Iraq and Syria, and it underwent a fundamental transformation from a gendarmerie to a nascent army. During the war years, Glubb had the opportunity to write a series of memoranda in which he pontificated on a variety of issues, such as the future of Palestine and the weaknesses of Arab governments and their armies. He made every effort to extol the virtues of Amir Abdullah's rule and the successful development of Transjordan's political system, which was based on limited British interference.

Glubb and the British imperial system in Transjordan

When Glubb arrived in Transjordan in 1930, the British had established a system of light-touch imperial influence in the country over the previous decade. The establishment of a Hashemite amirate east of the River Jordan was accidental, resulting from the political and strategic circumstances that prevailed in the region after the First World War. Britain's interests in Transjordan were determined by strategic considerations that included the defence of the Suez Canal, a desert air route to India and an oil pipeline to Iraq. The British presence in Transjordan focused on relations with Abdullah ibn Husayn, the second son of Husayn ibn Ali, the sharif of Mecca, who was born in February 1882.[1] Relations between Amir Abdullah and the British evolved gradually during the 1920s, and Glubb was a vociferous supporter of the British system of imperialism in Transjordan.

In May 1943, he argued in a memorandum entitled 'A further note on peace terms in the Middle East' that in comparison with Iraq, which he regarded as a disaster, Transjordan was a qualified success. (18) This document is significant because it provides a detailed account of how Transjordan was successfully run during the amirate. Glubb was a consistent advocate of patriarchal rule with a small number of first-class British officials whose job was to advise rulers such as Amir Abdullah. Transjordan was the epitome of this form of authoritarian government and that the continuation of British control worked better than independence. Glubb argued that the population of Transjordan should have been rewarded for their loyalty to the British Empire during the Second World War with greatly increased economic development. The British succeeded in Transjordan because they were willing to share power with Amir Abdullah and the tribal shaikhs who supported the British so long as their interests were not impinged. The country also benefited from a comparatively homogeneous population, and a small educated urban population that might have supported anti-colonial nationalism.[2]

Desert control in Transjordan

In the early years of the amirate the British gave Amir Abdullah a free hand on tribal policy, but as the British became more involved in running the emerging state they tried to expand its authority. This policy

succeeded in the settled areas of the country but had no real impact in the desert, which numbered about 50,000 people, or roughly one-third of the population.[3] The British recognised that attempts to bring the tribes under the control of the central government were futile without Amir Abdullah's assistance.[4]

There is no indication that prior to late 1928 the government made any attempt to control the tribes on the southern frontier or to exert its influence east of Hejaz railway.[5] Raiding had been taking place across the southern frontier since August 1922 and posed various problems for the government.[6] It had a dramatic impact on the tribal population in the south, which was already suffering from drought and locusts, which had left much of the population destitute.[7] The inability of either Amir Abdullah or the British to prevent raiding damaged their prestige in the desert area. Nonetheless, law and order were gradually established on the southern frontier, and the slow process of bringing the tribes under the jurisdiction of the state can be regarded as one of the most important internal developments in Transjordan prior to the Second World War.[8] During the process of pacification, which was achieved with much less bloodshed than in neighbouring states, the tribes were transformed from the state's most intractable opponents into its most loyal adherents.

In recognition of the special status enjoyed by the tribes, the British created the Tribal Control Board (TCB) in 1929, which was run by Amir Shakir, a kinsman of the amir. This body was responsible for the administration of tribal affairs through 'tribal law', rather than through the civil courts that prevailed in the towns.[9] The TCB was intended to institutionalise government control over the tribes, and to provide closer supervision of Amir Abdullah's influence over the tribes.[10] It played a central role in regulating the lives of the tribes because it was responsible for investigating raids and the meting out of punishments – such as fines, the seizure of property and imprisonment – to tribesmen who broke the law. Nonetheless, the TCB failed to prevent the renewal of raiding by Saudi tribes in 1930, and Transjordanian tribes from counter-raiding.

Glubb and the Arab Legion

One of the notable legacies of the British imperial system in Transjordan was the creation of one of the most effective armies in

the Middle East. The Arab Legion (otherwise known as Al Jaish al Arabi or Arab Army), which was established by Lt-Col. F.G. Peake[11] in October 1923, was based on several security forces that were created in 1920 and 1921,[12] and it unusually combined policing and military branches.[13] The Arab Legion was not the only security force in the country because the RAF maintained a small presence, and in 1926 the British established the Transjordan Frontier Force (TJFF), which was an imperial force under direct British command until its disbandment in 1948.[14]

The TJFF was a cosmopolitan force, and its role was to maintain law and order west of the Hejaz railway and to prevent tribal raiding, which it failed to do.[15] The TJFF was responsible for policing but it was commanded by regular army officers and given military training. There is a widespread misconception that the TJFF and the Arab Legion were coterminous.[16] The Arab Legion was the army of Transjordan, King Abdullah I was its commander in chief, it was commanded by a British officer until March 1956 and it was funded by the British until 1957. One of the common misconceptions about the Arab Legion was that it was a force entirely consisting of Bedouin, whereas until 1931 it was recruited from the settled population of Transjordan. Peake deliberately refused to recruit among the Bedouin because he thought they were poor soldiers.[17] Glubb challenged this assumption and consistently argued that their warrior tradition made them natural soldiers.[18]

The integration of the tribes into the state also transformed the tribes' traditional military role from raiding into an organised and disciplined fighting force – the regime's Praetorian Guard. The incorporation of the tribes into the state and the development of an efficient army had far-reaching implications. Gradually the Arab Legion was transformed from a gendarmerie responsible for internal security into a skilled fighting force that became an essential tool in Amir Abdullah's foreign policy. One of the most significant legacies of the British role in Transjordan was the creation of an army that has to this day remained loyal to the monarchy.

The Desert Patrol and tribal relations

The government's decision to prevent tribal raiding was a political rather than a military problem, and the TJFF proved to be unequal to

the task. Consequently, a desert police unit called the Desert Patrol was recruited from the Bedouin population as a branch of the Arab Legion.[19] In November 1930, Glubb was sent to Transjordan to raise the Desert Patrol.[20] Shortly after his arrival, he wrote two detailed memoranda that outlined his plan to deal with raiding, as well as the political and diplomatic implications of cross-border raids. He argued in 'Note on policy for the control of the Transjordan deserts' that Transjordan's frontier with Najd made frontier control very difficult. He argued that the most effective way of preventing raiding was to establish a mobile strike force composed entirely of Bedouin, an approach that succeeded in Iraq. Glubb believed that the Bedouin were ideally suited to serving in the desert, and he contended that recruiting tribesmen would transform their attitude towards the government from absolute hostility to supporters of the authorities. (1) In his second report titled 'Note on the situation on the southern frontier of Transjordan', Glubb claimed that the Transjordan government regarded its desert frontier as a *terra incognita*, and that failure to prevent raiding had a dramatic impact on the prestige of both Amir Abdullah and Britain in the desert area. Moreover, he argued that the government must compel Ibn Saud to return stolen goods and livestock. He believed that evidence of government cooperation would have a positive impact on the population on both sides of the frontier, and that this policy would end raiding. (2)

Glubb's policy was based on establishing a mobile strike force using trucks armed with machine guns that relied on forts supplied with petrol and radios. He justified recruiting the Bedouin on economic grounds, and because they were naturally disposed to serving in the desert for long periods. (1, 15) Initially he found it very difficult to recruit Transjordanian tribesmen because they traditionally regarded the government as their mortal enemy,[21] but increasingly the Desert Patrol recruited from the tribes of the country.[22] This meant that the original recruits were foreigners, which was also intended to overcome divisions between the Beni Sakhr and the Howeitat, the two dominant tribes of the country. (5)

Glubb's policy of desert control, which was based on the principle 'set a thief to catch a thief: use Bedouin to control Bedouin', was remarkably successful. His success was matched by an increase in recruitment from the 'county families' of Transjordan who regarded the Arab Legion as a natural outlet for their sons who

were forbidden to pursue their traditional pursuits, which included raiding.[23] In August 1942, Glubb discussed in some detail the peculiar nature of the Desert Patrol and the tribal population. (15) He consciously refused to impose British military discipline on the tribesmen because he recognised that it was essential to appeal to their unique characteristics. A second explanation was his belief that British officers who served with the legion must be fluent Arabists rather than military experts. However, finding enough Arabists became a major problem for Glubb as the army expanded and more British officers were needed with specialist skills.[24]

Glubb used his position as commander of the Desert Patrol to bring the nomadic population under the authority of the government for the first time.[25] Moreover, he gradually supplanted Amir Shakir, who died in 1934, and Amir Abdullah as the government's key intermediary with the tribes.[26] Glubb relied on his appreciation of the tribal social order, and the use of various techniques such as the payment of subsidies,[27] some of which came from his own pocket,[28] the provision of employment and education, and the promotion of agriculture. In the March 1935 desert report he acknowledged the importance of the Indian precedent on his thinking. (4)

These methods had a telling impact, culminating in the cessation of raiding by the summer of 1932. (7) Glubb's success was undoubtedly aided by the impoverishment of the tribes.[29] This was caused by the impact of Akhwan raids, locusts, the continued shortage of rain and the Great Depression.[30] The promulgation of the Bedouin Control Law and the Tribal Courts Law in 1936 formalised Glubb's system of desert control and made him the 'governor' of the desert.[31] Nonetheless, he warned the authorities that the maintenance of law and order in the desert required constant vigilance and the introduction of a legal system that the tribes understood.

Glubb consistently argued that one of the most effective ways of keeping the tribes under control was the judicious payment of subsidies to the leading shaikhs, and in September 1935 he proposed that £10,000 in gold should be made available for this purpose. (6, 7) The payment of subsidies and stipends to the leading shaikhs by Glubb and the Amir Abdullah played an important role in maintaining public security when the population was subjected to intense propaganda to support the uprising in Palestine that started in the spring of 1936.[32]

There can be no doubt that Glubb's approach to desert control was a remarkable feat. Ironically, his policy in the desert had the unintended consequence of undermining the foundations of life and traditions of the tribes, which had been observed for generations. (3)[33] Glubb was attuned to the contradictions associated with extending the authority of the state, such as the impact of education on the tribesmen. (8) Although the autonomy of the tribes was reduced, government policy had the unprecedented effect of allowing the influx into the desert of villagers and cultivators to graze their livestock in the winter.[34]

Glubb's success did not mean the end of tribal issues, and throughout the 1930s the desert reports contain numerous accounts of problems at the frontiers of Transjordan. (10) These included the diplomatic problem of long-running disputes with the Saudi authorities concerning the movement of tribes,[35] and the welfare of the impoverished Transjordanian tribes.[36] Glubb expressed particular concern about the poor health conditions that were prevalent among the tribes, including the widespread incidence of tuberculosis (TB).[37] He argued that the tribes were destitute because of the crushing losses of camels and other livestock caused by raiding from Hejaz and Najd. The banning of counter-raiding meant that the tribes were debarred from recouping their losses, and diplomacy failed to produce restitution.[38] Furthermore, the tribes were affected by the world economic crisis, which led to a precipitous demand in Egypt and Syria for butchers' meat.[39]

The Desert Patrol remained a small force during the early 1930s, numbering about 180 men,[40] and as raiding ceased it undertook routine police duties in the desert.[41] Likewise, the Arab Legion was little more than a police force until 1936, numbering 1,154 in 1935.[42] The outbreak of disorder in Palestine meant that military columns were needed to deal with the possibility of opposition to the government, and the problem of armed gangs from Syria traversing Transjordan to fight in Palestine.[43] The Desert Patrol was used to patrol the Syrian frontier to prevent the movement of armed bands, and between 1936 and 1939 the Arab Legion was reorganised and expanded. Glubb argued in the December 1939 desert report that there was little desire for rebellion in Transjordan, which meant that the Arab Legion was not forced to fire on the population, and that the use of force would have had disastrous consequences.

Glubb and the Palestine question

The Palestine mandate was one of the most significant failings of British imperialism in the 20th century. Glubb started to comment on the Palestine question in 1936, and his reports contain scathing views of the Palestinian leadership and its Jewish opponents. He respected the tenets of liberal Zionism but abhorred the Zionist movement in Palestine, which he characterised in a letter written to Alec Kirkbride in December 1942 as a fanatical movement whose interests were a menace to the British Empire. (14, 17)

A predominant concern for Glubb and British officials in Transjordan was to prevent the spread of disorder. Glubb believed that the population remained quiescent since it had limited grievances against the administration despite the agitation in Palestine. (10) The judicious use of subsidies that were employed to ensure the support of the leading shaikhs,[44] and expenditure on public works, such as road-building, which provided employment, contributed towards the maintenance of public security.[45] Glubb also believed that law and order were maintained because the population wanted to set a good example of responsible local government, although support for the Palestinian population was widespread. (9) In the June 1936 desert report, he argued that the population had no grievances against the government, but the government should not take the shaikhs' support for granted. (10) However, Glubb and the British authorities were concerned about the threat posed by propaganda disseminated by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the grand mufti of Jerusalem and the dominant figure in Palestinian party politics.[46]

In September 1936, the British Government established a royal commission of inquiry to examine the causes of the unrest in Palestine. The commission (commonly known as the Peel Commission after his chairman) submitted its report in July 1937. The royal commission report argued that the mandate was unworkable, and proposed a scheme of partition whereby the majority of the Arab areas of Palestine would be united with Transjordan.[47] This was a highly controversial proposal since it would have led to the expansion of Amir Abdullah's realm. Glubb was sceptical about the partition in 1937 because he believed that the better-educated Palestinian population would undermine the sociopolitical order. His concerns about its ramifications for Transjordan were prophetic because of the

impact of Transjordan's annexation of the Arab areas of Palestine after the First Arab-Israeli War in 1948–1949. (11)

The resumption of violence in Palestine in the autumn of 1937 marked an even greater threat to the maintenance of public security in Transjordan. The desert reports were dominated by Glubb's views of how the population of Transjordan, including in the desert periphery of the state, were affected by the rebellion in Palestine. (12, 13) He acknowledged in the December 1937 and August 1938 desert reports that sections of the population were becoming increasingly disaffected since they were subjected to the mufti's propaganda. Glubb was convinced that British prestige had been undermined by the insurrection in Palestine, but he was equally certain that no British forces should be sent to Transjordan in order to maintain public security since it would precipitate a rebellion that would be hard to suppress.

In spite of the deployment of over 20,000 British troops in Palestine to suppress the rebellion, Glubb remained concerned that the population was being subjected to foreign influence. In spite of his success in preventing tribal raiding, and imposing order in the desert, the maintenance of public security remained a perennial concern for him and the British authorities. Nonetheless, he argued that the 'principal reason why Transjordan did not rebel in 1936–39 was because his highness the amir was strenuously pro-British and never for a moment hesitated in this attitude'.[48] Glubb's assertion about the efficacy of Amir Abdullah's role in maintaining public security in Transjordan masks the role played by the Arab Legion, and the value of subsidies and job-creation schemes. Nonetheless, his views had no appreciable impact on the making of policy in London. During 1938, partition was rejected, and in 1939 the government issued a white paper that imposed severe restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchases, but promised an independent Palestine in ten years.[49] This remained the British Government's policy until after the Second World War.

During that war, Glubb contemplated the future of the Palestine mandate and Britain's imperial presence in the Middle East. In November 1942 he wrote a memorandum entitled 'Notes on post-war settlements in the Middle East'. (16) He argued that if there had been an adequate garrison in 1936, the revolt would not have occurred. He went on to argue that the British would be forced to remain in Palestine for the foreseeable future, and he

vaguely discussed the benefits of Palestine entering an Arab federation and a system of 'regional international control'. Nonetheless, Glubb believed that the British Government was responsible for the situation in Palestine because constant changes in policy prolonged unrest, and allowed the Arabs and Zionists to exert pressure on Whitehall. This failure of policy was 'tantamount to putting a premium on rebellion and agitation'.

Glubb's 'masterly'[50] summary of the situation in the Middle East in the autumn of 1942 was followed by another paper, written in May 1943. He compared Palestine with the future status of Syria, and he argued that the political complications in Palestine 'are entirely of our own making'. He contended that during the Ottoman era, Palestine was 'notoriously one of the quietest provinces of the empire', but the failings of government policy meant that 'the country is inhabited by two races bitterly hostile to one another, and both almost entirely lacking in wise leadership, in statesmanship or in the spirit of compromise'. (18)

Glubb's wartime memoranda on Palestine were pessimistic about the future, and in 1944 he argued: 'The solution of the Palestine problem, therefore, rests less in the finding of a formula satisfactory to both sides (an impossible task in their present state of fanaticism), than in controlling both sides firmly with adequate forces for 15 years.' (19) Glubb consistently argued that the authorities in Palestine had to apply force in order to maintain control over a deeply divided population. The government did rely on force, particularly when it attempted to suppress Zionist opposition to British rule, but it was much more restrained than in the 1930s.[51] By 1945, the international situation had dramatically altered on account of the Holocaust, growing American influence on British policy and domestic economic weakness.

The Arab Legion in the Second World War

In 1939, the Arab Legion was a gendarmerie numbering 1,953 men and costing the British Government £200,000. By 1946, it had increased to 8,000 men and cost £1.8 million, and it was transformed into a small, relatively effective army.[52] During the Second World War, the legion undertook a variety of military operations. In 1941, it played a role in the British invasion of Iraq to overthrow the regime in Baghdad that threatened British interests, and in the

invasion and occupation of Syria.[53] Sir Harold MacMichael (high commissioner for Palestine, 1938–1944)[54] and the British military authorities recognised the role played by the Arab Legion in both operations, but the British Government showed no interest in it participating in further operations, such as in the Western Desert. This was a source of considerable frustration for Glubb and Amir Abdullah.[55] The Arab Legion expanded in order to meet British military requirements, and during the war, 3,200 men were recruited to serve in garrison companies, whose role was to protect British bases and lines of communications. More significantly, the legion established a mechanised brigade, numbering 2,700 men, which became the army's strike force.[56]

Glubb had a vested interest in promoting the Arab Legion, which he had played a central role in transforming from a gendarmerie to a fledgling army. It was a fully professional force commanded by a small number of British officers. Glubb wrote several memoranda during the war, which discussed the failure of British attempts to establish effective armies in Iraq and Egypt. These papers are of interest because they explain in detail why these armies became a threat to the societies that they were supposed to protect, and their poor performance during the First Arab-Israeli War.

In May 1943, Glubb argued that establishing an army in Iraq had been a serious error, leading him to implausibly argue that it should have been abolished. He attributed these failings to the nature of the Iraqi political system that had been established during the mandate. (18) He also contended that British officers had a role to play in the transformation of the army and that their chief value was moral, but that they served for too short a duration to acquire personal influence.[57] In March 1944, Glubb wrote an exceptionally long memorandum entitled 'Notes on Arab subjects'. He argued that the Egyptian and Iraqi armies were a menace to the population because their organisation and unprecedented firepower allowed them to easily overthrow civilian governments, leading to a military dictatorship. He believed that these countries should instead have focused on creating paramilitary forces to handle internal security. (19) The example of the situation in Iraq between 1932 and 1941 provided a cautionary tale about the threat the army posed to civilian governments.[58] These ideas were unrealistic because it is hard to conceive of a situation where governments that faced various internal and external threats would willingly disband their armed forces.

Nonetheless, the threat posed by these armies was real, and their failings highlighted the benefits of the system developed by the Arab Legion which was a professional rather than a conscript force commanded by a small number of British officers. During the Second World War, Glubb's approach to running the Arab Legion with a handful of British officers worked, but as it expanded, more British officers were needed. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the role of these officers became unfeasible because their presence became politically untenable. Alongside the value of these officers, Glubb succeeded in persuading the British Government that expanding the Arab Legion was in Britain's strategic interests,[59] and that its efficiency enhanced Amir Abdullah's influence and prestige in the Arab countries. (20)

Conclusion

Glubb's early years in Transjordan were dominated by desert control and establishing relations with the tribes. During the early 1930s, he commented in great detail on the tribal way of life, and about the difficulties the tribal population faced. Nonetheless, he was instrumental in undermining the tribes longstanding autonomy from government control. There can be little doubt that the pacification of Transjordan's tribes and their gradual incorporation into the Arab Legion was a remarkable success.

The contents of Glubb's reports were also heavily influenced by regional events. In 1936, he started to comment on the impact of the Palestine uprising in Transjordan. The tribal population required constant attention to prevent the outbreak of disorder, but the payment of subsidies and the establishment of job-creation schemes contributed to the maintenance of public security in the territory. Be that as it may, Glubb took every opportunity to criticise the system of rule the British had established in Palestine, and the role of Arab and Zionist politicians. In contrast, he extolled the virtues of Amir Abdullah and the benevolent rule that characterised Transjordan during the amirate.

Glubb became the commander of the Arab Legion in the spring of 1939, and during the Second World War the legion played a role in the invasions of Iraq and Syria. He played a central role in the transformation of the Arab Legion from a gendarmerie into a small professional army. In spite of this expansion, the legion played an ancillary role for the rest of the war, which must have been the source

of great frustration for Glubb. However, he had the time to write a series of memoranda in which he forcefully expressed his misgivings about the nature of rule in neighbouring states, and the threat posed by the armies of Egypt and Iraq to civilian rule.

1. TNA: CO 831/10/2, 19 November 1930

Note on policy for the control of the Transjordan deserts

Frontiers: Arabian deserts have been divided up by frontiers drawn on maps, which the forces of the various governments are forbidden to cross. As a result, our mobile force must remain always in being and be ready to penetrate hostile raids individually, instead of acting periodically by crushing counter-raids.

Scientific arms: as against this handicap of frontiers, we today enjoy the advantage of possessing scientific weapons which increase mobility and firepower, such as machine guns, motor cars and wireless telegraphy. These two factors, therefore, on the one hand, the handicap of frontiers and, on the other, the assistance of modern scientific arms, more or less counteract one another. The old principles of desert control, however, remains as true as ever, namely, keep in touch with every district, and strike successfully in each area with a mobile force.

It is proposed that the mobile strike force should consist of six armed cars manned by Bedouin police personnel. It is considered that this force should be sufficient, if concentrated, to deal with any tribe likely to be encountered in the Transjordan deserts (this does not include an organised invasion by Ibn Saud, which would necessitate the intervention of military forces).

Bedouin police are more efficient and more economical that any other force for this purpose. 1) They can remain indefinitely in the desert, without requiring to be taken out to rest. 2) They require no organisation for the supply of rations and water. Each man carries his own rations of dates and flour in a bag. They drink the water of the desert wells or pools. Any other troops, even non-Bedouin Arabs, require supply organisations. 3) They know the country and all the wiles of the raiders, being themselves raiders born and bred. 4) They can obtain their own intelligence as they go. No non-Bedouin can extract information from Bedouins.

In considering the mobility of armed cars in the desert, however, we strike the ruling factor in all desert operations, namely, distance. The Hejaz railway is on average, about 150 miles from the eastern frontier of the Southern Desert.

The whole system of employing a mobile force of Bedouin police in armed cars, therefore depends on the existence of permanent petrol dumps in the desert. That is to say, desert posts. It is essential to realise, however, that the post in itself does not prevent raiding, neither need the garrison of the post be strong enough to sally out and defeat raiders. The primary object of the post is, by maintaining permanent supplies of petrol, to ensure the perfect mobility of the armed cars.

Police or soldiers

To begin with, the Bedouin tribes live in a world apart, and are suspicious and out of sympathy with non-Bedouins, even other Arabs. As a result, only Bedouin police can handle Bedouins successfully, or obtain accurate information from them.

Again, Bedouin police can forestall over overtake raiders by foreseeing their movements, the routes they will follow and the tactics they will adopt, the police being themselves ex-raiders.

Armed cars manned by Bedouin police are more mobile and less costly than regular forces, because they require no supply or ration organisation. The men feed themselves, each man carrying a haversack of dates or a bag of flour in his kit. They drink any water and eat on the march on camel back or in their cars. Moreover, they remain through the year in the desert, never requiring to be taken out to rest, all other troops do if employed in the desert for considerable periods.

Politically also, the effect on the tribes themselves is excellent. Bedouins are inclined by long custom to regard the government as their hereditary enemy, or at least a strange outside power, entirely foreign to themselves, and to be avoided as far as possible. The enlistment of their own men in police forces, however, entirely reverses this attitude, and they come to regard the government as part of themselves, a change in attitude which revolutionises the problem of controlling them.

For these reasons, it is believed, and has indeed been proved by experience in Iraq, that not only the cheapest way but the only way to control Bedouins satisfactorily, is by employing purely Bedouin forces.

2. TNA: CO 831/11/1, December 1930

Note on the situation on the southern frontier of Transjordan

Government intervention

Faced with this crisis and chaos on their frontier, the Transjordan Government were in no position to act. Their desert was almost terra incognita. They had no experience of desert administration and no money.

The summer of 1930

Hitherto the Transjordan government had been almost helpless in the face of these events because they had practically no force capable of operating in the desert. In the spring of 1930, however, a mechanised company of the Transjordan Frontier Force came into being and was immediately sent out to the desert to restore order.

Prevention of Transjordan raids

The Howeitat, at the commencement of last summer, were already in a state of mind of bitter resentment. They had suffered a series of crushing raids and massacres from Najd the last two of which, at least, had been officially ordered by Ibn Saud and were led respectively by his cousin, Ibn Musa'ad and one of his most trusted retainers Ibrahim al Nashmi. The Howeitat saw no signs of government action to recover their property. Despairing of outside help, they determined to help themselves.

It was at this stage the Royal Air Force and the Transjordan Frontier Force appeared on the scene with an energetic programme of preventing raiding. At that time, Ibn Saud had issued orders for the cessation of raiding.

Uncivilised tribes, when faced with the power of a modern government, cannot attempt to resist by force. They nurse their resentments and, when they reach a certain state of desperation,

resort to every means of lying, deception and stealth to outwit their rulers.

I must confess that, as an Englishman, I was utterly ashamed to discover the complete absence of prestige of Great Britain on both sides of the frontier. This lamentable situation is due to the impression that, in fining and imprisoning their tribes and returning loot to Ibn Saud . . . His Majesty's Government is willing to descend to any depths of servility to placate Ibn Saud. I am aware that this is strong language, but it is almost verbatim the language used to by Bedouins.

The goat and the tiger

In some countries, I believe, it is the custom for such as wish to shoot tigers to take up a position in a convenient tree and to tie up a goat in a clearing near by. While the tiger is stalking the goat the man in the tree obtains a chance of an easy shot.

The Bedouin tribes of Kuwait, Iraq and Transjordan play, or should pay, much the role of the goat vis a vis of the Akhwan tiger. As long as loyal Bedouin tribes remain in the deserts attached to these countries the warlike exuberance of the central Arabian tribes will be first turned upon them and the ensuing raids, battles and disturbances will be fought out in mid-desert far from settled areas and the vital centres of the territory concerned.

The Transjordan Bedouins are just as martial as those of Najd and numerous enough to repel any attack short of an invasion by Ibn Saud in person – if they resuscitated and firmly controlled. Now, however, they are at their last gasp, penniless and starving. Actually resuscitation automatically brings control in its train. For if the government is strong enough to compel Ibn Saud to return loot and if the shaikhs depend on the government for small annual subsidies, as the Najdi shaikhs depend on Ibn Saud, then the prestige of the government soon becomes paramount, and unauthorized raiding and looting ceases. No sheikh is going to risk his subsidy by winking at theft by his followers and a strong and organized government is able sufficiently to protect its tribes as to ensure their prosperity, rendering stealing unnecessary.

It is heartbreaking to find the Transjordan government slowly and painfully learning the same lessons with Iraq acquired through ten

years of blood and tears, raids and recriminations. As regards our tribes, therefore, the case may be put in a nutshell. In adopting further and continued repressive measures against our own tribes we are on the wrong track. The first essential is to help them and provide them with the means of livelihood.

It is curious that almost unlimited expenditure can apparently be incurred in covering the desert with cars and aircraft, much of which effort is lost and has even resulted in a further fall of prestige. An infinitesimal sum directed to the right object would probably settle the whole matter by saving the Howeitat victims from starvation, and thereby bringing their public opinion to or side and against raiding.

3. TNA: CO 831/29/2

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts, August–October 1934

It is regrettable to think that the primitive tribesmen of 20 years ago was almost incapable of lying, and certainly unable to do so on oath, while his son today is becoming increasingly expert in the niceties of law and the arts of forgery, usury and perjury. When teaching the Bedouins to read and write, we are transforming them into perjurers or politicians, but the alternative is to hand them over to be fleeced by other perjurers and usurers. The pity of it is that the simple primitive tribesmen cannot apparently be transformed into an officer and a gentleman, without passing through many generations of intervening knavery and caddishness. Unfortunately we cannot send all the Howeitat to Eton and Oxford. As a matter of fact, we can no more prevent their becoming cads than we can prevent their dying in droves of TB.

4. TNA: FO 371/19016/E3536

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts for the month of March 1935

Sandeman's policy with the Baluch was tested in the Afghan war of 1878, and emerged triumphant. And let us also remember that our Bedouins, like Rudyard Kipling's Tommy Atkins, are hustled

and scorned in peace, but hastily, and even servilely, courted as soon as war breaks out. Faisal and Lawrence were neither the first nor the last of the leaders in Arabian warfare who concentrated all their efforts on winning over the Bedouins. This very day, Ibn Saud, now courted by the politicians from Baghdad to Damascus, is a bare foot Bedouin, whose power has been built up by Bedouins. In England, we are governed by lawyers, and so perhaps attach importance to lawyers in the East. But do not let us forgot our tribesmen – for some day they will be or more value to us than the lawyers and, in dealing with our tribesmen, let us take a leaf from Sandeman's book and remember:

SYMPATHY
SUBSIDIES
TRIBAL LAW

5. TNA: FO 371/19016/E6366

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This only shows how little permanent effect has yet been produced on the mentality of the local Bedouins. Law and order has been nearly perfect in the desert for over two years but the result is only achieved by continual and intense vigilance and energy. Relax for a fortnight or three weeks, and the old acts of plunder and violence begin to reappear.

Recruitment for the Desert Patrol

The regular portion of the Arab Legion is recruited only from Transjordan subjects, and periodically suggestions, or demands, are made that the Desert Patrol should be bound by the same rule. Unfortunately, however, there are only two important Bedouin tribes in Transjordan, the Howeitat and Beni Sakhr, two tribes which have been at bitter enmity with one another for several generations. To recruit a force solely from these two tribes would be dangerous in the extreme. However well disciplined the force maybe, tribal susceptibilities are always liable to be touched upon, and then, suddenly, the force is found to be passionately divided into two opposing camps.

The only method to avoid so dangerous a state of affairs and, at the same time, to enlist only natives of Transjordan, would be to engage non-Bedouins. But such a step would automatically destroy the value of the force, which has been built from the first on the principle of 'set a thief to catch a thief' – use Bedouins to control Bedouins.

For these reasons, ever since the formation of the Desert Patrol, sanction has been obtained to enlist 40% of the force from non-Transjordan tribes. The list below gives the origin of all the NCO's [non-commissioned officer's] and jundis at present in the force, excluding motor drivers and W/T [wireless telegraphist] operators. Technically, most of those who are non-Transjordan by origin are naturalised Transjordan subjects, but these lists show their original descent.

Transjordan: 114 or 67%
Syria: 14 or 8%
Saudi Arabia 29 or 18%
Iraq 13 or 7%
Total: 170

6. TNA: FO 371/20032/E1472/G, 19 September 1935

A note on the reactions in Transjordan in the event of a European war

Three principal methods seem open to us, in order to keep the Transjordanians from joining in anti-Jewish disturbances: 1) cash gifts and subsidies to shaikhs, 2) the influence of HH [his highness] the Amir, 3) prompt action against agitators, 4) a favourable press, 5) control of W/T propaganda.

Gifts and subsidies

Most of the tribal shaikhs are open to persuasion, if accompanied by a douceur in cash. However, the sums required are trivial, compared to the expenses of a war. In the event of an outbreak of hostilities, however, it would be essential to offer gold. It is impossible to foresee the expenses of warlike operations of any kind, but I should say that, on the outbreak of war, a sum of £10,000 in

gold should be immediately handed to the British Resident, to distribute as necessary.

7. TNA: CO 831/37/3

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Thus, with tribes in their present state of social development, there would appear to be no alternative to the maintenance of feudal hospitality for all, in so far as the slender financial resources at our disposal permit. The fact that the writer spends £1,500 a year on special services is often made the subject of criticism, but it is not fair to wish the administration of desert tribes to conform exactly with that of city areas or civilised countries. The Transjordan deserts were reduced from anarchy to order almost without firing a shot and literally without putting a single Bedouin in prison. This was done by constructing an administration on the feudal lines which the tribes understand, instead of endeavouring to force upon them an administration which owed its origin to European thoughts and ideals. The tribes are loyal to and satisfied with the Transjordan government because it has given them an administration in accordance with their own customs, which prescribe lavish hospitality to princes.

8. MEC: Glubb Papers, box 208, undated

Note on the application of the Tribal Courts Law, 1936

The existence and survival of tribes in any part of the world are due to the absence of public security. When men feel themselves unsafe they naturally band themselves together to form communities for self-defence.

In the absence of a strong central government, therefore, membership of a tribe gives a certain degree of safety to a person and his property.

The tribe also supplies an economic and social function. It feeds all its members, and looks after the aged, the widows and the orphans. These can at the worst collect round the shaikh of the

tribe who will feed them. The most modern governments in the world have not yet been able, by the most scientific methods, to design a method of caring for the poor and helpless as it done by Arab tribes.

In reality, the tribe is a small government, and carries out for its members the principal functions of government. As such, it is of course to some extent a rival of an organised government. The allegiance of the tribesman is first of all to his tribe and only secondly to his government. He puts his tribe first as long as his tribe affords him more protection than the government, and as long as he relies on the tribe to feed his widow and his children should he die. As soon as the government becomes more efficient than the tribe at protecting his life and property and at providing him with the means of livelihood, the tribesman will gradually lose his feeling for his tribe, and learn to trust and follow his government.

Whenever, therefore, government control breaks down, and persons are killed or property is plundered, people turn back to their tribes for protection. When long periods of time elapse without any breach of public security, men tend to leave the protection of their tribes and live more and more as individuals. This effect is strengthened, such as employment in government service, medical treatment, loans, or advances of seed.

Thus we conclude: 1) that tribes are communities of men who band themselves together for safety, when, the control government is not strong enough to ensure that safety. 2) Tribes also provide economic support for their members. 3) Tribes thus perform the duties of little governments, where no strong central government exists. 4) When central government is strong enough to ensure the safety of persons and property, tribes gradually disappear. 5) The best way to make tribes disappear is to ensure perfect public security.

Perfect public security is the best way to weaken tribal feeling. Another way is education, if it gives persons a better idea of the advantages to be obtained by obeying a central government.

The employment of tribes in the government service, in the police or the army, is another method. When the Arab Legion

was first formed, jundis of different tribes hated one another and sometimes even fought. Now tribal feeling between jundis has practically disappeared. Jundis who leave the army and go back to tribes take the government and not the tribal viewpoint, to some extent at least.

Tribal custom does not make any provision for punishment as a deterrent. It is solely concerned with the recovery of private rights. It is not therefore possible to punish a criminal by tribal custom. There is no provision for punishment under tribal law. All punishment must be inflicted under some law made by the government.

Arab tribesmen have followed their own methods of assessing their personal rights for thousands of years. Although these tribesmen have been Muslims for 1300 years, they have not consented to abandon their tribal customs in this respect, even in favour of Sharia Law. We cannot therefore expect to force them to give up their tribal customs in favour of Civil Law in 25 years.

When tribesmen who complain to the government do not receive what they consider to be their private rights, they cease to complain to the government any more. They try to recover their rights by force. This causes fresh crimes, which undermines faith in the government and makes all tribesmen rally round the tribe, as being better able to protect their private interests than the government.

Thus an attempt by government to abolish tribal custom in private rights leads to a strengthening of tribal feeling and weakening of government prestige – the very opposite of the object in view.

The best way to weaken tribal feeling, is to ensure the safety of persons and their property.

9. TNA: CO 831/37/3

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts, May 1936

At the end of May [1936], however, the idea was gaining ground that the best service they [i.e. the population of Transjordan] could

render to the Arab cause would be, by their obedience and good conduct, to prove that the state governed by Arabs for Arabs, had a higher standard of civic conscience and public devotion, than a country still groaning under the brutalities of 'colonial' rule. The maintenance of law and order in Amman, therefore, was not due to lack of sympathy for the Palestine Arabs, or lack of resentment against the British or the Jews, but rather was an attempt to show that Arabs, even in a poor country like Transjordan, were capable of governing themselves.

10. TNA: CO 831/37/3

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts, June 1936

The great majority of their tribal leaders were still in the hands of the government and prepared to follow any definite line of action indicated to them.

The Bedouin shaikhs have been so neglected by the government, when the latter appeared firm in the saddle, that Shaikh Haditha al Khuraisha, one of the two paramount shaikhs of the Beni Sakhr, has been reduced to such poverty that he rarely had enough to eat.

But the moral is the same. The moral is that, in an emergency, these are still the men who count. It is a fatal error to neglect the tribes in peacetime, and then expect them to be loyal when troubles begin. If the shaikhs had been paid a living wage during the past five years, we need have had no need for anxiety now. These three or four great leaders are followed by thirty or forty others on a smaller scale. These form the 'county families' of Transjordan. And when the country families are dying of hunger, they are as ready to foment revolution as any proletariat. Today, while in feverish haste, we run from shaikh to shaikh urging moderation or promising assistance, we cannot but remember, with some bitterness, that £1,000 a year divided between them for the last five years, would have ensured their loyalty today. This 'economy' may cost us a small war.

Quietness and moderation

In spite, however, of these two inflammable elements – Nabulsis in Amman and penurious shaikhs with the tribes – the country has

one powerful factor in favour of peace – it has no major grievance of its own. The penurious shaikhs have individual grievances – there is no major grievance like land policy, over-taxation, or foreign military occupation. The vital thing at the moment is not to provide a major grievance – and object for rebellion. It is true that acts of disorder may occur, highway robberies to cut telephone wires. Small parties may cross to Palestine, But broad and large, Transjordan has no complaints.

11. TNA: CO 831/41/11

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts for the month of June 1937

Considerable feeling will arise between the existing Transjordanians and the Palestinians who are to be attached to Transjordan. Especially will this be so in the intellectual class. The Palestinians can produce much better educated government officials, doctors and lawyers. The Transjordanians already realise that, if their country is joined to Palestine, the Palestinians are likely to monopolise all the lucrative appointments.

Perhaps an even more difficult problem will be the question of transferring the cultivators whose lands will fall inside the new Jewish state. Peasants are notoriously attached to their native soil, and refuse to leave it, even if better paid and available elsewhere.

This is a sentiment deep in their character, and not to be argued away by reason. But the difficulty here will not be only in evicting the Arab from Palestine, but in planting them in Transjordan or elsewhere. Although much of the land in Transjordan could produce much more and support a larger population, yet it all belongs to somebody, according to Arab ideas. The fact that government may spend money to make this land more productive will not immediately reconcile the Transjordanians to the importation of Palestinian settlements (many of them differing somewhat in cultivation) into their midst.

But perhaps most difficult of all will be the clash of certain personalities inside the two states. The new constitution appears to reduce the Mufti to insignificance, and exalt his enemy, the Amir Abdullah. But even if the Mufti were eliminated it is difficult to

foresee His Highness, in an independent Arab state, would consent to be a constitutional monarch with a parliament of Palestinian lawyers.

But while the Palestinians would be the intellectuals of the new state, the Transjordan would probably supply the fighting men, the raw material for rebellions.

Plenty of disturbances will probably lie in the path of the new Arab state. At the same time, however, it must be realised that such incidents cannot necessarily render an Arab state unstable. The Arabs are addicted to turmoil, but, although they quarrel with each other, they are not incapable of unity against an outside threat. After all, the Arabs have always shown these characteristics – they conquered half the world and carried on a succession of civil wars amongst themselves at the same time.

12. TNA: CO 831/46/9

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts, December 1937

Indeed Palestine itself has affected Transjordan in two ways: 1) By direct sympathy for the inhabitants of that country. 2) Perhaps more directly, by revealing the apparent inability of the government to put an end to the Palestine disturbances. This quite irrespective of the rights and wrongs of the case, has caused every malcontent to open his eyes. If discontented Palestinians can defy their government why should not the discontented elsewhere, they ask. Thus Palestine has, to some extent, undermined the prestige of settled government everywhere.

This situation has coincided with the genuine dissatisfaction of a certain section of the population of Transjordan. When the Transjordan government was formed 15 years ago, few trained officers or officials could be found among the native inhabitants of so rural a country. As a result, the senior ranks of government service were principally filled by Syrians or Palestinians who still occupy the same posts. The inhabitants of Transjordan, however, claim that they are now capable of filling all the junior government positions, although the more moderate do not deny the

need for 'foreigners' (i.e. Syrians or Palestinians) to occupy a few of the senior posts. They allege, however, that the influence of 'foreigners' in senior positions causes even junior posts to be offered to non-Transjordanians.

Whatever may be the rights and wrongs of these claims, they have undoubtedly produced genuine dissatisfaction amongst the small would-be official class. The most bitter malcontents are graduates of secondary schools who have been unable to secure government employment. This class is, however, still in a minority, and their influence probably insufficient to produce armed disturbances while the Bedouins and fellaheen have no complaints. The question seems likely to become increasingly acute, however, as the schools continue to produce young would be officials.

13. TNA: CO 831/46/9

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts, August 1938

However, strongly Transjordanians may feel, however, it is not easy for them to give their sentiments a suitable outlet for action. The most nationalistic elements of the population are: 1) the government officials, 2) the townspeople of Amman. The government officials are nationalistic because they have received the most European education, and nationalism is a European phenomenon. The more European influence there is in any class or district, the stronger is the national feeling. But although the officials feel so bitterly on the subject of Palestine (and let it be candidly admitted, so resentfully against Great Britain) it is not easy for them to act. Their official positions impose a check on their action, and moreover they are aware that the Transjordan contains considerable lawless elements, and that the undermining of respect for government might result in increasing local lawlessness, which would react against themselves without doing much good to Palestine.

The second nationalistic element is composed of natives of Amman. These people are partly influenced by the fact that they also are to some extent under European influence (and hence nationally minded) but to an even greater degree by the fact that a larger proportion of them are foreigners. Amman is a mushroom

city which has grown up since the war, and is largely populated by townspeople from either Damascus or Palestine (chiefly Nablus). Damascus and Nablus are of course centres of extreme Arab nationalism, and the inhabitants of Amman are closely connected with both. Many of these persons are of course largely indifferent to the fact of Transjordan and would be prepared to see the whole country burn, if Nablus thereby would derive any advantage. These foreign communities in Amman are, however, restrained by one consideration, namely that many of them are merchants, and local disturbances would be very bad for business.

Thus the hatred and resentment of officials and the townspeople of Amman, on the subject of Britain and Palestine, are very intense. But neither government officials nor merchants are really anxious for a local rebellion. What they would all like to see is the despatch of increasing sums of money and men to Palestine.

Behind these nationalistic elements, the officials and the people of Amman, stand the large class of the tribesmen and fellaheen. These are less nationalistic than the former two classes, but, in many cases, they are more religious.

A considerable element of tribesmen and fellaheen are, however, merely lawless and excitable. When the government is in difficulties, they become rather overbearing and menacing, and, if the crisis continues, break out in acts of disorder. But in this they do not see eye to eye with the officials and the townspeople, whose object is political, and who do not desire indiscriminate local lawlessness in Palestine. Thus the officials and police are ready to act to suppress local disorders, which are liable to be committed by Transjordan tribesmen, merely because they think the government is in difficulties.

14. TNA: CO 831/51/10

A monthly report on the administration of the Transjordan deserts for the month of July 1939

The theory that the presence of Jews is a strategic asset to the British is now completely exploded. To begin with if the Jews were not there, the Arabs would be friendly, a much greater strategic advantage. If the Jews arrive, the Arabs become hostile.

The Jews, in practice, are purely occupied with defending themselves, and are (perhaps naturally) not interested in defending British Imperial interests. What is more – no sooner does the policy of His Majesty's Government cease to meet with the approval of the Jews than the Jews themselves resort to sabotage!! And the ridiculous position arises that both the Jews and the Arabs simultaneously set about sabotaging British Imperial interests!!

15. MEC: Transjordan collection, 15 August 1942

Note on desert units

The desert portion of the Arab Legion is a rather peculiar force, and officers joining it from the British Army must inevitably notice a number of curious features which appear to them at least, remarkable, if not blameworthy, or even 'hopeless', 'chaotic' or 'impossible'. It was thought that an explanatory note might therefor be of assistance to newly joined officers.

The peculiarities of the Arab Legion desert units arise from two sources.

(1) The history of these units.
(2) The character of the Bedouins themselves.

In November 1930, I was brought from Iraq to Transjordan, and told that government wished to extend its authority over the desert. I was authorised to recruit one hundred Bedouins for this purpose. The tribes in Transjordan were intensely hostile to the government, and none of them would enlist.

Gradually the hostility of the tribes was weakened and within six months, I have completed my 100 men and had also four trucks. We captured our first raiders, and the situation began to improve. It took two years before the last Bedouin raid ceased.

During this period, I lived entirely in the desert with my 100 men. Sometimes I did not visit Amman for two or three months on end. There were no other British officers with me. There were no police posts or buildings, and we lived in tents or as often as not, in the open desert. Naturally, in such circumstances, I lived entirely with my 100 men, sat and talked to them all day long, and a strong mutual affection grew up between us all.

In 1936, the Palestine rebellion broke out, and the desert force was increased to about 350, with more vehicles and machine guns, but the spirit of the original 100 still survived. This spirit was almost entirely governed by mutual trust and affection. I always went out of my way to give talks to all jundis in each detachment or post, and to explain the necessity of discipline, drill and every other rule or regulation. As far as possible, I explained beforehand the punishment which would follow every offence. When an offence was committed, I was therefore able to say 'I told you what would happen if you did this. It was stupid of you to do it'. The system worked very satisfactorily and discipline was of a very high standard in this small force.

All this time, there was no idea that this force would ever be military in the sense of fighting an external enemy. The morale of the force was partly maintained by the long waiting list of men anxious to enlist for whom no vacancies could be made. Thus, dismissal was the most dreaded of all punishments.

Morale and esprit de corps was also fortified by pride in the administration of which they took part. Only in Transjordan did the tribes more or less identify themselves with their government, a state of affairs which provoked the surprise and envy of the tribes of Syria and Iraq. The knowledge that they were employees of an administration which was the envy of the less fortunate tribes in neighbouring countries, made our people very proud of themselves. The whole thing was an experiment in patriarchal government, based on philanthropy, mutual confidence and understanding. Although the tribes had lost their own independence by the extension of government control, the resulting administration was controlled by men of the same tribes enlisted and promoted to sub-district commanders and post commanders. No other government ever attempted to do this. In every neighbouring territory, all senior posts were almost limited to townsmen, and the extension of government control always meant the reduction of the conquered tribes to a subordinate status under the orders of townsmen. Bedouin tribes have until recently been not only independent, but have occupied a dominating position over the town and settled populations. Their sudden and complete subordination to townspeople, has therefore led to no little secret

(and even open) resentment. In Transjordan alone were the tribes, once reduced to submission, allowed to run their own show on behalf of the government.

This system of employing tribesmen in senior posts has many disadvantages. The standard of literacy is very low. The nomad as explained below is by nature untidy, careless and unmethodical. There is always a temptation to say that tribesmen are incapable of administration, and to replace them in senior posts by townsmen, with the result that an immediate improvement in administration has resulted. But in every case, the morale of the tribesmen, how reduced to subordinate status, has been affected and when a crisis has arisen, they have ailed. In Transjordan alone have we persistently faced the administrative disadvantages of careless semi-illiterate commanders, but in return we have produced the only force which has never yet failed.

Since the end of the Syrian operations, in August 1941, the Arab Legion desert units have been increased five fold in numbers. Many new British offices have joined. It is essential for these officers to grasp the reason for the high morale of the Arab Legion in the past, and to comply with the traditions and manners in which the force has grown up. Some of these customs make regular military training difficult. But on the other hand, these customs and traditions have in the past maintained the morale of this force, when all other Arab forces have collapsed. It is not possible to change or radically modify the customs of the force at this stage of the war. To attempt to do so would be to risk a collapse of morale. It is essential for British officers to interest and familiarise themselves with the spirit and traditions of the Bedouins as a race, and of the Arab Legion in particular. Any officer who finds himself out of sympathy with those customs and traditions should not attempt to remain with us. He will not be happy with us nor we with him. Some people love tribesmen by nature, some hate them. The fact conveys no criticism of either side. It is just a matter of temperamental incompatibility.

The Bedouin nature

Nomadic life seems to produce certain characteristic qualities independent of race. Living in wide open deserts, continually moving

camp and changing scenery, doing little work except watch animals graze, but living in constant danger from raiders, robbers, thirst, hunger and disease, produces certain very marked characteristics. It may here be remarked that townspeople, although may live comparatively near to these nomadic tribes, have lived in entirely different conditions. The fact that all now call themselves 'Arabs' should not lead us to think they are a homogeneous race like (let us say) the English. In England, there are no communities living under such enormously different conditions as the Bedouins and townspeople in the northern Arab countries. In reality, Bedouins and townsmen are, for all practical purposes, different races, who regard every event and every problem in as different a manner as do the British and the French for example. Introducing a townsman into a Bedouin community, therefore, we are introducing a foreigner as much as if we put Frenchman in a British unit.

The point of honour

The Bedouins are still in the age of chivalry a la Richard Coeur de Lion. This is an exceedingly individualistic age of development. Richard was a poor general, and he was more anxious to distinguish himself personally that to enable his side to win. This is a typical Bedouin quality. They are passionately keen to acquire personal distinction and are intensely jealous and all want to leave the service!

Tribal susceptibilities are equally difficult. If praise be given to the Rowalla, the Beni Sakhr are suddenly resentful. If two men of Shammar happen to get medals, the Howeitat are suddenly disaffected.

Another form in which this vanity shows itself is an intense touchiness on the subject of personal dignity. To pull off a Bedouin's headgear in public or pull his beard or in any way upset his dignity is a terrible offence, which may lead to murder. Similarly to use abusive language in public will produce intense hatred and resentment. It is for this reason that I personally have never had Bedouin defaulters marched into office, much less take their hats off! Such an indignity might well produce bitter resentment where the actual punishment would be accepted as just. Similarly

defaulters parades, extra drill, fatigues or anything which may make the defaulter ridiculous in the eyes of his comrades, should be avoided. They will only produce resentment.

For some reason, it is much better to take a man away alone and administer the severest of rebukes or punishments, rather than to criticise him before his comrades. So jealous are they that a public rebuke will often cause grievance which be nursed for months.

The corollary of this vanity and jealousy, however, is a genuine point of honour, which is one of the principles instruments of handling these people. Arab townsmen are not distinguished either by vanity, jealousy of the sensitiveness of their honour.

This point of honour can be used both in the case of individuals or tribes, or the Arabs as a whole. Such an appeal should always be tried before threats. Thus to say: 'If you turn back, you will be put in prison' – may merely produce an insubordinate or sullen reply. But to say 'are you the kind of fellow who deserts his comrades in a tight space?' may produce the desired effect.

Fickleness

Inconsistency seems to be everywhere a characteristic of nomads, presumably owing to the habit of changing their camps so frequently. This is a very trying characteristic, especially when trying to teach them anything. As a result, no other government in the world has attempted to raise a military force from Bedouins, although they are the most warlike community in Arabia. If we find it difficult we can at least console ourselves by thinking that nobody else has ever thought it even possible.

It is not any use thinking that this inconsistency can be cured by merely rebuking or punishing. This quality is much more deeply ingrained. Prison records show that a three years term of imprisonment is almost equivalent to a death sentence on a Bedouin, and many die within a year. Arabs townsmen will do ten or fifteen years imprisonment, and come out in the best of health and spirits. Bedouins, like some wild animals, will just fade away and die if kept long in captivity.

When we realise that many Bedouins will die if kept in confinement for a year, it is not surprising that their morale suffers if they

remain in one place for a lesser period such as a few months, or if kept in barracks or towns. Bedouins like their camels, only remain really fit if they live constantly moving about in their own deserts.

This quality is peculiarly difficult when trying to push them though an intensive course of military training. Before the war we rarely retained a man who wished to resign. More often than not, after resignation, he would return and re-enlist a few months later, but the escapade provided him with a little variety without which he could not live.

Money

Living in wide-open spaces, in close proximity with animals under the sky and stars, and in a state of continual insecurity, produce a philosophic indifference to worldly things. Many of the great religions of the world have originated from such simple thinkers. Bedouins take life philosophically, one day they are rich (but drought or an enemy raid) they are reduced to beggary. But it does not seem to make much difference.

On other occasions, they are extremely importunate for money, and intensely dislike any deductions from their pay. It is difficult to account for such inconsistencies, except by referring again to the general fickleness of their temperaments. The intense poverty verging on starvation, in which all Bedouins live, may account for some of their greed, which is continually struggling with their religious resignation.

When we criticise the Bedouins for trying to get money, we must remember that their generosity is fantastic. Their hospitality is proverbial, but they will give as readily in alms. A Bedouins who has plagued you to give him a pound, will insist on inviting you to dinner and spend three of four pounds on entertaining you. Before payday, the tents of the jundis fill up with Bedouins. When the ordinary jundi gets his pay, he gives a large part of it away to these cadgers.

The attitude of the Bedouin to money is just illogical. Europeans really attach far more important to worldly wealth than to the Bedouins. But Europeans exercise more self-control. However absorbed they are in making money, they will not beg it from a

stranger. In fact, it is perhaps because they attach so much importance to it that Europeans consider that to ask anyone else for money is the unpardonable sin. A Bedouin will come up to you and ask for money as readily as you would go up to a man and ask for a match. If you give it, he will probably give it to someone else, just as a child will scream and cry for a new toy but when he gets it, will immediately throw it out of the window.

Sympathy

Finally, the Bedouins are very sensitive. They react very readily to those who are sympathetic to them, and bitterly resent those who are not. If you do not feel any sympathy for them, you will probably not be a great success with them.

Comradeship is a great tradition amongst them, as is probably the case in all countries where life is insecure. Personally, I have always found true Bedouins loyal and remarkably grateful, but these qualities are in inverse ratio, to the their sophistication. When they become semi-settled, or mix much with townspeople, they lose these qualities.

It must be realised that Bedouins have not the same forms of 'patriotism' as we, this is to say loyalty to a country represented politically by a government. Their loyalty is not political because they have no political institutions. To most governments, monopolised by townspeople, they have 'class' hostility as tribesmen. But they are loyal to Islam as a community, and are proud of the name, reputation and traditions of Arabs. They are open to an appeal to preserve the honour of Islam, and the Arabs. Needless to say, no traditions or emotions bind them to the British, and few have ever met any English people unless they enlist. Emotional appeals referring to Great Britain of the British Empire are out of place.

The final saving grace possessed by all Bedouins is humour. While practical jokes and play are limited in public by their sense of dignity, their wit and humour are unending. Anyone who can raise a laugh can surmount most crises with them.

In brief, the Bedouin is often vain, touchy, fickle, childish and importunate. But he is also very alive to honour or shame, quick, intelligent, humorous and capable of great devotion and courage.

He is usually loyal to his comrades, and anyone who can enter that category, will find many true friends.

But we shall not succeed if we insist on treating him as though he were a British soldier in Aldershot barracks.

16. TNA: CO 732/88/9, 15 November 1942

Notes on post-war settlements in the Middle East

Even fools may well hesitate to rush into a dissertation on the vexed question of Palestine. It is remarkable that, though we, are rather ashamed of being 'imperialistic' ourselves, we keep getting ourselves into a position where we conflict with the Arabs in the interests of third parties – in Palestine we fight the Arabs in the interests of the Jews; in Syria in the interests of the French.

In Palestine also, both sides are continuing to arm, the Jews even more than the Arabs. There seems to be no alternative to the continued maintenance of a large garrison. The best hope for peace in Palestine seems to be a generous settlement of the Arab question in other parts of Arabia thereby persuading the leaders of the Arabs in other countries to acquiesce in sacrifices in Palestine.

Even so, a bi-racial administration in Palestine with Great Britain keeping the peace with a large garrison appears inevitable for some time to come. If, however, Palestine were to enter into an Arab federation, and racial animosities were to settle down, the Jews might find a wider scope for their commerce than would be the case if the continuance of the present fanaticism on both sides leaves the Jews confined to a portion of Palestine and encircled by enemies. It may be remarked that the fault is on both sides – the Jews are no less fanatical than the Arabs.

The main points of this statement would be: 1) The Arabs and Jews are intensely hostile to one another, and neither side is willing to compromise, 2) It would be contrary to every principle of modern freedom or justice or the Atlantic Charter, to hand over the political control of one of these groups to the tender mercies of the other.

There are fanatics on both sides who stir their followers up to violence. Such action will be rigorously dealt with, has no chance of

success, and will merely plunge Palestine once more into poverty and bloodshed.

The best hope for the future lies in the spread of toleration and mutual sympathy between the different races of Palestine. Those leaders who encourage fanaticism in their followers are postponing indefinitely the fulfilment of their hopes.

As in so many such struggles, the fanatics of both sides have become the leaders but there is little doubt that there are large masses of people of both races who want to live in peace, and dread further outbreaks of violence. While the extremists of both sides breathe blood and fire, unrestrained and unreproved by the mandatory, the moderates are afraid to come forward. But it is possible that, were the mandatory power to take a firmer hold, great number of persons of both races might be openly or secretly, relieved.

In any case, the system of administration under which the government delays all action until popular opinion demands it, and then colours popular opinion, is not practicable anywhere in the East and least of all where two intensely hostile races are preparing once more to fly at one another's throats. There can be no possible course after the war than for Great Britain to retain control, maintain as fair a balance as possible between the two races until after a generation or two of born Palestinians, the two races each a modus vivendi. Why not say so now, and clear away illusions and false hopes?

Immigration

Both sides regard Jewish immigration as the key to the whole problem. It is vain to hope that the clauses in the White Paper about immigration can be changed, without provoking a storm from the Arabs. All over Arabia the Arabs realise that Jewish immigration is the crux of the whole struggle and they value the White Paper solely as a British guarantee against further immigration.

Let us not tempt Providence by ourselves throwing a bombshell into the arena. Let us leave the White Paper as it stands until we begin to see light through the storms and struggles of war and peace making. Three years after the armistice will be soon enough

voluntarily to court a new small war. Until then, the White Paper and strong garrison will be our only supports in Palestine.

17. TNA: CO 732/88/9, 31 December 1942

Glubb to Kirkbride

The Jews, who have suffered so much and who make pathetic appeals to our sympathy when they are the victims of oppression, are entirely without bowels of compassion vis-à-vis the Arabs, when it is within their power to oppress the latter. Somebody said that the Jews are the cleverest people in the world, but the least wise. Their actions in Palestine have surely confirmed the truth of that opinion. But in Palestine itself, Jewish statesmanship or wisdom has been conspicuous by its absence, and greed and fanaticism have characterised their attitude towards the Arabs. Although (or perhaps because) the Jews have long been a persecuted minority themselves, their mentality renders unthinkable any idea of handing another minority over to their tender mercies.

The Jews are a most adaptable race. For it is partly their aggressive and supercilious assumption of European superiority which is responsible for the present friction.

18. MEC: Glubb Papers, box 210, 25 May 1943

A further note on peace terms in the Middle East

The old man of the sea

Perhaps the worst error we made in Iraq was the creation of the army.

The rashness which permitted us to agree to the formation of an army in Iraq, was, like the establishment of a parliamentary system in the same country, due to the failure to realise that Iraq is 350 odd years behind Great Britain. In designating constitutions for Iraq, Tudor England should be borne in mind, not modern Britain.

Perhaps also when we created the Iraqi Army, we had not sufficiently pondered the vast increase of power which modern arms have given to armies, vis-à-vis the civil population. The Turks maintained in Iraq an army as large as the Iraqi army, and yet

it rarely if ever had complete control. Even very inefficient armies when armed with modern weapons, possessing armoured vehicles, MT [motor transport], and W/T, can make short work of civilian political dissatisfaction.

Thus Iraq will never the base and stable, while she has an army, until a real public opinion develops sufficiently strong to convince unscrupulous politicians that any of them who use the army to seize power will be politically outlawed. Such public opinion, should it ever develop, will certainly take many generations to form. When we see the success which attends military autocracy in many European countries, we cannot feel very hopeful about Iraq.

There can be no doubt that the correct course, for the benefit of Iraq would be to abolish the Iraq army once and for all.

Military missions

It is sincerely to be hoped that we shall not repeat this error, should it fall to us again to build up new Arab states in Syria, Cyrenaica, Tripoli or elsewhere. No such states should have an army at all, until its internal political constitution has passed though the adolescent stage, and given proof of its stability. If an when armed forces must be created, a British officer should be in executive command, or as chief of the general staff, be the real commander, if the nominal commander in chief were an Arab. Very few British officers should be employed in the ranks of the army. It is only necessary to have one two key posts occupied by British officers to prevent the army being used as an instrument to destroy the liberties of the people.

In this respect, British policy regarding military missions has been most unfortunate since 1918. It is apparently laid down that British military missions must consist of regular officers, who cannot be seconded for more than three years. This means that British offices on military missions are expert soldiers, but have little knowledge of the peoples whose armies they are instructing, and can rarely speak more than a few words of the language. These offices usually have no moral hold over the officers or men at all. They are mere technical experts limited to giving certain

lessons. We thus find a rather ridiculous position, in which British officers are diligently teaching soldiers to shoot, at a moment when unknown to these officers, the soldiers are preparing to use their skill against the British themselves.

The latest military science is not necessary for Arab armies at this stage. They cannot in any case hope seriously to challenge European armies for many generations to come. It is therefore much more important for them to be loyal, and to avoid being used as catspaws by politicians, than that they be raised to the highest pitch of military efficiency. The vital requirement for British officers employed with Arab armies (whether in executive posts or as military missions) are:

1) That they possess the personalities which will enable them to get a grip of the officers and mean, and dominate their activities.
2) That they know the people, have a general idea of the local political trends, can speak the language fluently, and like and be liked.

Transjordan

Transjordan enjoys the enviable position of being the only complete success, amongst the various 'Mandated' states created after the First World War. She is the only Arab state, which has not rebelled since 1918 (including the independent Arab states of Saudi Arabia, which in rebellion from 1928 to 1930). In the present war, Transjordan is the only Middle East state, which has not had to be garrisoned by British troops. Not only have no combatant British troops been stationed in Transjordan, but Transjordan herself has provided troops, which have assisted to garrison Syria, Iraq and Palestine. Transjordan is the only state in the Middle East the troops of which have actually fought on the British side in the present war.

The principal cause for this successful result is undoubtedly that Transjordan was not given a 'British democracy' constitution after the First World War, and that influence, lightly and tactfully applied, still controls the country, though largely from behind the scenes.

Transjordan has undoubtedly deserved well of Great Britain. It is therefore only that Transjordan should reap some reward after this war. It is alarming to hear it suggested, however, that this reward should take the form of a greater measure of independence.

Transjordan is living proof that a continuance of British control works better than independence. The Transjordanians, to whom the British have denied independence, are solidly pro-British. The Iraqis who have been given independence are certainly NOT solidly pro-British. Yet the proposal is solemnly discussed that the 'success' of Transjordan be 'rewarded' by a grant of more independence. In other words, the system which has proved itself successful is to be 'rewarded' by being scraped, and replaced by the system which has proved itself to be unsuccessful.

The Transjordan system

Transjordan has, for the past ten years, been such as an outstanding success that it is surely worth our while to try and analyse the reason. It is certainly remarkable that we hear now of giving Syria a constitution on the 'Iraq model', although Iraq has been the sad failure of the Arab experiment, while Transjordan has been the great success. Yet we do not suggest giving Syria a constitution on the Transjordan model but on the Iraq model. Like the Bourbons – we seem to forget nothing and learn nothing. The systems which have again and again failed are still repeated in each new country requiring settlement. Such lack of originality and power of thought or deduction musty surely lead to ultimate disaster.

What then are the characteristics of the Transjordan system?

It will be seen that this constitution is a compromise between Eastern despotism and British democracy – a compromise which has functioned in an almost ideal manner.

Powers of the Amir

The Transjordan constitution leaves ultimate power in the hands of the Sovereign, who has the power to dismiss the Prime Minister. The Amir is not in a position to indulge in constant arbitrary interferences in the routine work of government, a practice to which Eastern despots are unfortunately addicted. He can, however, prevent a major breakdown such as the Rashid Ali coup d'état, because he can dismiss the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

In the same manner, a happy balance has been struck between the Cabinet and the Assembly. The latter cannot initiate legislation or cause the fall of the Cabinet. As a result, the cabinet devotes itself much more to the genuine administration of the country, instead of being solely occupied in the struggle to keep their seats by pulling political strings in the assembly. Thus the Transjordan cabinet do real solid administrative work. Most Arab cabinets do too much politics and too little real administration.

On the other hand, the existence of an assembly forms a useful safety valve for public opinion. The fact that bills must be debated in public before becoming law, causes the government to study public opinion before drawing up new legislation. Finally, membership of the Legislative Assembly had educative value, enabling a number of leading citizens to see something of the working of the government.

His Majesty's Government does not seem to have appreciated the success achieved by this nicely balanced constitution, and continue to promise constitutions on the Iraq model to new Arab countries. Let us hope and pray that (if Syria is already doomed to be a second Iraq) we shall at least install the Transjordan model in Cyrenaica and Tripoli, should we control the future of these countries.

Command of the armed forces

The command of the armed forces of Transjordan, collectively known as the Arab Legion, has been held by a British officer ever since the foundation of the Transjordan state.

The Arab Legion is however officered by Arabs. There were only three British officers in the Arab Legion before the war. This is probably an ideal arrangement. British officers hold a few key staff appointments, but otherwise all the officers of the Arab Legion are Arabs, who can rise to high ranks. At the present moment, the Officer Commanding, is British, but the second senior officer is Arab, the third senior is British and so on.

The retention of the command of both police and military forces in the hands of British officers is perhaps a negative advantage. But it has ensured the stability of the country and prevented the prostitution of the armed forces for political purposes.

Financial control

Great Britain has a valuable hold over Transjordan, in the poverty of the country and its need for financial assistance. The need for an annual grant in aid renders cooperation with the British government essential. The British have, however, exercised this right of interference with extreme moderation, and the Amir and his Cabinet do in actual practice govern the country entirely. Nevertheless the presence of a British Resident, whose financial assistance is essential to the maintenance of the administration, is undoubtedly a sheet anchor, which ensures absolute stability, however little the Resident intervenes in the daily routine of administration.

For that matter, the British government could have done much more for Transjordan in the way of development, and the advance of capital. Almost nothing has been done in Transjordan in this direction in 25 years of British control.

Personalities

The final reason for the success of the present regime in Transjordan has been the presence in that country of a number of outstanding personalities. First of these is of course the Amir Abdullah himself. In the daily routine of administration, those in contact with HH may at times complain of his occasional interference, or of his political ambitions. These faults constitute merely secondary shortcomings. In the main issues, the Amir Abdullah leaves little to be desired in his present role.

The system or rather lack of system, under which each country has its own British officials in hermetically sealed compartments, has conferred one benefit on Transjordan. Sir Henry Cox was 15 years British Resident while Colonel Peake for 17 years commanded the Arab Legion. These two officers held their posts so long as to become almost part of Transjordan, instead of being foreigners. The present British Resident, Mr A.S. Kirkbride, has been 25 years in Transjordan, with only two short breaks.

Absence of class rivalry

Another reason for the quietness and harmony in Transjordan is the absence of acute class rivalry as between the official class or effendis, and the tribal and agricultural population. This factor is

of great importance in Iraq as a disturbing element. The Iraq government, which held sway for ten years almost without British intervention, entirely failed to win the loyalty and confidence of the tribes.

In Transjordan, the task of unification was easier, owing to the absence of large city population. But the present harmony between town and country was, nevertheless not accidental. It was indeed due to the influence, firstly of the Amir Abdullah, and secondly of British officials. King Feisal I during his reign in Iraq was also, like the Amir Abdullah, able to understand the point of view of both tribe and town, and the royal families have a real role to play in this connection. Unfortunately King Ghazi seems to have been brought up almost entirely town interests. Apart from members of the Royal Family, the task of promoting mutual understanding between effendis and tribesmen seems to fall chiefly on British officials. Few effendis of tribesmen are big enough really to enter into the point of view of the other classes.

In Transjordan, special efforts have been made in this direction, and the sons of tribal shaikhs (both cultivators and nomads) have become administrative and civil officers, thereby preventing that estrangement between tribes and the government, which is so noticeable in other northern Arab countries.

The independence standard

This system in Transjordan has been an almost unqualified success. Unfortunately, however, the system has apparently passed unnoticed and unappreciated by HMG. It is we who established the Iraq model as the standard test for all Arab states. Although the Iraq experiment has been an obvious and tragic failure, yet we still hold it out as the goal to be arrived at by all Arab countries. To such countries as have 'not yet attained' to the chaos and misery to which our ideals have reduced Iraq, we are sympathetic or condensing, or we hold out promises of help to them to reach the Iraq model. All our troubles are not from our stars but from ourselves, and the false standards which we have introduced into Arabia and which we continue to reiterate to this day, in spite of all that has passed.

In such an atmosphere, a ruler like the Amir Abdullah cannot avoid feeling at times that he is the object of scorn and condescension, because he has not reached 'the Iraq model'. In such moments he impatiently demands complete independence and the abolition of the mandate and of British control – measures which, if adopted, would reduce happy Transjordan to the chaotic conditions of Iraq between 1932 and 1942. We can only hope that no such 'concessions' will be made after the war.

The just reward

Nevertheless the Amir and people of Transjordan have deserved well of Great Britain. To 'reward' their loyalty and friendship by abolishing the system which gave rise to them, and to introduce in its place a system which everywhere else given rise to hatred and xenophobia, would be an irony indeed.

But Transjordan has earned a just reward. This reward should not be an unsuitable and ill-timed political 'concession', but should take the form of funds for greatly increased economic development. Such measures will benefit the whole population, instead of flattering the vanity of a handful of politicians while ruining the administration.

Irrigation schemes in the Transjordan valley and schemes for agricultural development elsewhere, better marketing, local technical education and similar progressive methods, would be a solid step in progress penetrating every class of this honest, loyal, and virile population.

19. TNA: CO 732/88/9, 1 March 1944

Notes on Arab subjects

Chapter VIII: Arab military cooperation

Armies or police?. Opinion is divided as to whether Arab states should have armies at all. The turbulent nature of the populations of these countries, and the general lack of stability of their governments, necessitates the maintenance of large police forces for internal security. Such police forces, moreover, must in any case be para-military, equipped with automatic weapons, armoured cars

and even artillery, because they are liable to be faced with large scale rebellions. In Arabia, rebellion is endemic, and it not always a patriotic revolt against European rule. One of the most powerful rebellions in Arabia in the last 25 years was that against Ibn Saud in Saudi Arabia from 1928–1930. A reduction of European control will not reduce, but may well increase, the number of rebellions in Arabia.

While, however, considerable armed forces will continue to be required for internal security, no Arab country alone can hope to resist invasion by a European power for more than a few days. The population of these countries is too small, and their wealth and manufacturing resources are too limited to enable them to maintain considerable armies with modern equipment.

The danger of Arab armies. When considering our policy towards Arab armies, therefore, we must always bear in mind that these armies are more of a menace to the liberties of their own people than to the enemies of their country.

We have therefore the following powerful arguments against having armies in the Arab states at all:

1. They cannot defend their countries for man than a few days against a European or even a Turkish invasion.
2. They are exceedingly expensive, so much so as seriously to limit productive expenditure on their countries.
3. They probably end up by being used in a political coup d'état to install dictatorship (as happened in Iraq).

The conclusion would therefore appear to be that the Arab counties would do well to give up the idea of having armies, and concentrate on well-armed and efficient gendarmeries. The policy of independence-just-round-the-corner followed for the last 25 years has, however, established the precedent that Arab armies are the outward and visible sign of independence. We shall therefore almost certainly see an Arab army raised in every Arab state, for reasons of amour proper, regardless of whether such armies will be of any value to the countries which maintain them. Our problem therefore is to consider how such armies can play a useful part, or at least be harmless.

The moral aspect. It is difficult to avoid the impression that we are in a vicious circle with the Iraq army. The British do not trust them, doubtless justifiably. The Iraq army perhaps feels itself mistrusted and useless, and its morale suffers accordingly. The Arab Legion has been more fortunate than the Iraq army, and has actually fought on the side of the United Nations. Its reputation is good, and it is serving the Allied cause, even if not actively engaged at present with the enemy. But I have made every effort to get the Arab Legion into action again, not solely in order to help the United Nations, but also to cement the loyalty of the Arab Legion and of Transjordan. For the friendship of Transjordan for Britain will best promoted, not by neglecting the Arabs as being useless allies, but by getting some of them killed fighting with. This would produce a tradition of comradeship which should keep the Arab Legion pro-British for a generation.

Voluntary service of conscription. Conscription is viewed with hatred and fear in every country which formerly was part of the Turkish Empire. Although this horror may have become reduced in recent years, it is certain that 'national' feeling in Arab countries is not yet strong enough to make the nation accept conscription with willingness, far less with alacrity. The conscripts are of low class, lacking in enthusiasm, and desertions are frequent.

Armies may fight for either two reasons:

1) Patriotism, or other form of devotion to a cause. In this case, every man should know and appreciate the cause at stake, and voluntarily devote his energies and, if necessary, his life to ensure success.
2) Professional pride, or esprit de corps. Men indifferent to the political background, may become fine soldiers from long habit and from professional pride.

Arab conscript armies fail to achieve either of these standards. The nation is too ignorant and too politically immature to expect its citizens voluntarily to sacrifice their own interests to serve as conscripts. But the system of conscription means that the men serve only a short time with the colours (and are very badly paid). They fail to acquire any professional pride in their short period of service.

20. TNA: CO 537/1499, c. 1945

A note on the future of the Arab Legion

The increase of the Arab Legion the necessity for which requires consideration is an increase from 2,000 to 4,800, or about 4,700.

British control of the situation in Palestine, therefore, depends largely on our power to prevent Arabs from neighbouring intervening in Palestine disturbances. The role of the Arab Legion will be to prevent this external intervention, which constitutes one of the major complications in the Palestine situation. In brief the Arab Legion plays a vital role in any Palestine disturbances, and the future of the Arab Legion is an integral part of the Palestine problem.

In brief, the Arab Legion is not a plaything of the Amir Abdullah. It is an integral part of the forces available for dealing with the Palestine problem. It is the only force available to prevent the other Arab states sending armed reinforcements to Palestine. It has been said that, for this purpose, a brigade in Transjordan is better than a division in Palestine. In the event of Arab disturbances the statement would probably be true. But a brigade in Transjordan can only be Arab Legion, because British troops could not be used in Transjordan without upsetting the political equilibrium.

Thus the net result of this appreciation is to prove that to consider a grant in aid to the Arab Legion as an expensive subsidy to Transjordan is erroneous. The Arab Legion is employed almost entirely in the furtherance of British policy in Palestine. Money invested in it may well produce a better dividend than if the same sum were expended on raising Imperial Arab troops. It performs services in connection with the Palestine problems which no other troops can perform. If these services are not performed, the resulting expenses incurred in Palestine would probably be far higher than the cost of the Arab Legion.

The Arab Legion today is in a very curious position. It is a British commanded force, the war service of which have been performed almost entirely under the operational command of the British Army, but it is at the same time highly popular amongst Arab nationalists, and the peoples of the Arab countries.

This high reputation amongst all the Arab nationalists, gives the Arab Legion a position of great influence for good or evil all over Arabia – a position which the petty jealousies of monarchs or presidents cannot undermine.

While, however, the maintenance of the Arab Legion is an essential British interest, not a charity to the Amir, it is true that HH is deeply attached to the force. He is also aware that his own influence and prestige in the Arab countries and the world at large, has been greatly enhanced by the high reputation gained by the Arab Legion. Its reduction to its pre-war level would be to him a terrible blow, and would seriously shake his devotion to Great Britain.

3
Glubb, Transjordan and the Palestine Mandate, 1945–1949

Introduction

The post-Second World War era was marked by a significant intensification of relations between the British and Transjordan. A key feature of this process was an increase in the British subsidy for the Arab Legion. Glubb played a central role in pressuring Whitehall to expand its support for the legion, and the British consented because it was in their strategic interests. Although the continuation of Glubb's role of the Arab Legion was raised, the situation in Palestine posed a significant threat to Transjordan. Glubb wrote a series of controversial memoranda in 1946 and 1947 in which he advocated the partition of Palestine, and said that the Arab Legion should occupy the predominantly Arab areas of region. Although he was not alone in advocating such a policy, he adopted a Transjordanian perspective of events in Palestine. During the course of the First Arab-Israeli War in 1948–1949, the Arab Legion occupied the mainly Arab areas of Palestine, but the war proved to be an unprecedented civil-military challenge for Glubb and the Transjordanian Government.

Anglo-Transjordan relations and the expansion of the Arab Legion

In 1946, the British Government belatedly decided to grant Transjordan independence, and a treaty of alliance was signed.[1] In light of events in Palestine and the growing significance of the Cold War, the chiefs of staff emphasised the strategic value of

Transjordan and the importance of the Arab Legion.[2] It was generally assumed that the British Government would continue to fund the Arab Legion in return for access to the country in wartime. Glubb argued in a memorandum written in July 1946 that if the Arab Legion was cut, King Abdullah would be forced to approach the Iraqi Government to pay for the units that the British Government was unwilling to fund. He contended that this would be contrary to British interests because the Iraqis might demand his removal in exchange for an Iraqi commander, and this would undermine cooperation with British forces in Palestine.[3]

Glubb considered his position in Transjordan following the signing of the Anglo-Transjordan treaty in 1946. He adopted a gloomy view of his role in Transjordan, despite the value Whitehall attached to his remaining as commander of the Arab Legion.[4] He was clearly frustrated by his limited role in Transjordan.[5] Glubb suggested in July 1946 that he should leave Transjordan, and predicted that it was 'unlikely that the Transjordanian Government will wish to retain a British officer in command of its armed forces for another 15 years'.[6] His command of the Arab Legion was open to criticism. General Sir Evelyn Barker, the GOC (General Office Commanding) in Palestine and Transjordan, expressed concern about its command, training and administration. He was particularly critical of Glubb, who 'is not a soldier and I don't think understands the organisation and training, or the interior economy of a unit and he is more interested in politics no doubt leaves a deal of the soldiering side to the brigade commander'.[7] Barker's criticism may have been influenced by his lack of staff training, and because he held no formal rank in the British Army. He believed that because the Arab Legion was subsidised by the British exchequer it should have been subjected to half-yearly inspections to ensure its efficiency. James Lunt, who served in the Arab Legion during the 1950s, notes that Glubb had an inferiority complex regarding senior officers because of a dearth of formal military training and operational experience.[8] Glubb's military education ended in about 1920 when he was a subaltern at the Royal Engineers depot in Woolwich.

General Sir Alan Cunningham (high commissioner for Palestine, 1945–1948) and Sir Alec Kirkbride (Britain's minister at Amman, 1946–1951) rejected Glubb's removal because 'his personal knowledge of the personnel of the force and his influence over individual

officers and men would be impossible to replace now . . . any change of command during the transition period from mandatory control to independence would be most inadvisable'.[9] Glubb's retention at Amman was clearly in Britain's interests, and his future was discussed on a number of future occasions, but Whitehall never succeeded in finding a suitable successor.

The Arab Legion's roles included the defence of the oil pipeline that traversed the country, lines of communication and preventing the movement of insurgents across Transjordan to Palestine. In June 1946 the legion numbered 6,633, of which 5,375 were serving in Palestine in place of British troops.[10] The presence of a large proportion of the Arab Legion in Palestine was financially and strategically beneficial to the British. Nonetheless, Sir Alan Cunningham was concerned about the constitutional implications of the legion operating in Palestine at Britain's behest, and the political ramifications of clashes between the legion and the Jews.[11] All the same, units of the Arab Legion remained in Palestine because of the worsening security situation,[12] and the garrison companies were not disbanded.[13]

Glubb penned a series of memoranda during the course of 1947 that advocated the expansion of the Arab Legion to three mechanised infantry brigades plus divisional troops which were supposed to enhance its logistical and technical support.[14] (5) The presence of British forces in Palestine was crucial to Transjordan's independence and economy. Transjordan was secure from invasion, but its lines of communication and trade ran through Palestine. The withdrawal meant that Transjordan would have to defend itself, which reinforced the economic and military importance of the continuation of the subsidy. Glubb was concerned that the subsidy might be reduced because such a large proportion of the Arab Legion served British interests in Palestine, and because the legion was numerically much smaller than most of the neighbouring armies. He believed that Whitehall failed to consider the impact of the withdrawal on Transjordan's future, and that calculations regarding the strength of the legion were based on the continuation of the British presence in Palestine. (6, 7)

Glubb's ideas about expanding the Arab Legion entailed a significant expenditure on additional weapons, vehicles and miscellaneous supplies at British expense. Furthermore, expansion led to a significant increase in the number of British officers serving in the Arab Legion either on secondment from the British Army or on

a contractual basis.[15] More British officers were needed because of a dearth of technically trained Arab officers,[16] but finding suitable candidates was a perennial problem. (16) Notwithstanding Glubb's concerns about the future of Transjordan and the Arab Legion, his proposals to expand the legion were supported by the headquarters of MELF in Egypt, and by the chiefs of staff in London.[17] However, the roles envisaged for the Arab Legion, which included supporting the British Army in wartime, the defence of Transjordan if British forces were unable to intervene and an internal security role, bore very little relation to the war that took place in Palestine in May 1948. (5) This was because the Arab Legion was neither equipped with sufficient heavy weapons, including artillery and munitions, nor numerically strong enough. Furthermore, British and American intelligence estimates about the future situation in Palestine were uncertain regarding the military situation in early 1948.[18]

The Palestine denouement, 1945–1948

The final years of the mandate were a potential threat and opportunity for Transjordan. At the end of the Second World War the Foreign Office remained opposed to partition for political and strategic reasons.[19] In 1946, Glubb wrote two remarkable papers in which he outlined in detail the case for partition, and even more controversially the creation of an Arab state in Palestine, which would be amalgamated with Transjordan under King Abdullah's rule. He believed that the Arab Legion could occupy the Arab areas of Palestine in 24 hours, and that partition offered a definite solution that would benefit the British Government after years of fruitless diplomacy. (3) These proposals amounted to a *coup d'état* that was intended to prevent the mufti and the Palestinian nationalists from dominating a Palestinian state. (2)

Glubb's suspicion of government policy was reinforced by the publication of a report by an Anglo-American commission of inquiry in April 1946 that proposed increased Jewish immigration to Palestine.[20] He argued that the British and US governments had ignored the interests of the Palestinians, and that any attempt to allow Jewish immigration would have significant regional ramifications. (1) In January 1947, Glubb argued that partition depended on the acquiescence of the Transjordanian Government, which was under considerable Arab League pressure to reject partition. (4) There were several other

obstacles to partition, which included the Foreign Office's longstanding opposition to the expansion of King Abdullah's realm. Moreover, Glubb recognised that King Abdullah's widespread unpopularity in the region might force the Transjordanian Government to disavow this policy. The highly regarded Sir Alec Kirkbride was equally vociferous in his support of partition,[21] and by the end of 1947 the Foreign Office reversed its policy.[22]

The Foreign Office changed its mind because of events on the ground, which descended into a campaign of terrorism on the part of extremist Zionists,[23] between the summer of 1945 and the autumn of 1947.[24] Once again the British Government failed to negotiate a solution that culminated in its decision in February 1947 to hand over responsibility for Palestine to the United Nations (UN).[25] The UN established a special committee (the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)) in May 1947 to examine, and make recommendations for, the future of Palestine. This process culminated in an historical vote at the UN on 29 November 1947 in favour of partition.[26]

The UN vote led to the outbreak of a civil war in Palestine, and the British focused on an immaculately planned withdrawal that involved removing a vast quantity of supplies and personnel with a minimal loss of life for British forces.[27] The process of withdrawal had dramatic consequences in Palestine because the army focused on defending its lines of communication and had little interest in intervening in the civil war between Arabs and Jews.[28]

The British Government's unilateral policy marked a major threat for Transjordan, which relied heavily on British forces to protect its integrity, and since most of the country's commerce relied on access to lines of communication through Palestine, and the port at Haifa. (7) Glubb believed that the British withdrawal marked a serious threat to Transjordan, which is why he made strenuous efforts during the year to persuade the British Government to enhance the capability of the Arab Legion. (5) One solution to this threat was for Transjordan to assume responsibility for parts of Palestine, and Glubb continually argued that the country was Britain's only faithful ally in the region. (8)

King Abdullah's objectives in Palestine were common knowledge at the time, which involved Transjordan occupying the predominantly Arab areas of the country. Glubb articulated these views to the director of military intelligence at the War Office in January 1948, and he argued that King Abdullah was well aware of the international

ramifications of such an operation, and that he had no intention of moving over the Jewish frontier.[29] Meanwhile a civil war was raging in Palestine during the final months of the mandate, and the Arab states were deeply divided about how to handle the situation. (8, 9) During the last months of the mandate, between 700,00 and 800,000 Palestinian civilians became refugees[30] and a series of massacres occurred in the country, notably at Deir Yasin in April 1948, which had a far-reaching psychological impact on the Palestinian Arab population.[31] These events also had a dramatic effect in the neighbouring states, including Transjordan, and strenuous efforts were made by Glubb and Kirkbride to prevent the king from being forced to take precipitous action. During the final months of the mandate, Transjordan became increasingly less Lilliputian because the king's numerous regional enemies understood that the Arab Legion would play a major role in the forthcoming interstate war.[32] This meant that Amman became the focus of Arab diplomatic activity, and the king took every opportunity to undermine the mufti's influence in Palestine and in the newly formed Arab League (1945). King Abdullah was absolutely determined to prevent any chance of a Palestinian state being formed under the mufti's leadership, and he was aided and abetted by Glubb and Kirkbride.[33]

The focus of Glubb's reports between January and May 1948 was on the Arab Legion. Nonetheless, he found the time to comment on political events in Palestine, a notable example being a memorandum written on 21 February in which he was characteristically scathing in his views on the mufti and regional leaders. (8) Glubb was equally concerned about the Zionists in Palestine, who were far better organised than the Palestinians, and by the end of April 1948 the Zionist forces had effectively defeated the Arab resistance inside the country. (9)

The Palestinian population was deeply divided in 1948,[34] and it is possible to argue that it had not recovered from the repressive measures that the government had adopted in the late 1930s. The Arab states, including Transjordan, were publicly opposed to partition, but deep divisions within the population prevented a unified military and political response between December 1947 and May 1948.[35] The Zionists exploited these divisions ruthlessly, and their military successes had significant political ramifications. Considerable pressure was exerted on King Abdullah before the end of the mandate to intervene, but this was inconceivable because of effective British

diplomatic pressure.[36] The final months of the mandate were characterised by deep Arab divisions, and the overwhelming desire to thwart King Abdullah at all costs.[37]

Events on the ground in the last weeks of the mandate increased the pressure on the regional leaders, and one American diplomat concluded that the Arab world was verging on mass hysteria, where considerations of prestige and honour 'drove reason from the field'.[38] The massacre at Deir Yassin in April 1948, which resulted in the killing of about a hundred civilians in controversial circumstances,[39] and the fall of Haifa to Jewish forces, increased demands for action, which did not occur. These events led to a refugee crisis of considerable proportions, which particularly affected Transjordan. Prior to the end of the mandate on 14 May, Arab intervention in Palestine was likely, but its precise nature was uncertain because of schisms in the Arab camp. General Sir Alan Cunningham, the last high commissioner for Palestine, believed that, with the exception of Iraq and Transjordan, the Arab states would not invade. He assumed that the Arab armies were incapable of fighting, and that they had no intention of invading Palestine.[40] The Joint Intelligence Committee in London shared this perspective,[41] but nonetheless on 15 May 1948 the neighbouring armies invaded Palestine without making any attempt beforehand to devise a unified operational plan.

Ostensibly the First Arab-Israeli War led to the outcome that Glubb had advocated in 1946: Transjordan's occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank. However, the Palestinian population were understandably wary of the extension of Transjordanian rule since they resented King Abdullah for 'cashing in on partition', and they were concerned about Transjordan's economic viability.[42] Alongside the Palestinians circumspect reaction to falling under King Abdullah's control, the authorities in Amman faced the fundamental problem of how to fund the extension of the state. In August 1948, Glubb commented that the Transjordanian Government was facing the unprecedented challenge of handling the massive influx of refugees, and by October he doubted whether it was in Transjordan's interest to annex the West Bank. (11) He argued that the Arab states were as politically divided as they were militarily, and they were determined to prevent the expansion of Transjordan. (14) Nonetheless, one of the major weaknesses of Glubb's analysis of the situation was that he disregarded economic considerations, and in particular the cost of annexation.[43]

Glubb argued that the Palestinian population was in no position to form a government, and that the future of Palestine would be determined by foreign powers. The Foreign Office clearly recognised that it was in Britain's interests to support Transjordan, and it shared Glubb's analysis that under no circumstances should a Palestinian state be countenanced. The Foreign Office adopted this policy because it was concerned that an independent Palestine would inevitably fall under the mufti's rule.[44] However, in September 1948, the Arab League established a so-called 'all-Palestine' government in Gaza, dominated by the mufti. (13)

Glubb commented that the Gaza government was unpopular partly because the people of Palestine 'do not desire a return to the kind of terrorist regime which the Mufti would probably sponsor'. He also argued that it was unlikely that such a weak regime would last very long against overwhelming Israeli strength. (15) It was also vital that the Arabs should not be allowed to determine the future of the West Bank since he contended that there was no way of quickly ascertaining the wishes of the population. Glubb also argued that it was in the interests of the British Government that Transjordan should 'receive as large an area as possible of Palestine'.[45] King Abdullah refused to acknowledge this regime and effectively undermined its authority in Palestine by delegitimising the mufti's right to rule the Palestinian population. This was achieved by establishing two congresses in Amman and Jericho in the autumn of 1948 that rubber-stamped the king's rule over Arab Palestine.[46] King Abdullah annexed the West Bank in April 1950, but the process of incorporating the Arab parts of Palestine had considerable economic and political consequences during the post-1948 era. Glubb's views about the future of Palestine were significant because he was in a position to affect the future of the area, and he was determined to act in the interests of Transjordan and King Abdullah. Moreover, he assumed that Britain's and Transjordan's interests were coterminous, and that his opposition to a Palestinian state was entirely consistent with his longstanding contempt for the mufti and his regional allies.

The Arab Legion and the First Arab-Israeli War

The First Arab-Israeli War was Glubb's greatest military and political test. Glubb's reputation was established as a result of this war, but his dual loyalty to King Abdullah and British interests in the Middle East

reached breaking point. Following the termination of the Palestine mandate in May 1948, he held no official position in any branch of the British Government or armed forces. Nonetheless, he routinely corresponded with senior officers at the War Office, including the CIGS, the professional head of the British Army, and MELF headquarters in Egypt, which provided him with secret intelligence reports on the Israeli armed forces.[47] Glubb therefore enjoyed remarkable and enduring access to the highest levels of the British Army, which he had resigned from in 1926.

The Arab Legion was much smaller than most of the Arab armies, and according to Glubb it numbered 6,000 men in 1948 and was based on four regiments (battalions) divided into two brigades.[48] However, his summary of the Arab Legion's order of battle in 1948, which is widely accepted, is open to question. According to British intelligence assessments, the Arab Legion numbered between 7,400 and 8,000 men.[49] It is open to debate why Glubb understated the strength of the legion. However, he might have been motivated by the desire to enhance its role by suggesting it was weaker than it actually was.

In 1948, the Arab Legion contained a number of weaknesses. It had no reserves, and very limited logistical support because it relied on British forces in Palestine. Nonetheless, it was regarded by British and American intelligence agencies as the most effective Arab army.[50] In the final months of the mandate, British military authorities in Egypt and Palestine supplied the Arab Legion with a large quantity of equipment, including 62 armoured cars, artillery, mortars and several hundred tons of ammunition.[51]

Transjordan's proximity to Palestine meant that the legion had a disproportionately significant role in the war that broke out on 15 May.[52] Glubb envisaged that the Arab Legion's occupation of the predominantly Arab areas of Palestine would be a police action that would take 24 hours to complete. (11) The Arab Legion's pre-war planning also assumed that it would not fight the Israelis, but these assumptions were significantly wide of the mark, and they call into question why the Arab Legion required significant supplies of munitions if it was going to engage in such a limited operation. During the first week of the war, the Arab Legion occupied Ramallah, Nablus and Latrun, which became the focus of fighting between the legion and Israeli forces. The legion also occupied east Jerusalem for

political reasons, and in spite of the fact that it had no experience of urban warfare nor the manpower or reserves to become involved in a 'slogging match'.[53]

The Israelis, Transjordan's Arab enemies and American officials assumed that Glubb was following secret orders from London,[54] and that the Arab Legion was 'merely a tool of the British'.[55] However, there is no evidence to support these allegations, and the Arab Legion's occupation of Jerusalem shows that the army conducted this operation against Glubb's military judgement.[56] The British Government took various steps during the course of the war to hinder the Arab Legion's operations, which included ordering British officers not to command their units in Palestine at the outset of the war,[57] despite the inevitable impact this had on relations with King Abdullah's government.[58]

More significantly, the Foreign Office was responsible for promulgating a UN arms embargo on 25 May 1948, which prevented the British Government from supplying its Arab allies, including Transjordan, with arms and munitions until the summer of 1949.[59] The Foreign Office's policy was overwhelmingly influenced by its desire to maintain relations with the US Government at all costs, and to prevent the Americans from providing the Israelis with arms. In practice, the Israelis consistently breached the UN embargo and imported large quantities of arms from a variety of sources, such as Czechoslovakia.[60]

The Foreign Office's policy was hugely controversial and had a dramatic impact on Britain's prestige in Transjordan and the Arab states.[61] It clearly showed to King Abdullah that his treaty relations with the British Government were of secondary importance to London compared with relations with the United States,[62] and Britain's commitments to the integrity of the UN Charter.[63] During the war, the Arab Legion made no effort to enter territory awarded to the Jews by the UN in November 1947. The arms embargo had a detrimental impact on the legion's ability to fight the war because it claimed that it lacked sufficient munitions, especially artillery shells, to continue.[64] However, there is evidence that the Arab Legion received a much larger quantity of ammunition from Egypt and British forces in Palestine during the final weeks of the mandate.[65] Nonetheless, the Arab Legion remained critically short of ammunition, and King Abdullah's pleas for support were repeatedly rebuffed by the Foreign Office.[66] (11)

The situation with the British officers, together with the ammunition shortage, placed Glubb in an invidious position because the king did not believe his claims about the shortage of ammunition.[67] Nonetheless, the Arab Legion performed well in fighting against superior Israeli forces in the Latrun area, which was tactically important because it overlooked the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road.[68] Glubb's status, which had hitherto been unchallenged, was undermined by the Israeli occupation of Lydda and Ramleh on 12 July 1948, leading to a mass exodus of refugees.[69] He warned the king and the government that the towns were indefensible because of their location on the coastal plain and their proximity to Jewish settlements. The loss of the towns to superior Israeli forces led to demonstrations and the public vilification of Glubb and the Arab Legion in Nablus and Transjordan.[70] (10) The king and his government accused Glubb of treacherously handing them over to the Israelis. Glubb pondered resigning, (10) which led one Foreign Office official to minute that 'once the Arab Legion ceases to have a British commander it is goodbye to our influence in Transjordan, and perhaps the whole Arab world. The effect of Glubb's dismissal on our prestige in the Middle East would be incalculable.'[71] Sir Alec Kirkbride challenged King Abdullah about the vituperation against Glubb and the British officers,[72] and on 6 August the king publicly expressed his 'satisfaction from and pride of their courage and gallantry'.[73] Nonetheless, Glubb's position with the king was undermined after it was found that Glubb was responsible for spending £1.4 million on the war without authorisation. Sir Alec Kirkbride was consternated by this revelation and argued that Glubb was entirely in the wrong, and that it would be very difficult to defend him.[74]

Notwithstanding these significant constraints on the Arab Legion's operational effectiveness,[75] which had a detrimental impact on Britain's prestige in Transjordan, Glubb argued in August 1948 that the war had become a duel between the Arab Legion and the Israelis. (12) The performance of the Egyptian and Iraqi armies, which were numerically far larger than the Arab Legion, was woeful.[76] Their manifest failings in leadership and logistics provide overwhelming evidence in support of Glubb's criticisms of these armies and the failure of the British military missions.[77] Glubb argued in July and August 1948 that the neighbouring states would welcome the

Arab Legion's defeat because of their opposition to King Abdullah's aspirations in Palestine. (11)

Against all the odds, the Arab Legion was not defeated in 1948. The Israelis did not to take advantage of the legion's weaknesses in manpower and munitions and overrun the West Bank because they were deterred by the possibility that the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty of 1948 would come into effect.[78] The dearth of ammunition meant that the Arab Legion was incapable of undertaking offensive operations and was limited to defending its positions in Palestine.[79] The legion was therefore rendered militarily impotent by the arms embargo, and remained inactive during Israeli operations against Egyptian forces during the autumn of 1948. The Transjordanian Government decided that the Arab Legion would not attack Jewish forces 'under any circumstances'[80] and took steps to exercise stricter control over the legion. Hitherto, Glubb had exercised 'in the nature of a free hand' over the Arab Legion, and Kirkbride argued that such control was a natural process and beneficial because the government would no longer be able to evade responsibility 'in the eyes of the Arab world for the actions of its troops'.[81] These developments marked the beginning of a process whereby the Transjordanian Government sought to exert greater political control over Glubb.

Conclusion

Following the Second World War, Glubb was preoccupied with strategic issues, including the expansion of the Arab Legion and the implications of the British withdrawal from Palestine. He successfully appealed to London to fund an expanded Arab Legion, but the process was not completed by early 1948 and the outbreak of the war in Palestine. The legion's reliance on British support meant that it was vulnerable to the cessation of arms supplies. Hitherto, Glubb clearly assumed that the interests of Britain and Transjordan were coterminous, but the withdrawal from Palestine and the halting of British support during the First Arab-Israeli War showed that this was an erroneous assumption. This was because the government in London had higher priorities that prevailed over supporting Transjordan. The political nature of Glubb's role as commander of the Arab Legion came to the fore during these years. There was clear tension between

his position in Transjordan where he was a servant of King Abdullah, and his relations with the British civil and military authorities in London and the Middle East.

These tensions became clear during the course of the First Arab-Israel War. The Arab Legion was one of the smaller armies, but it played a disproportionately significant role in the war. Significant political differences between the Arab states, and in particular widespread distrust of King Abdullah's ambitions, precluded any meaningful operational planning. The king and his government exerted considerable pressure on Glubb to deploy the Arab Legion, which made little operational sense. A clear example was the Arab Legion's deployment in Jerusalem that was made for reasons of prestige rather than on sound military judgement. Nonetheless, Glubb's conduct during the war was justifiably criticised by the king, his government and the British. His unauthorised expenditure on the Arab Legion placed the Transjordanians in a very difficult financial position, but the personal vilification of Glubb after the fall of the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramle was unjustified. The Transjordanians occupation and subsequent annexation of a significant part of the predominantly Arab areas of Palestine posed a series of unprecedented challenges during Glubb's final years as commander of the Arab Legion.

1. MEC: Glubb Papers, box 211, c. 1946

A note on the report of Anglo-American Commission

A Jewish State of Palestine
If you do it
You'll rue it
An Arab State of Palestine
Hardly a proposition
When you consider the opposition
Federation
What situation
Follows separation
A divorce of course
Partition
To partite and be neighbourly
Is far less labourly
Than putting up with banditry
And blaming the mandatory

The Arabs and Europe

All Arabs today have an inferiority complex vis-à-vis Europeans. Themselves a proud race with an Imperial past of their own, they are resentful of anything implying that they are today an inferior race. They play up generously to an appeal to their virtues, they fall readily to flattery, but they react with surprising violence against contempt. Their touchiness towards Europeans is apt to make them suspect an insult where none is intended. In the political sphere, they work themselves into a frenzy at the idea that the great powers confer together and secede their future without consulting them, as though they were servants or children.

This of course is the difficult side of their character, due partly to their natural pride and partly to the modern propaganda against Imperialism, and the European domination of Asia. If the suspicion that they are being insulted can be overcome, they can be delightful comrades and faithful allies.

With this background, the mere fact of appointing an Anglo-American Commission to decide the future of what they consider an Arab country, without Arab representation on the commission and without consulting the other Arab states, produced a painful atmosphere from the beginning.

Depth of Arab feeling

Although the Commission's report makes a few passing references to Arab intransigence and Arab nationalism, the members to not appear to have formed any adequate estimate of the position likely to be encountered. Moreover they seem to have concentrated far too much on Palestine, and under-estimated the strength of the Arab League. In fact the Arabs of Palestine have handed over the defence of their case to the Arab League, which stands pledged to defend Palestine with all the resources at its disposal. It is therefore essential for Great Britain, before throwing down the gauntlet to the Arab League, to make an exact appreciation of what that body can actually do.

Military resources of the Arab League

The regular armies of the Arab states are not formidable opponents. But the Arab is one of the world's best guerrillas, and his country is one of vast areas and long lines of communications. The

military history of the Arab countries for centuries always follows the same pattern. The invasion of a foreign regular army is scarcely resisted, and the trouble begins only when the country has been occupied. Then every post is sniped, every straggler killed, every convoy on the roads attacked, until the position of the occupying army becomes almost impossible.

Any attempt to introduce Jews in large numbers into Palestine will stir up the most profound passions – not in Palestine but in every Arab country.

2. TNA: WO 216/207, July 1946

A note on partition as a solution of the Palestine problem

Are the Jews mad?

The present mentality of the Jews is compounded of two cultures:

1) The ancient Hebrew tradition.
2) Modern East European culture

An interesting sidelight on the present situation in Palestine is obtained by reading Josephus, now available in cheap English translations. The history shows the Jews full of narrow hate and fanaticism as today.

On top of this ancient stratum of unreasoning Jewish fanaticism, has been super-imposed a layer of up to date Eastern European fanaticism. The characteristics of the Nazi technique have been copied – the theories of race, blood and soil, the terrorism of the gunman, the inculcation of hate into the young, and the youth movements. An officer who lived for some years in Germany before the war remarked to the writer a few days ago how extraordinarily it reminded him of Germany to see the Jewish youths marching singing along the roads of Palestine. A marvellously exact replica of the Germany on the 1930s he remarked.

Before 1914, the Jews were rather connected with liberalism and international cooperation. Perhaps some of the old liberal Jews still survive in Great Britain. In Palestine they have been supplanted by the younger generation of totalitarian Nazi Jews.

Moreover the Fanatics are daily gaining ground and old liberals, all of whom are past middle age, are rapidly fading out.

If then we admit that modern Zionism is compound of ancient Judaism and modern Nazism, we see that both of these cultures committed suicide owing to the narrowness of their fanaticism. There seems to be a considerable probability that this Zionist berserk fury will also commit suicide. But we wish to prevent it from inflicting a perhaps mortal injury on the 'British Empire before it destroys itself.

Partition

Partition alone offers a final solution. The great advantage of partition is that it offers a definite solution. The struggle to enforce it may be severe, but at least when the struggle is over, there is some possibility that the problem will have been solved. This consideration alone is enough to justify partition as against the hopeless situation today.

If we adopted partition, we could be accused of having surrendered to either side. The principal criticism would probably be that the proposal is unworkable. It would be for us to prove the contrary.

The divide and rule argument. Both sides, particularly the Jews have charged His Majesty's Government with deliberately fomenting Arab-Jewish rivalry, in order to have an excuse to maintain a large garrison in Palestine. With the imminent evacuation of Egypt, this argument is thought to have gained in strength.

It is doubtless true that His Majesty's Government are finding increasing difficulty in finding territory in which to station the garrison of the Middle East, but it is submitted that a continuance of Jew-Arab strife does not really afford any guarantee that British troops will be able to remain.

The positive advantages of partition are meanwhile overwhelming:

(a) It offers a permanent solution. As long as Jews and Arabs share a single Palestine, the continuance of the present struggle is inevitable, until one side or other is exterminated. If they be divided into two 'independent' states with 'international'

frontiers guaranteed by UNO,[82] it will be much more difficult for one side or other to commit acts of aggression.

(b) If Britain admits more Jews under the present regime, she incurs the fanatical hatred of the Arabs, and gives Russia a chance to intervene, without satisfying the Jews. If she refuses any more immigration, she incenses the Jews and risks friction with the USA. Partition gives less opening for wholesale charges of betraying one side of the other.

(c) Although the Jews stress the light of Jewish displaced persons in Europe, the policy of the Zionists is rally a race for a majority. This is proved by the fact that they are doing all they can to import Jews from Persia, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and other Eastern countries, where they have never been persecuted.

This race for a majority is carried on regardless of economic considerations. If it results in a slump, unemployment and depression in Palestine, the blame will be placed on the British.

If the Jews had their own state, they would have to take a more practical view of immigration, and import only such persons as could find a livelihood.

In spite of this, however partition might well offer the chance for immigration on a scale which is not practical politics under present conditions.

3. TNA: FO 371/52567/E12254, December 1946

A further note on partition as a solution of the Palestine question

Partition with the creation of a new state in Arab Palestine

Were an independent Arab Palestine state to be formed, there would be no possible means of preventing the Mufti entering it and assuming control, in the capacity of king or president, with the members of the Palestine Arab party as his cabinet. There can be little doubt that a Nazi despotism would result, anyone not approved of by the Mufti being either eliminated or put in a concentration camp.

As against a government of this nature, may be contrasted the ruler and the government of Transjordan. King Abdullah is the

only Arab monarch or statesman who has never wavered, in good times and bad, in his fervent devotion to Great Britain. He was in 1941 almost unique amongst the governments of the world in proclaiming the inevitability of a British victory.

There is also the possibility that the Mufti and his party, instead of taking over the government of the new Arab Palestine, would oppose it, and carry the Arab League with them in irreconcilable opposition. In such circumstances, it is doubtful that His Majesty's Government would be able to enforce it, and after a shorter or longer period of fighting, the scheme would have to be abandoned. We should then be where we are now, except that we should have incurred the implacable hostility of the Arabs, as well as of the Jews, and have exposed ourselves to ridicule for one more ineffective wobble. As opposed to this, the defection of Transjordan to the side of partition would break the solid front of Arab opposition, and would even silence most the criticism, if Transjordan could make quick success of it.

Their extremism is not the only objection to the Palestine Arab party and the formation of an Arab Palestine state. His Majesty's Government have for 28 years, been faced with an impossible task in Palestine, and have inevitably devoted much of their attention to the duty of keeping order. But the result has been that all the senior and responsible posts have been kept for British officials, and the Arabs of Palestine have little or no practice in government. At the head of the administration would the Palestine Arab Party, who are extremist demagogues with no experience of government and who would not have the knowledge of an experienced civil service beneath them.

The implementation of partition will in any case be an extremely delicate and precarious task, but to entrust its execution to a government of fanatical politicians, without the assistance of experienced officials, unsupported by an army and with a hastily improvised police force, would be to court disaster.

Against his may be compared the Transjordan government, staffed by regular civil services for the past 25 years, and supported by a comparatively highly trained and well officered army and police force, with 25 years of service and tradition behind them.

The factors than which weigh against the formation of a new Arab state in Palestine are:

(a) The economic unsoundness of these small countries.
(b) The fact that the Mufti and his party would inevitably establish a Nazi tyranny over the new state, and might well flirt with Russia.
(c) The Mufti and his party might boycott the scheme, and no other party could form an Arab government in Palestine against their opposition. The British government would then be obliged either to solicit the Mufti's cooperation or to abandon yet another 'final solution'.
(d) The immense difficulty which would be experienced in forming an Arab government in Palestine in the middle of the crisis of partition, in view of the fact for 28 years all the senior government posts have been monopolised by British officials, and no Arabs with experience of senior posts exists. This government would be in the hands of a group of fanatical anti-British politicians and would have to create an army from nothing, and improvise a police force from the Arab personnel of the Palestine police.

The experiment would be, to say the least, precarious, whereas it is absolutely essential for Great Britain, after so many damaging failures and reversals of policy, to make absolutely certain of final success this time. Sooner than run the risk of a fiasco, it would be better to try partition but to carry on temporarily at least with a continuance of the mandate.

It is important for Great Britain to retain some space in which troops can train and live in the Middle East. The Haifa base would not be enough. A government led by the Mufti's party would almost certainly refuse bases for British troops, where by incorporating Arab Palestine in Transjordan, it would automatically by covered by the Transjordan treaty.

Advantages of partition and incorporation in Transjordan

The advantages of partition and incorporation in Transjordan are the converse of the disadvantages of partition and the formation of an Arab state in Palestine.

(a) A larger area under one government is economically sounder.
(b) An Arab Palestine state would inevitably be under the rule of the mufti and his extremists, instead of under the unwavering pro-British King Abdullah.
(c) A Mufti-led government would probably demand withdrawal of British troops from Arab Palestine. Incorporation with Transjordan would automatically make the country available for bases and training areas.
(d) The Arabs of Palestine have no experience of government and their state would probably collapse. The Transjordan government has been a going concern for 25 years, with civil services, army and police.

Military control

I have advisedly said that Transjordan will take over law and order in the first 48 hours. It will obviously be impossible completely to take over the administration so quickly, but that is not important. We are concerned with a possible breakdown in law and order only. The Arab Legion would occupy the undoubtedly Arab areas, and the commander of the Arab Legion would immediately receive powers similar to those now wielded by the GOC [general officer commanding] British troops in Palestine. These powers would include command of the police, and the right to try by military courts certain offences against the peace.

4. TNA: FO 371/61858/E940, January 1947

A note on the exact citing of the frontier in the event of the adoption of partition

Refusal of Arab cooperation

The solution envisaged in this note is partition, and the incorporation of the Arab part of Palestine in Transjordan. It is obvious that a scheme of this nature can only be carried out if the Transjordan government is willing to cooperate. Should the solution announced be so unfavourable to the Arabs (in their view) that nine Arabs out of ten would categorically reject it, it is possible that the Transjordan government itself would refuse to cooperate. In this case, the whole proposal would obviously be an ignominious failure from the moment of its announcement. His

Majesty's Government have great influence over the government of Transjordan, and King Abdullah has for 20 years been an unwavering supporter of Great Britain. But it is conceivable that to support the British scheme might him, not only in the hostility of Palestine Arabs, but in internal disturbances in Transjordan itself. In such circumstances, the Transjordan government might well ask to be excused.

Common prudence would seem to dictate that before announcing a scheme in which the cooperation of the Transjordan government was essential, the agreement of that government should be obtained. If this were impossible for reasons of secrecy, the scheme must obviously be such that the cooperation of the Transjordan government was a foregone conclusion.

Failure of the Transjordan government

The second possibility which would have to be envisaged is the acceptance (under protest) of the British proposal by the Transjordan government, but the eventual inability of the Transjordan government to implement them, and its final abandonment of the attempt. In this connection, the following points may be noted:

1) The people of Transjordan sympathise strongly with the Arabs of Palestine. Thus the acceptance by the Transjordan government of cooperation in a scheme which seemed to the Arabs very unfavourable might not only involve the Transjordan government in difficulties in Palestine, but also lose it its popularity at home.

It must also be remembered that King Abdullah has a number of enemies, notably the Syrian government and Ibn Saud. These people will (apart from the indignation against the Jews) be annoyed if partition means an increase in the strength of King Abdullah. They will therefore quite possibly (at any rate the Syrians) urge the people of Palestine and Transjordan to oppose King Abdullah should he agree to cooperate with Great Britain in implanting partition. It is noticeable that the Syrian government professes to His Majesty's Minister in Damascus to the strongly pro-British, but at the same time the chief plank in their propaganda against King Abdullah is that he is subservient to Great Britain.

2) The Transjordan government would have to establish itself in the portion of Palestine handed over to it, with the support of moderate Palestine parties. These parties are now completely overshadowed by the Mufti's party, but they could easily be revived by the support of the government. But if the siting of the frontier is such that all Arabs reject it, it will not be possible to form a moderate Arab party to support partition. No government, whether autocratic or democratic in form, can function, if the whole population is unwilling to cooperate with it. No amount of soldiers, British or Arabs, can enforce partition if a great majority of Arabs refuse to cooperate.

The second possibility is therefore, that the Transjordan government might agree to cooperate, but that the proposals might give rise to a great outburst of Arab nationalism. This outbreak would be supported by other Arab countries, and might paralyse the Transjordan government.

3) Appeals to fanaticism in other Arab countries, and Arab protests before UNO, would be immensely weakened if the moderate Arab parties in Palestine could be persuaded to support the proposals and bodily declare their acceptance. This would almost scotch UNO and Russian intervention.

In brief, therefore, it is absolutely essential that the partition proposals should be able to command a measure of Arab support. Otherwise no power in the world can enforce the scheme. I believe that partition on the lines of the existing frontline could be enforced, but that the surrender of further territory (still Arab) to the Jewish state could not be enforced.

Difference between Jewish and Arab opposition

It is worth noting that Jewish and Arab resistance are of a fundamentally different nature. Jewish resistance draws its principal strength from foreign diplomatic support, and political pressure in Britain and America. Jewish terrorist activity is annoying, but is not a serious military problem.

The Arabs on the other hand have little or no international influence, but are a more serious military threat on the ground because that are not all confined to Palestine where British troops can operate. If the Arabs were to rebel and be hard pressed by British troops,

they could dodge across any of the frontiers of Palestine for a rest, and come back when the pressure was relaxed. Perhaps even more serious would be the possibility of outbreaks of rioting, and attacks on British subjects and installations in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Egypt.

The fact that the Arabs are not indulging in violence just at the minute, should not cause us to forget that an outbreak of Arab violence would be much more serious than Jewish terrorism.

5. TNA: WO 191/82, May 1947

A note on the re-organisation of the Arab Legion

Need for reorganisation into balanced formations

With the cessation of hostilities and the grant of independence to Transjordan, the time has come to consider reorganisation of the Arab Legion. The object would be to form a balanced force which though small, would be able to operate either independently or in cooperation with British forces.

Transjordan need for an army

The Transjordan government categorically reject the thesis that they only require an internal security force. They state that this was so in the mandatory period. Now they are independent, they insist that they need an army.

Possible roles

The Arab Legion might be called upon to play all or any of the following roles: 1) a subsidiary role to the British Army in the event of another World War, 2) an overseas expeditionary force in the event of a small war, 3) independent defence of Transjordan, if Great Britain were fully occupied elsewhere, 4) defence of Transjordan against guerrilla invasion which fell short of war. The present Yugoslav and Albanian action in Greece presents a parallel, 5) internal security, possibly in connection with major disturbances in Palestine.

Role in another world war in the Middle East

Their knowledge of the country and their familiarity with the desert, would probably render the Arab Legion suitable for

employment on the desert flanks of the main armies. European armies operating in Iraq, Syria or Egypt almost inevitably have a flank in the desert. Arab troops can be of great value on such flanks as a covering force, for recce duties, for harassing raids, or for wide tuning movements. In 1941, it was Arab Legion familiarity with the Syrian desert which enabled the British column from Palestine to cross the desert and take Baghdad.

Reorganisation into formations

The most suitable formation would be a division consisting of three brigades and certain divisional troops.

The Arab Legion is designed to fight in intimate cooperation with the British Army. Britain is bound by treaty to train the Arab Legion, and supply instructors and up to date equipment. Without standard British equipment, it is impossible to ensure the supply of ammunition and spares in the field. For all these reasons, the war establishments of Arab Legion formations and units should be made as similar as possible to those of the British Army.

Command

To raise a complete division on mobilisation is at present beyond Transjordan's resources. Even if she could do so the division could not initially operate as a single formation, as such a course would leave no troops at all to garrison Transjordan.

The immediate objective is therefore to provide one or two brigades at the commencement of hostilities.

Moral reasons

In 1941, the Arab Legion fought with the British Army against the Iraq army which had declared war on Great Britain. The present rulers of Syria were also in league with the Germans. Great Britain at one stage of the war asked Ibn Saud to declare war on Germany but he refused. The present situation in Egypt is notorious.

In these circumstances the Arab Legion see themselves as the only Arab army which has shown itself true allies of Great Britain in peace and war. They, therefore, expect to receive special consideration, and the other Arab states regard such a course as natural. The Arab states, however, watch one another closely and jealously.

If the Iraqi and Saudi armies receive weapons which are not given to the Transjordan army, the deduction which they all make is that to be loyal to the British connection does not pay.

6. MEC: Glubb Papers, box 215, c. 1947

A note on the position of Transjordan and the Arab Legion in the event of the withdrawal of Great Britain from Palestine

Hitherto consideration of the future of Transjordan and calculations of the possible strength of the Arab Legion in peacetime, have been based on the continued presence of British forces in Palestine. The possibility of the complete withdrawal of Great Britain both from Palestine and Egypt, cannot fail entirely to revolutionise the situation in Transjordan, both politically and militarily. It is essential for us to consider the new situation which may arise in the next few months, should reference to the UNO result in a British withdrawal from Palestine.

Effect of British support

Amid the fervid oratory of the wilder Egyptian and Syrian politicians, the influence of Transjordan in the Arab League and throughout the Arab world has always been for moderation and common sense. Particularly has Transjordan been uniformly pro-British. She has frequently incurred the resentment of the Syrian and Egyptian politicians by pointing out the illogical nature of their attitude and the inaccuracy of their statements.

The military aspect

For the moment the Arab Legion is believed to be 'the most powerful Army in Arabia'. This reputation has been gained by the obviously greater efficiency of the Arab Legion, as compared with other Arab armies. It is also apparently being intentionally fomented by the Syrians, the communists and probably by directives from Russia. All these people are running a propaganda campaign to discredit King Abdullah as a tool of British imperialist aggression.

Even the British seem to be taken in by this propaganda. A senior British army officer recently said to me 'Transjordan has an enormous army for so small a country'. Actually Transjordan has 5,700

men in military units, out of a probable population of 450,000. It is scarcely accurate to say that Transjordan has a vast army compared to its population.

The downfall of Transjordan

The theory that Transjordan is threatening to invade her neighbours is propaganda. Apart from Great Britain, Transjordan would be at the mercy of her neighbours. Egypt and Syria are incensed against Transjordan to a considerable extent owing to Transjordan's unwavering support of Britain. Saudi Arabia is hostile for parochial and dynastic reasons. Even as between these two, however, Transjordan is closer and more loyal to Britain than is Saudi Arabia.

It may be argued that Transjordan must look for her safety to her treaty with Great Britain, or even the UNO, both of whom would come to her rescues in war. Recent years, however, have taught us a great deal about how to destroy another country without war. It is interesting to hear that the Syrian Communist Party have orders to discredit King Abdullah and enounce him as a British agent. He is to be represented as a tool of British imperialism. It is not difficult to guess from whom the Syrian Communist Party received this directive.

The method which would be adopted to overthrow Transjordan if the British forces were to evacuate Egypt and Palestine would take the form of guerrilla inroads, and subsidies for internal rebels in Transjordan. This would be combined with intense radio and newspaper campaigns denouncing King Abdullah as reactionary, fascist, and all the clichés to which Moscow has accustomed us. In all these activities, Russia is already taking part. She is pressing for the withdrawal of British troops from Palestine in order to weaken Britain's position in the Arab countries. One of Russia's first steps would be an attempt to overthrow Transjordan the tool of British imperialism.

The Syria and Saudi armies would not march into Transjordan after a declaration of war. They would be infiltrated into the country in civilian clothes, but with the weapons of their armies. At the same time, the active press propaganda would be carried on, to represent the situation as an internal rebellion due to the mis-government

of King Abdullah. Transjordan could not long survive these tactics, which however would be so disguise as not to constitute open war, involving the intervention of UNO or Great Britain.

7. TNA: FO 371/68818/E2012, December 1947

A note on the effect of the Palestine situation on the future of Transjordan

The isolation of Transjordan.

From 1920 to 1945 two factors kept Transjordan alive and reasonably prosperous:

(a) An annual grant-in-aid from Britain.
(b) The fact that Britain was in occupation of Palestine and therefore that the ports, railways, and other facilities of Palestine were available to Transjordan, as though they were one country.

The British evacuation of Palestine

In this situation, the Transjordan government was suddenly taken aback by the announcement of the intended British withdrawal from Palestine. To the world at large, this decision seemed to affect the people of Palestine. In Amman it seemed seriously to threaten the future of Transjordan. This was for two reasons:

(a) Although Transjordan was independent, the presence of the British Army in Palestine and the existence of a treaty of alliance, virtually rendered Transjordan secure from invasion. The departure of Great Britain from Palestine and possibly also from Egypt, meant that Transjordan would really have to defend herself, although here revenues did not allow her to pay for the Arab Legion.

The UNSCOP report, moreover, envisaged the doubling of the number of Transjordan's enemies. She had previously been unfriendly with Syria and Saudi Arabia. Now a Jewish state was to be added on the west, and possibly also an Arab Palestine state, under the Mufti who would also be hostile to King Abdullah.

(b) Transjordan is by nature, the hinterland of Palestine. With slightly unnatural distortion, she might be made to join Syria

as the hinterland of Lebanon. But with Palestine and Syria unfriendly, Transjordan would be in an awkward predicament. All her commerce, imports, exports – her very lifeblood, must come in through Haifa, or Beirut, over roads and railways controlled by the Jewish and Arab states in Palestine, or the Lebanon and Syria to the north. Transjordan has no port except Aqaba where no commercial vessels call, the land communication of which are bad, and which is the wrong side of the Suez Canal for trade with Europe and America. To King Abdullah and the Transjordan government, Mr Creech Jones' statement at Lake Success was first of all a blow to the security and independence of Transjordan.

Maintenance of the Arab Legion

There was also once more the doubt whether Britain would continue to pay for the Arab Legion. This was now more vital than before, for two reasons:

(a) Because Transjordan would now really have to defend herself against her neighbours.
(b) Because the money contributed by Britain for the Arab Legion had become vital to the economy of Transjordan. Any sharp reduction in the earnings for the solders, combined with possible commercial difficulties resulting from the loss of part and railway facilities on the Mediterranean, might seriously threaten her financial stability.

The dangers threatening Transjordan

In brief, Transjordan is scarcely large enough or rich enough to stand alone in her present situation. If she is to continue to exist, she can only do so by receiving substantial aid from Britain.

Transjordan request

Briefly, Transjordan is asking for the continuance of the Arab Legion at its present size, after the British evacuation of Palestine. She considers this necessary for two reasons:

(a) directly enable her to defend herself.
(b) Indirectly as a concealed subsidy, without which he economy would break down.

Probable action by Transjordan

Should Great Britain refuse to continue to subsidise the Arab Legion at its present approximate strength, the Transjordan government may possibly not passively await events. Sooner than run the risk of being partitioned by the Jews, Syria, and Ibn Saud, Transjordan might approach Iraq for a subsidy.

The ideal solution

The one and only ideal solution for Great Britain and Transjordan would be the annexation of the southern Arab part of Palestine to Transjordan without Iraq intervention.

For Transjordan and King Abdullah this would mean the creation of a state which would have some hope of permanent stability. For the Palestine Arabs, it would mean independence under an Arab government of their own, with the capital in their midst whether in Amman, or Nablus. The alternative for them would be to be a 'colony' of Cairo or Baghdad.

To Britain, it would mean that the privileges secured under the Anglo-Transjordan treaty would be extended to half Palestine. Britain would thus be able to keep her troops in Palestine after all, and would have got rid of the Jewish-Arab problem without sacrificing any of her strategic advantages in the Middle East.

Role of the Arab Legion

The only tool for securing this solution, so ideal for Great Britain and Transjordan alike, would appear to be the Arab Legion. Yet ironically enough, His Majesty's Government have hitherto announced that the Arab Legion will be drastically reduced when Britain leaves Palestine. This would mean that the Arab Legion would be incapacitated from action just at the very moment when it might ensure the final solution of the Palestine problem without any sacrifice of the interests of either Britain or Transjordan.

In this connection it may be pointed out that if Transjordan succeeded in absorbing southern Arab Palestine, it might be able to pay for a much larger share of the Arab Legion after a couple of years.

His Majesty's Government seem to be faced with three alternatives:

(a) To reduce the Arab Legion subsidy immediately on the evacuation of Palestine. This might result in the extinction of Transjordan as it exists today and the loss of the British interests secured under the treaty.
(b) To pay the subsidy asked for by Transjordan, and ensure the country's stability.
(c) To pay the subsidy asked for by Transjordan now. If Transjordan succeeded in incorporating southern Palestine, the subsidy might be substantially reduced after two years.

Moral repercussions

The moral repercussions likely to follow a change or deterioration in the status of Transjordan would further intensify the material results. For Transjordan has become notorious, not only in the Middle East but far beyond, as the embodiment of faithful devotion to Britain. If Transjordan were to be allowed to disappear from the map, and be absorbed by Syria, Saudi Arabia and a Mufti-led Palestine, the effect would be incalculable. For all the Arabs areas extremely conscious of the fact that Syria is a shameless turncoat (although saved by Britain from France), that Saudi Arabia has never taken risks by doing anything for Britain, and the Mufti is Britain's bitter enemy and spent the war in Berlin. Morally the disappearance of Transjordan might not be immediately apparent. But I am certain, that it would produce a profound impression all over the East – an impression which it would take a generation to efface. The conclusion everywhere would be that to be a loyal friend of Britain is suicidal, for she abandons her friends and makes concessions to those who threaten and oppose her. The ultimate result of the general diffusion of such opinion cannot be assessed.

Importance of the future of Transjordan

In conclusion, therefore, I venture to suggest that the stability of Transjordan is a matter of considerable importance to His Majesty's Government. If the Transjordan government claim that a certain subsidy is necessary to enable their country to survive,

I submit that their opinion should be given to serious considerations before it is rejected. If Transjordan could be united with the Arab portion of Palestine, she would become more stable, require less financial assistance in the future, and provide a better base for Great Britain in the Middle East. The feasibility of this solution depends on the maintenance of the Arab Legion at its maximum efficiency for the next two years.

8. MEC: Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 90, 22 February 1948

Glubb to Crocker (C-in-C [commander-in-chief] MELF)

A note on the situation in Arab Palestine on 21st February 1948

Politicians and patriots

While the Arab peoples are more or less deeply stirred by the approaching crisis in Palestine, the majority of Arab rulers and politicians are more concerned with the profit they can derive from the situation, that with the interests of the Arab race as a whole.

There are at the present moment the rival Arab groups, each hoping to derive profit from the Palestine situation. These three groups are:

1. The Mufti and his party.
2. Shukri al Kuwatli, Jamil Mardam, and the present Syria government.
3. King Abdullah and the Transjordan government.

The Arab peoples are to some extent aware of the rivalries and jealousies dividing their leaders, but do not at present know how to overcome them. Their leaders however are losing their respect by their intrigues, and there is just a possibility that popular dissatisfaction may later on express itself more openly.

The Mufti's party

Dissatisfaction with the Mufti and his party has been increasing in Palestine for the past six months. The educated classes are beginning to realise that it is his negative policy of refusing every

solution without doing anything constructive, which has brought the Arabs of Palestine to their present pass.

The Mufti's methods are indeed too akin to gangsterism to suit the educated and prosperous classes.

The Syrian government and the Arab Legion

It is well known that the Arab League is divided against itself. There is no great love lost between Iraq on the one hand, and Syria and Saudi Arabia on the other. The deepest rifts, however, are those which divides King Abdullah from Ibn Saud owing to Hashemite-Saudi dynastic rivalry, and King Abdullah from Syria owing to the Greater Syria project.

Whereas King Abdullah has a better army than Syria, his devotion to the cause of Arab nationalism has at times been called in question. The Syrian government, on the other hand, has no army worth mentioning, but has been at pains to adopt an attitude of extreme nationalism and xenophobia on very possible occasion.

King Abdullah and Transjordan

The considerations in favour of King Abdullah and Transjordan are as follows:

1) His territorial proximity to Palestine, which would render the union of Palestine and Transjordan natural.
2) The high reputation enjoyed by the Arab Legion in Palestine
3) The general impression that the Transjordan administration is more honest and efficient than that of Syria.

Other factors, however, act against King Abdullah. The principal weakness of his case is his reputed luke-warmness towards Arab nationalism, and his long history of cooperation with Great Britain, sometimes against the other Arab states. His enemies make great play with the theme of the King's 'subservience to British imperialism'.

Transjordan labours under a second disadvantage, namely His Majesty's loquacity. He has more than once dropped a remark before strangers to the effect that partition may prove to be best solution. His enemies seize gleefully upon such indiscretions and

splash headlines appear in the Syrian and Egyptian press to the effect that King Abdullah has betrayed the Arabs cause to the Jews.

Influence of the Arab Legion

According to the present programme, units of the Arab Legion released from their duties in the Jewish areas, return directly to Transjordan, thereby leaving the League army in undisputed possession of the Arab areas until 15th May. In order to justify the re-entry of the Arab Legion into Palestine on 15th May, some invitation to them from the people of Palestine would be desirable. Thus if the Arab Legion units evacuate Palestine according to the present programme, the chance that they will return later on, will be greatly reduced.

9. MEC: Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 83, 24 April 1948

Glubb to Crocker

It seems that partition may well be completely implemented before 15th May.

The Jews have shown themselves extremely efficient, and they obviously had the whole programme worked out long ago. Every detail of these moves has obviously been prepared and rehearsed to the last detail. Their action has been typical of the best 'police state' methods – the city coup d'état – seizing prominent buildings, clearing the houses block by block, calculated massacres of women and children deliberate propaganda and so on.

Against this, the Arabs are proving helpless. They have NO organisation at all, no ammunition supply, a mixture of rusty rifles of a dozen different makes without ammunition and no plan. On many occasions, the local Arab villagers with their rusty rifles have attacked convoys of Jewish armoured cars with considerable bravery, but when the battle is over, they go home to their families. Such methods are easy meat for the calculated brutality and methodical terrorism of the 'police state'.

The result is that Arab resistance inside Palestine is almost at an end already. The Arab states have talked a lot, but have really done extremely little, and seem unlikely to do much more.

It is rather sad in a way to see the Arabs make such assess of themselves, because real Arabs are good men, but unfortunately their governments consist almost entirely of Levantine lawyers. These people, led by Egypt, have got accustomed to winning national victories over Great Britain, by making speeches, shouting down UNO, and organising student demonstrations. When faced with serious opposition, they collapse. In fact they never envisaged any form of action beyond making speeches, shouting threats, and organising riots.

The Transjordan government is not prepared to embark on a war with the Jewish state all alone. Actually when we analyse the Jewish successes, we see that they have been gained almost exclusively against the civilian population, chiefly women and children. When they have clashed with the Arab Legion, their tactical performance has not been impressive.

Moreover our re-invasion of Palestine would be something in the nature of 'aggression' also and might incur the opposition of UNO. It is not as though we were defending Transjordan against a Jewish attack. On the whole, therefore, I think that the Transjordan government would not be justified in re-invading Palestine against Jewish resistance, if all other Arab resistance were already at an end.

One of our troubles is, of course, that we by no means enjoy the support of all the Arabs. Syria, Egypt and Ibn Saud would be jealous of Transjordan action in Palestine. If we got into trouble in a war with the Jews, these other Arab states might seize the chance to attack us! What a frightful lot of cads there are about (on both sides!).

10. MEC: Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 83, 1 August 1948

Glubb to Pyman

My personal position in Amman is still very unsatisfactory. The King and the Prime Minister continue to ask me in private to resign, but they do nothing publicly to express their satisfaction with my services, or to exonerate me from the charge of having treacherously handed over Lydda and Ramle to the Jews. In other

words, they seem to wish to continue to take advantage of my services and those of the other British officers, but they are not loth to see the blame for all reverses laid on me and the British officers alone.

Transjordan has many enemies, whose interests combine to destroy her, namely:

1) The Mufti's party is staging a comeback.
2) The extremist party in the Arab League, Azzam Pasha, and the Syrian and Iraqi Prime Minister's. These people can never forgive Transjordan for making a treaty with Britain. To bring about her downfall would be a good warning to other Arab governments who might think of making treaties. Syria can also of course never forgive King Abdullah for the Greater Syria scheme.
3) Russian agents are for the first time active in Amman.

These various factors give me a personal inclination to hand a written resignation to the Transjordan government. Presumably one of two things would result:

1) It would be accepted and I should walk out. Inevitably an Arab officer would succeed me. Probably all the other British officers would then resign. The Arab Legion as a military force would almost if not quite collapse. In the end Transjordan herself might disappear, and be annexed by Syria or Saudi Arabia. This would certainly happen if His Majesty's Government refused any longer to pay the £2 million. But would she pay £2 million to maintain a force with no British officers?
2) If the Transjordan government refused to accept my resignation, I would thereby be exonerated from the charges of treachery now circulating, and my position would be much stronger.

If I submit my resignation, there is the risk of it being accepted as in (1) above. I do not know whether His Majesty's Government consider the maintenance of the present relations between Britain and Transjordan to be an important British interest. I cannot decide what personal action to take until I know this, because my resignation might result in changing these relations.

I have, therefore, asked the legation to cable His Majesty's Government, and ask them to what extent they consider this an imperial interest. If it is such, I think they should give me a clear directive, in which case I will of course carry on, whatever personal unpleasantness and humiliation may result.

If on the other hand, His Majesty's Government say that they are indifferent, and the matter is merely a personal one for myself, then I can with clear conscience take what action is necessary to defend myself from libellous propaganda.

The reason why I have written all this to you at such length is because Anglo-Transjordan relations are largely a matter of strategy.

11. MEC: Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 83, 12 August 1948

The Transjordan situation

Today 12 August 1948, the Arab Legion is in intimate contact with the Jewish Army on a front of forty miles. The truce is extremely precarious, and frequent shootings are going on. The Arab Legion is without ammunition except for small arms.

The Transjordan government is overdrawn on the British subsidy to the extent of about £1,500,000. The British government has suspended payment in view of this overdraft, and the Transjordan government may consequently be unable to pay the Arab Legion at the end of August.

Transjordan is supporting about 200,000 Palestinian refugees, of whom 150,000 are destitute and are only being kept alive by a daily dole of bread by the Transjordan government. This dole is just enough to keep them alive but they and the whole country are threatened with disastrous epidemics of typhoid (which has already begun), cholera, or typhus.

In the capital, Amman, the number of Palestine refugees exceeds the native inhabitants of the city. This refugee element is seething with discontent, and contains many communists, Jewish and other spies and agents' provocateurs.

The more extreme members of the Arab League, particularly Syria and Iraq, aided and abetted by Azzam Pasha, are straining every nerve in propaganda against Transjordan, in the hope of destroying her once and for all, and dividing her territory.

It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the continued existence of Transjordan is in the balance. Before suggesting what action should be taken to overcome this crisis, a short narrative is necessary to show how this situation arose.

The plan of campaign

The original Transjordan plan was based on the supposition that, at the end of the British Mandate, the Jews would proclaim a Jewish state within the boundaries laid down by the UNO partition scheme. The Arab areas of Palestine would remain vacant, except possibility for bands of irregular's. The Arab Legion would march in and occupy these areas, pending a decision on their final disposal. There would be no conflict between the Arab Legion and the Jewish forces. The proposed occupation was to be no more than a police operation. The British government were aware of this plan.

The Jerusalem crisis

The Transjordan plan for occupying the range of hills from Hebron to Nablus assumed that Jerusalem city was to be an international area under UNO and would not be the scene of fighting.

UNO however took no steps to take control of Jerusalem when the mandate ended. The British High Commissioner arranged a truce in Jerusalem a fortnight before the British evacuation and a truce commission consisting of American, Belgian and French consuls general endeavoured to prolong the truce after the end of the mandate. Terms for the continuation of the truce were actively agreed to by both the Jews and Arabs on the morning of 15th May, but five hours later, the Jews broke to truce ad attacked the Arab quarters of Jerusalem. The Transjordan government had been informed by Arab Legion headquarters than the plan for the occupation of Hebron to Nablus range depended on truce Jerusalem. If fighting were to take place in Jerusalem, the whole Arab Legion would be needed in the city and the rural areas could not be

occupied. As result the Transjordan government made every effort for 48 hours to save the Jerusalem truce. During this period, the Jews were rapidly conquering the whole of the Arab quarters of Jerusalem. By the evening of 17th May, it was obvious that the Jews would complete the occupation of the whole of Jerusalem, both new and old, within a few hours.

As a result, the Arab Legion entered Jerusalem at dawn on the 18th May, and after several days of very heavy fighting, succeeded in saving the old city and a small portion of the new city.

It should be noted that, had the Jews been allowed to occupy the whole city, they could have driven down the main road to Jericho and Allenby Bridge and cut off the whole Arab Legion from Transjordan. Intervention in Jerusalem was therefore forced upon Transjordan for military reasons.

The Jerusalem battle left the Arab Legion in an unfortunate military situation. The force, which consisted of less than 6000 all ranks, was spread over 6000 square kilometres of a country in preparation for a police operation, which it suddenly found itself committed to a battle of the intensity of European warfare.

The Arab Legion put nearly half of its strength into Jerusalem, the Jewish population of which has been estimated to be 110,000 with some 15,000 Jews of military age.

It was feared that the Jews would strengthen their forces in Jerusalem by sending up troops and weapons from Tel Aviv. As a result, the remaining three battalions of the Arab Legion were placed west of Jerusalem, to block the road to Tel Aviv. This force was also immediately engaged by Jewish forces from the coastal plain endeavouring the relieve Jerusalem. The situation foreseen therefore actually occurred – the whole Arab Legion was engaged in the Jerusalem operations.

Meanwhile the operations of the other Arab armies were obviously ineffective. The Iraqi, Syrian and Lebanese armies had scarcely succeeded in crossing the Palestine frontier. The Egyptian army caused the Jews some anxiety at first, but after 15 days of operations, the Egyptians took up a static position north of Majdel on the coast and it became increasingly obvious that they had no

intention of advancing any further. As a result, the real struggle of the war became more and more a dual for the possession of Jerusalem, between the Arab Legion and the Jewish forces.

Ammunition shortages

The Arab Legion had only received 25 pounders in February. With the guns, they were given only 1st and 2nd line ammunition – enough for a few days.

The Arab Legion began the campaign in Palestine with 1st and 2nd line ammunition for all weapons – which approximates to ten days supply for such operations. A further months' supply was obtained for weapons other than 25 pounders. As a result, a total of 40 days' supply was received for weapons other than artillery, and a total of 10 days' supply for artillery.

Position of the Arab Legion

The fact that the Arab Legion alone had done any serious fighting, and that it had single-handed saved the city of Jerusalem, could not be concealed from the public, in spite of the grandiloquent communiqués of the other Arab armies. In every Arab country, the Arab Legion had achieved a halo of glory. King Abdullah made a grand tour of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq on the strength of it.

The first month of fighting in Palestine has shown that this tiny country had done more than any other to support the Arab cause. The Arab Legion fought more than the Egyptian army, although Egypt is 36 times bigger than Transjordan in population and revenue. It had done far more than the Iraqi army, although Iraq is nearly ten times as large as Transjordan. The Syria army had done virtually nothing, although Syria was eight times as strong as Transjordan.

The Arab Legion fought for 40 days on 10 days 25 pounder ammunition. In the case of all other arms, however, the total amount received from the British army had been 1st and 2nd line plus one month's contact. This amounted to enough ammunition for about 45 days of fighting, of which the force did 40 days. As a result, the present stocks of ammunition for all arms (except .303) are about five days.

Financial situation

Before hostilities began, the Arab League had collected several million pounds in a central fund. At the end of the British mandate, Azzam Pasha asked the Transjordan Prime Minister to incur any necessary additional expenditure up to £500,000. Of this sum £200,000 was paid, but a promise was given for a further £500,000 – this is for a total of £700,000. At the end, however, Azzam Pasha suddenly refused to pay, on the grounds that Transjordan had betrayed the Arab cause by her subservience to Great Britain. Transjordan as a result is £500,000 in debt owing in liabilities incurred on the security of the promise from the Arab League.

12. TNA: FO 371/68822/E11049/G, 19 August 1948

Note by Glubb Pasha

Israel and Transjordan

The struggle in Palestine for the last two months has become little more than a duel between Israel and Transjordan. The other members of the League refuse to allow Transjordan to make peace, but they do none of the fighting. The fact several of the members of the League would like to see Transjordan destroyed. Egypt, Iraqi and Syria will never forgive Transjordan for making a treaty with Britain last February.

It is ironical, that Transjordan is denounced by Jews and Arabs alike, because she is an ally of Britain. The effect on British prestige would be disastrous, if fighting were to recommence in Palestine and as a result, Transjordan were to collapse. Britain's only friend in the Middle East would be the first to disappear.

The Arab Legion has no ammunition except 303.[83] Actually, however, the matter has gone beyond the ammunition question. Transjordan has not sufficient resources to take on the Jewish state single-handed, with the other Arab states looking on. To take one example alone – Israel now has some five squadrons of aircraft. Amman is only one hour's flying from Tel Aviv and Transjordan has no aircraft and virtually no anti-aircraft defence. The Jews could destroy Amman in a couple of days.

13. MEC: Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 83, 25 September 1948

Glubb to E. Chapman Walker

The internal jealousies of the Arabs have become much more active, as the moment approaches to divide up the Arab areas. You know how unpopular Transjordan is amongst the other Arab countries. Syria and Lebanon hate and fear King Abdullah because they think he wants to rule over Greater Syria. Ibn Saud is jealous for dynastic reasons. Egypt and Iraq rejected treaties with His Majesty's Government last winter and asked Transjordan to do the same but she signed in spite of them. King Abdullah is also unpopular because he is a realist, and makes statements regarding the advantages of British help to weak states, which are not at all popular with the others.

As a result of all these reasons, all the other Arab countries are determined to prevent Transjordan from getting anything out of it. Azzam Pasha, the Mufti and Syria would sooner see the Jews have the whole of Palestine rather than let King Abdullah get anything.

Now the other Arab governments have a formed a puppet Mufti government in Gaza, which has proclaimed itself the sole government of Palestine.

In practice the Mufti has few strong supporters left in Palestine, but the assistance firstly of Egypt and secondly of the other Arab states, makes him formidable. The people of Palestine are half starving; Egypt has plenty of money and Transjordan absolutely none.

If we assume that it is a British interest for Transjordan to secure the maximum area of Palestine, then this Egypto-Mufti racket is a direct attack on British interests.

14. MEC: Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 83, 3 October 1948

Glubb to Pyman

It is possible that it might be just as well for Transjordan not to try and annex Palestine. The fact is that the Arab areas of

Palestine have a population greater than of Transjordan. Thus in a sense, though Abdullah might be King, it would really be Palestine annexing Transjordan. His Majesty's Government wanted (I gather) Transjordan to get as much of Palestine as possible and also a port on the Mediterranean.

But the Palestinians are a very different race to the Transjordanians – they are more Levantines than Arabs – poor fighters but clever intriguers and lawyers. They are also not very pro-British! If the clever Palestinians were in a majority in the new government, they might soon get control and the policy of the country (in spite of the King) become more like that of Egypt and Syria, than that of the old Transjordan. It is, therefore, a question whether it would not in the long run be better for His Majesty's Government to have the old Transjordan in the old friendly spirit (if this can be recovered), rather than a Transjordan twice the size but possibly hostile.

In this case, however, we shall have to realise that Transjordan is not an economical unit and will be entirely surrounded by enemies with no outlet to the world except Aqaba. If left alone, surrounded by hostile Syria, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Mufti – she will collapse. If Britain wishes to retain Transjordan as a strategic base, she will have to keep her alive by artificial means.

Meanwhile our most immediate concern is the safety of the Arab Legion in Palestine, where ammunition is running low, the Jews are skirmishing in front and the Mufti's army is training behind us and the Iraqis are on our flank. The whole thing is more like 'Alice in Wonderland' (or Dante's Inferno) than real life!

15. TNA: FO 371/68642/E13240, 5 October 1948

Transjordan and Palestine

The Arab set up

The principal difficulty in assessing the Arab set-up is the complete absence of confidence of these states in one another. Thus no Arab state today really knows what the others are trying to do. Transjordan least of all is in the confidence of the others.

The Palestinians

As far as can be judged today, the Gaza government is not by any means popular in Palestine. It is opposed for three reasons. Firstly because the moment is considered inopportune. The members of the Gaza government are said to have caused split in Arab solidarity for personal motives. Secondly the people of Palestine do not desire a return to the kind of terrorist regime which the Mufti would probably sponsor. Thirdly it is pointed out that the Gaza government without an army or resources is unlikely to be able to long resist Jewish encroachment.

As against this, however, must be set the fact that the Palestinians are very war-weary. They want to go home and lead their normal lives, under no matter what government. If therefore the Mufti seemed likely to have the power to form the government, the people would accept him with resignation.

In addition to being war-weary, the Palestinians are desperately poor and many are starving. If the Mufti had really large sums of money to spend, he might become really dangerous. Presumably such sums could only come from Egypt. In brief, the Mufti seems unlikely to be a really dangerous rival to Transjordan unless Egypt is prepared to support him strongly.

Transjordan

The principal factor in the present situation is the Arab Legion, which alone of the Arab armies is still actually in action against the Jews, owing to the half-truce in Jerusalem.

In the districts of Jerusalem and Ramallah, the Arab Legion is strong and quite popular. There is at any rate no popular enthusiasm for the Gaza government. The Transjordan government proposed to disband any armed forces raised by the Mufti.

16. TNA: FO 816/152, 22 June 1949

Glubb to the Adjutant General (War Office)

The selection of British officers for the Arab Legion has not, during the past three years, been entirely satisfactory. During the war, 1939–1945, the Legion could not expect to receive the best officers

of the British Army, but the situation is now quite different after three years peace. At least six officers have proved unsuitable and have done no credit either to the Arab Legion of the British Army, which they represent.

All British officers in the Legion hold appointments which require the highest military qualifications or technical ability. On their efficiency depends the general efficiency and functioning of the Legion. There are only a few (approximately 40) and they are the cynosure of every eye. In comparison with Arab officers they are highly paid. They must therefore be experts at their jobs and above reproach, to justify their appointments and to avoid criticism which is damaging to the Legion and to British prestige. They should be selected most carefully and undergo a longer period of probation (the present one is three months) before their appointment is confirmed.

It is considered that this procedure would ensure, as far as possible, that misfits do not come to the Legion. The conditions in Jordania are different from these in the British Army and an officer may well be efficient yet unsuitable through temperamental incompatibility or some other cause outside his control. For example, officers who have served with Indian or Colonial troops may not be suitable for employment with Arab troops as the conditions which obtain here differ greatly from these in India and the Colonies.

4
Imperial Twilight: Glubb and Jordan, 1950–1956

Introduction

Glubb's final years in Jordan were characterised by several political and military challenges. It is possible to argue that by 1950 he had spent too long in the country, but the Foreign Office failed to find a suitable replacement. Be that as it may, Glubb was forced to deal with the implications of the First Arab-Israeli War, which included the massive influx of destitute refugees. Glubb's predictions about the likely impact of the Jordanian annexation of the Arab parts of mandatory Palestine were proven to be accurate. The Israeli tendency to launch operations against Palestinian villages on the West Bank was a serious political and military problem because the Jordanian Government found it impossible to prevent the movement of refugees across the frontier, and it was in no position to retaliate. Glubb regarded the likelihood of an Israeli invasion to be realistic, which justified the significant expansion of the Arab Legion during the early 1950s. The legion's growth at British expense meant that more British officers were needed, but Glubb's ability to exert his personal influence became increasingly tenuous. He was sceptical that the British Government would meet its treaty commitments to Jordan and come to its aid. Following the death of King Abdullah in July 1951, the political scene in Jordan underwent a significant upheaval, and Glubb's relations with King Husayn were awkward. The impact of Israeli retaliatory operations and the growing influence of Nasserism had significant long-term implications for Jordan. Glubb and the Foreign Office failed to appreciate the repercussions

of these developments that culminated in King Husayn's shocking dismissal of Glubb in March 1956.

Britain, Glubb and Jordan: A strategic relationship

Britain's interest in maintaining Jordan was based on the longstanding loyalty of King Abdullah I, the role of the Arab Legion and the desire to maintain the country's stability. Glubb was at the centre of this relationship, which is why his views on Britain's declining role in the Middle East are notable. Furthermore, the strategic relationship between the two governments is important because it provides the context within which Glubb was forced to operate during these tumultuous years. Relations between the British and Jordanians was defined by a treaty that was signed in 1946 and revised shortly afterwards in 1948. The Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 was supposed to guarantee British interests in Jordan in wartime, but it underwent a subtle and unintended alteration because the British were committed to defend Jordan in the event of an attack. It was entirely conceivable that the Israelis might attack the Jordanian position on the West Bank, and the chiefs of staff did develop plans to meet this eventuality.[1] The British deployed a small force to Aqaba in southern Jordan in January 1949, but it was inconceivable that so soon after the termination of the Palestine mandate the British would come to Jordan's aid in the event of an Israeli attack. The international ramifications, particularly in the UN, of such a course of action led Glubb to reach the inevitable conclusion that this was a 'bluff'.[2] Nonetheless, the strategic relationship between Britain and Jordan was more complex than Glubb seemed to believe, and in March 1953 Sir Winston Churchill minuted that the 1948 treaty seemed to be one-sided in Jordan's favour.[3] In January 1953, Glubb argued that relations between Amman and London had cooled, but the rise of anti-British regimes reinforced the importance of the Anglo-Jordanian alliance. (11)

Glubb continued to make proposals about the future of Britain's imperial position in the region. This was despite the fact that he held no formal position in Britain's military hierarchy in the Middle East. In 1951, he wrote an unsolicited memorandum in which he proposed the establishment of a 'chain on Gibraltar's', or bases in desert areas. His rationale was that regional governments, and the rise

of anti-British nationalism, precluded the retention of bases in populated areas, such as the Suez Canal Zone. (6) The Foreign Office was sceptical about this 'far-fetched' proposal and found it hard to believe that any government would be willing to cede territory.[4] Glubb, however, was not deterred, and in June 1951 he penned another memorandum in which he proposed that an Arab army should be raised to hold these bases. This paper was characterised by his long-standing criticism of Levantine Arabs and Egyptians. Glubb regarded them as poor soldiers, and instead he suggested that men should be raised among the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, and that the Arab Legion should play a central role in training this force. (7)

Glubb's proposal to raise an imperial Arab army was challenged by Brigadier John Baird, who had considerable experience of commanding Arab troops, and had served as head of the British military mission to Saudi Arabia (1946–1951). Baird argued that Glubb's proposals were quite unrealistic because he believed that the population of the Trucial States and their neighbours were totally unsuited to military life. The vast majority of potential recruits were illiterate and unhealthy. There were very few potential Bedouin officers, and the dearth of education meant that there were few men to serve in the technical arms. He also argued that in peacetime few men would be willing to serve outside their shaikhdom.[5]

Baird also contended that the prevailing political climate in the Middle East was inimical to the establishment of an imperial force. His critique of Glubb's proposal suggests that Glubb was becoming increasingly out of touch with regional developments. This applied particularly to the problem that the British were facing at the time in their relations with the Egyptian Government concerning the future of the huge British base in the Suez Canal Zone. Officials in the Foreign Office were equally sceptical about the viability of Glubb's initiative, believing that the rulers would not allow their subjects to serve in a force under British control, or permit soldiers to be used in operations in other states.[6]

The main challenge Glubb faced in Jordan was the perception that he was an agent of British imperialism, which led Charles Duke, Britain's ambassador to Jordan (1954–1956), to describe him as a 'political dinosaur'.[7] Glubb became a semi-imperial anachronism because of the changed political scene in Jordan following King Abdullah's death.[8] It is a matter of contention whether King

Abdullah's murder was a turning point, but Glubb argued that the king's ability to rule unfettered had diminished. Shortly after the king's death, Glubb wrote at length about the political changes that were occurring in the country, commenting on the growing power of elected politicians and the supposed threat of communism, which became a priority in the 1950s. (8) In 1950 and 1951, there was significant growth in nationalist fervour and demands for constitutional reform. Gerald Drew, the American minister at Amman, argued that there was no tradition of nationalism in Jordan and that anti-British feeling was opportunistic. However, he believed that the British were becoming increasingly complacent about their sense of strength in the country.[9] British and American diplomats in Amman concurred that there was a diminution of the royal prerogative, which was manifested by successive cabinets refusing to follow the king's policy on negotiations with the Israelis.

The Foreign Office regularly commented on Glubb's 'gloomy'[10] reports, and that he tended to paint the 'blackest pictures' regarding the situation in Jordan.[11] His portrayal of events in Jordan was an example of special pleading that was intended to persuade the Foreign Office to increase its expenditure on the Arab Legion. Even so, his depiction of the political situation in the country was strikingly complacent because he failed to spot the long-term implications of the anti-British sentiment in the country.

Glubb and the annexation of the West Bank

King Abdullah's annexation of the West Bank in April 1950 marked the culmination of a lifetime's ambition of expanding his desert kingdom. However, the incorporation of the West Bank had considerable domestic and international repercussions.[12] The annexation, which was formally acknowledged by the Foreign Office in April 1950,[13] had significant implications because it raised the question of whether or not the Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 applied to the West Bank. Eventually the Foreign Office reached the conclusion that it did,[14] which was of considerable significance to Glubb and the Jordanian Government. One of the most significant military and political problems in the post-1948 era was whether or not the British commitment to defend Jordan would come into effect if Jordan was attacked.

Glubb argued that Jordan's annexation of the West Bank had surprising consequences because the population supported King Abdullah's rule rather than the exiled mufti. (3) In July 1952, he argued that there was no longer any talk of an independent government in Arab Palestine, and that the Hashemite monarchy commanded the loyalty of the people. (9) Nonetheless, Jordanian control of the West Bank entailed momentous economic and military consequences. The most significant challenge to Jordanian rule emanated from Israeli retaliatory operations in response to 'infiltration' across the lengthy ceasefire line.[15] These operations were characterised by the overwhelming application of force, which included alleged atrocities by Israeli forces on the annexed West Bank, which were intended to coerce Israel's neighbours into preventing attacks across their frontiers.[16] These operations hardened the attitude of the government and the public against an agreement with Israel.[17] Glubb commented bitterly on these operations at length, arguing that the Israelis were guilty of war crimes and acts of torture.[18] He believed that infiltration was an economic and policing problem, (6) and that the Israelis had a 'psychological impulse to use force' on account of their own persecution. (2, 12) The most significant Israeli retaliatory operation prior to Glubb's dismissal occurred at Qibya in October 1953 on the West Bank. Glubb argued that one of the most significant consequences of Israel's 'mad-dog' policy was that it compelled the Arab states, including Jordan, to unite. (13)

The Arab Legion's expansion

The First Arab-Israeli War had a very significant impact on Glubb's position, and the development of the Arab Legion. In May 1950, he argued that the Israelis would not attack Jordan 'unless she thought that she could complete the conquest of Jordan and install a "quisling" Arab government' before British troops arrived. (4) In December 1954, Glubb argued that the Jordanian politicians doubted whether the British would intervene if the Israelis invaded, and that it was essential that the British Government would intervene. (15) Nonetheless, the threat to Jordan provided a clear pretext for the British to fund the Arab Legion's expansion.

Glubb repeatedly pressed the British Government to fund the expansion of the Arab Legion. The objective of this process was to

make the legion strong enough to resist an Israeli invasion for long enough so that British forces could intervene.[19] Glubb was caught between the Jordanian Government's demand for a more capable army and the Treasury-driven requirement for spending cuts. In the 1951/1952 financial year the Arab Legion subsidy grew to £6.5 million, and this figure was supposed to fund a force of 25,000 men, which consisted of 14,000 regulars and 11,000 reservists. Instead of the piecemeal approach to funding the Arab Legion, Glubb argued that a long-term plan was needed to fund expansion and the purchase of additional weapons.[20] He also tried to pressurise Whitehall to increase the subsidy by pointing out the political benefits of subsidising Jordan, which included a stable and efficient government that was friendly to British interests.[21]

Regional developments, such as the growing influence of Nasserist Egypt, were another pretext used by Glubb to appeal to London's sensibilities. He claimed that if the Foreign Office refused to increase the subsidy, the Jordanian Government would approach the Egyptian Government.[22] His special pleading contributed to a significant increase in Britain's financial contribution to Jordan that amounted to £70,294,000 between 1946 and 1956. The Arab Legion received the overwhelming share, and the subsidy totalled £60,919,000. These figures undermine Glubb's complaint about British parsimony.[23]

In order to overcome the Arab Legion's inherent weaknesses, in 1949 Glubb proposed that a Home Guard should be established along similar lines used to defend Jewish colonies in Palestine. The advantages of this system were that it was relatively cheap, and it meant that the Arab Legion would not have to disperse itself to defend the long border with Israel. (1) Glubb also believed that the National Guard was valuable since it could delay an Israeli attack, giving British forces time to intervene.[24] In July 1954, he claimed that the National Guard had been instrumental in maintaining the integrity of Jordan, but his claims about its strategic value in wartime are open to question because it did not prevent the Israelis from launching major operations across the frontier, such as at Qibya in October 1953.[25] (14)

The process of expansion had a fundamental impact on the Arab Legion, which was transformed from a modestly equipped force into a modern army based on the British Army. Expansion was fraught with political difficulties caused by the growth in the number of

British officers serving in Jordan. (10) The Arab Legion's expansion was so rapid that not enough Arab officers had sufficient training or experience to command the combat units, or the less prestigious but equally important support arms, such as logistics or engineering. This meant that Glubb had to recruit more British officers to fill these posts. He had been stringent about recruiting officers who could speak Arabic and command troops, rather than for their operational or technical expertise. In 1940, only two British officers were serving with the Arab Legion, but by June 1950 there were 49.[26] The Arab Legion's rapid expansion meant that it was impossible to find enough officers who could speak Arabic, which meant that potentially unsuitable candidates were selected. Glubb's policy was not to Anglicise the Arab Legion, and British officers only filled positions where there were no qualified Arabs.[27] The problem was that the older Arab Legion officers lacked professionalism, whereas the younger generation had scant operational experience. Prior to the First Arab-Israeli War, Glubb had commanded the legion along patriarchal lines because he knew the officers and men. However, he became increasingly overburdened and it was impossible for him to command the legion as if it was still a small force.

The authorities in Amman and London concurred that recruiting additional British officers posed political risks, including the concern that Arab officers were being relegated to an inferior status.[28] In June 1955, Glubb argued that it would take another ten years for an Arab officer to command a division.[29] His ponderous system of promotion was ridiculed by officers who served in the Second World War, and had been promoted to high ranks at a young age in more challenging circumstances than prevailed in Jordan.[30] James Lunt is therefore undoubtedly correct in arguing that Glubb completely misconstrued the political effects of not promoting officers more quickly.[31]

Glubb and King Husayn

In July 1951, King Abdullah I was killed in Jerusalem and he was briefly replaced by his son Tellal. The death of the king, who had been a consistent British ally and had completely dominated the country, led to concerns about the stability of Jordan. However, in December 1951, Glubb argued that the ramifications of the king's death, which he characterised as an assassination, were misplaced. He

claimed that predictions of Jordan's imminent collapse were wrong because the king tended not to interfere in the day-to-day running of the government, and the opposition was disorganised. (8)

Glubb was particularly concerned about his fraught relations with King Husayn, who was only 18 when he was crowned in May 1953.[32] Glubb enjoyed an exceptionally close relationship with King Abdullah I, but in 1953 he was 56 years old and this substantial age difference contributed to his awkward relations with the successor.[33] There were several areas of contention that divided Glubb and King Husayn. These included the Arab Legion's deployment strategy on the West Bank, the promotion of Arab officers serving in the legion, the proposed transfer of the police from the Arab Legion to the Ministry of the Interior and the influence of junior officers around the king.[34]

The king expressed his dissatisfaction with Glubb on a number of occasions, and the Foreign Office hoped that their relationship would improve. The Foreign Office believed that Glubb was irreplaceable,[35] and General Sir Brian Robertson, the commander of MELF, described Glubb as Britain's 'biggest political asset in the Middle East'.[36] Glubb made it clear to the Foreign Office that he wanted to remain in Jordan until he was 60.[37] The Foreign Office accepted his desire to remain in Jordan without demur, on the assumption that it would 'be impossible to find anyone who could fill Glubb's position entirely'.[38]

In June 1955, Glubb wrote that King Husayn was poorly advised by a group of young officers. He argued that the king believed that as a result of the British subsidy, Jordanian officers were precluded from attaining high rank. Glubb refuted this argument, but he observed that the king wanted to replace British officers with Jordanians, although no demand had been made for the former's removal. He also commented on the king's impetuous personality, and it is clear that he was troubled by his relationship with him. (16) During King Abdullah I's reign, Glubb had commanded the Arab Legion as his personal fiefdom, but the situation changed following King Husayn's ascension to the throne. This was because the new king was determined to assert his royal prerogatives.

Glubb and the British Embassy at Amman consistently reported on his awkward relations with the king, who was unhappy with the way in which he was commanding the Arab Legion. Nonetheless, Glubb and the Foreign Office completely misread the situation in

Jordan.[39] Jordan's position as a British-subsidised ally made it particularly vulnerable to pressure exerted from Cairo. In October 1955, Glubb wrote a memorandum that analysed the Egyptian role in the region. He argued that colonel Nasser's regime was determined to undermine Jordan in order to turn the country into an Egyptian vassal. (17) Egyptian radio broadcasts, especially *Sawt al Arab* (Voice of the Arabs),[40] which was widely listened to, and newspapers in Cairo and Damascus, lambasted Glubb as an agent of British imperialism.[41]

Egyptian attempts to undermine the king's rule came to the fore in November 1955 as a result of Jordan's potential membership of the Baghdad Pact. At the beginning of November 1955, Glubb argued that it was essential for Jordan to join because there would be significant regional consequences if the king refused. (18) By the end of the month, Glubb was arguing that the British had lost the initiative in Jordan because they failed to adequately respond to the considerable pressure that was being exerted on the king. Glubb maintained that the only reason the country remained stable was the role of the Arab Legion, and that attempts by the British Government to compel the king to sign the treaty would have damaging consequences. This memorandum implies that Glubb thought that the British position in Jordan was retrievable. (19) However, in December 1955 and January 1956, Jordan was rocked by unprecedented riots that were caused by the country's potential membership of the Baghdad Pact.[42] Glubb argued that Jordan 'has just narrowly missed a revolution', which he thought had probably been directed by communists, aided and abetted by the Egyptian and Saudi governments. (20)

In early 1956, the political situation in Jordan was bleak, and American diplomats argued that their British counterparts were unable to perceive the changing situation. They also reported that Glubb and the British Embassy were misleading the Foreign Office about events in Jordan.[43] In spite of anti-British disorder in Jordan, the Foreign Office assumed that the king wanted a British officer to command the Arab Legion for the foreseeable future.[44] Glubb's attempts to gain the king's confidence came to nothing when he was unceremoniously sacked on 1 March 1956 and given 24 hours to leave the country. King Husayn's motives for removing Glubb and most of the British officers serving in the Arab Legion have been subjected to critical scrutiny, but there can be no doubt that the

British Government was consternated by the decision.[45] Sir Anthony Eden, the prime minister at the time, thought that Colonel Nasser had instigated Glubb's sacking. He was advised by Sir Alec Kirkbride, who retired in 1953 but retained close contact with the Jordanian royal family, not to retaliate.[46] Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that Glubb's removal, which he publicly accepted with good grace, marked the beginning of the end of Britain's role as Jordan's financial and military guarantor.

The dismissal of Glubb and most of the British officers serving in the Arab Legion had dramatic consequences. Hitherto British officers had occupied all of the key staff, command and technical positions, and the remaining officers became advisors with no command functions or authority. The slow process of promotion meant that the Arab officers were ill prepared to replace the British officers, which resulted in a severe drop in operational efficiency, a decline in morale and *esprit de corps*.[47] The army was divided by competing factions, which led the American ambassador at Amman to argue that it was 'well on the road to becoming just another Arab army'.[48] Sir Charles Duke painted a 'dismal picture' of the situation in Jordan following Glubb's dismissal.[49] However, the king achieved his objective of Arabising the Arab Legion, which was renamed the Jordanian Arab Army in July 1956. This was a key process since it helped to undermine criticism of British domination of the army, and reinforced the king's Arab nationalist credentials. In 1957, the Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 was abrogated, and the United States replaced the British as Jordan's financier and arms supplier.

Conclusion

Glubb's position in Jordan became increasingly hard to sustain because of the changed political scene in the country following the death of King Abdullah I in July 1951. There can be little doubt that he remained in Jordan for too long, and there was a complete failure of British diplomats at Amman and in the Foreign Office to divine that his position was untenable following King Husayn's assumption of the throne in 1953. Glubb's numerous reports from the era contain considerable detail about the political circumstances in the country, and growth of Nasserist influence. His role subtly changed because he was no longer able to run the Arab Legion as

a personal fiefdom. Instead he became increasingly bogged down in the minutiae of commanding it, and he was in the invidious position of being in charge of an army without having had any formal staff training.

In spite of these pressures, and the possibility of Israeli invasion, Glubb made a significant contribution during his twilight years in Jordan. He contributed in no small measure to the establishment of a well-trained and equipped army that has remained above politics. The nationalist thinking which was prevalent at the time heavily influenced some Arab Legion officers, but the army remained overwhelmingly loyal to the monarchy. Moreover, with certain exceptions, civil-military relations in Jordan have remained relatively cooperative, and the country has avoided direct military rule. This is far more than can be said for many of its neighbours.

1. MEC: Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 36, 25 June 1949

A plan for the military training of the people

The Home Guard

Jordan's limited financial resources will not enable her to maintain a large army. Her army is at present probably the best trained in the Middle East. Its small numbers, however, make it impossible for the Jordan army to hold a long front in contact with a numerous enemy. The regular army is suitable for use as a single mobile force to deliver an attack in one direction, or to step an enemy advance with a counterattack. The holding of the frontier, however, will have to be entrusted to other forces, which can be less well-trained, less well armed and less mobile. This force will be able to act on the defensive only.

The Jewish system

The Jews have been training on these principles for the past 13 years. Every Jewish colony is fortified and has enough weapons to defend itself. All the people of the colony are sufficiently trained to be able to fight in defence of the colony. In most cases, they are not well enough trained to enable them to fight battles in the open country.

Subsidiary defence forces

Apart from the regular army, there are at present two defence forces in the field:

(a) The irregulars.
(b) The inhabitants of the villages.

Some of the irregulars are now partly trained as soldiers. They are in many cases extremely desirous of becoming regular soldiers. I should like to retain a number of them to defend quiet sectors of the frontier permanently. Whether this can be done will depend principally on the amount of money available.

They can be trained up to the level of jundis, but is will not be possible, at any rate for several years, to equip them sufficiently to make them fit for mobile warfare. In any case, the number of irregulars who can be retained permanently can only be small. The greater part of the defence will have to rest with civilian inhabitants of the villages. The present object is to give villagers enough training to enable them to defend their villagers, on the same system as that employed by the Jews.

2. TNA: FO 371/82205/EE1091/61, 28 June 1950

Glubb to Kirkbride

There seems to be little doubt Arabs in Israel are subjected to the same torture camps technique as the Jews themselves suffered in Nazi Germany, though on a lesser scale. This however is difficult to prove.

The leading statesmen in Israel are constantly making speeches or statements to the press in which they claim that they are holding out the hand of friendship to the Arabs, but that the Arabs refuse all their advances.

I do not know if the Jews want peace – I daresay they do. Meanwhile however the policy of terrorist and frightfulness towards the Arabs they get hold of goes on. They have a considerable minority in Israel, and I imagine that the Jews want them to emigrate. They therefore try to persuade them with rubber coshes and by tearing

out finger nails whenever they get the chance. I do not know whether this is the policy of the Israel cabinet, but it must certainly be known and winked at on a ministerial level, I think. The brutality is too general to be due only to the sadism of ordinary soldiers.

On the other hand, it may be that the Israeli government really want peace, but that they imagine that shootings and torture . . . will cow the Arabs into making peace. If this is the case, then they have entirely misjudged the psychological effect. Indignation in Jordan is mounting. If the Jews really want peace, they are themselves destroying their chances of securing it.

The Jews make a tremendous propaganda about Arabs going over to 'raid' Israel. Arabs are traditionally connected with 'raids' but the world at large do not realise that the 'Arabs' of Palestine are as far removed from the Arabs who used to raid, as a Wimbledon grocer is from the clans of the Scottish Highlands.

We admit that when one of these unfortunates recrosses the line by stealth, a technical breach of the Armistice is committed. We are doing our best to prevent this, and we are constantly asking for Jewish police cooperation with this object. The Israelis, however, instead of cooperating, prefer their own deterrent measures – shooting or torturing the people they catch. This may have a deterrent effect, but it is simultaneously creating so much indignation in Jordan that the chance of peace negotiations is becoming less.

3. TNA: FO 816/162, 25 April 1950

State of Jordan

The Egyptians, the Syrians and the Lebanese have long been in the habit of indulging in contemptuous references to Abdullah's reactionary Bedouin regime. There can be no doubt that there are more highly educated persons in Syria, the Lebanon and Egypt than there are in Jordan. But it is remarkable to note that education in the Middle East does not appear to produce political stability – nor political morality – nor even common sense.

In every other Arab country, the forms of democracy have hitherto led only to jobbery and corruption, disorders and military dictators. It would be remarkable indeed if Jordan could really make democracy work. But it is still too early to make conjectures on what would be scarcely less than a miracle were it to come true.

The Palestine Arabs have suffered for 30 years for lack of a leader. The only man they chose – Hajj Amin al Husseini – proved a broken reed. All the others were merely lining their own pockets and those who are still left today are little better. It would seem that the common people of Arab Palestine have decided that King Abdullah can play the role of the leader so long awaited.

These paradoxes in Palestine are perhaps due to the educational results of the mandatory regime, which produced a relatively small number of highly educated people who form a class distinct from the simple villagers. The clever ones cannot resist the temptation to show off their cleverness by destructive criticism of all and sundry from President Truman and Mr Bevin to the private soldiers of the Arab Legion. To them everything about everybody but themselves is wrong. But 90% of the people have entirely different mental and psychological reactions. It is these latter – not the highbrows – who have taken King Abdullah to their hearts.

Not the first time in history, a king seems to be nearer to the common people than are the intervening job-hunters and axe grinders.

4. TNA: FO 371/82752/ET1202/28/G, May 1950

A note on the need for a longer-term plan for the Arab Legion

Difficulties of uncertainty

The Arab Legion is, and will continue to be, greatly outnumbered by its Middle East potential enemies. It is therefore obliged to rely on a very high standard of technical skills, in order to some extent to compensate for its small numbers. This means that a force with a very high standard of technical training has to be raised from the population of a country where the general level of education is low and where industrial development does not exist. As a result,

mechanics of all kinds, even motor transport drivers, all have to be trained in the service over a number of years.

To build up a force of this nature in a backward country therefore requires certain conditions:

(a) Long term planning making it possible to engage potential officers and technicians for long periods and to spend money on training them to the necessary standards.
(b) The offer of a career sufficiently attractive to tempt the best type of young man to make service in the Arab Legion his profession on leaving school. The annual output of potential officers and technicians from the schools of Jordan is very small compared with the demand of the Arab Legion. It is therefore absolutely essential to offer reasonably secure terms if the right type of young man is to be obtained.

Under the present system, the Jordan government is not aware of the amount of the British subsidy in any financial year, often until the financial year has begun

This situation is now publicly known in Jordan, and as a result service in the Arab Legion is coming to be regarded by the few reasonably educated young men as too precarious. The Jordan government is therefore becoming increasingly anxious regarding the supply of potential officers and technicians.

Situation in which Israel might attack

It may perhaps be emphasised that there is here no question of the Arab Legion being able to defend Jordan against Israel. The problem is only whether the Arab Legion could resist long enough to enable British troops to arrive at all.

To put it another way, Israel would be unlikely to attack Jordan, unless she thought that she could complete the conquest of the country and install a 'quisling' Arab Government in Amman which would sign an armistice with her before British troops could arrive. If she thought she could do this, the chance would probably be worth her while, even with the Anglo-Jordan treaty in existence. In view of her probable 8 to 1 superiority in 1955, it would

be no easy task for the Arab Legion to hold out for the number of weeks necessary for British ground forces to intervene.

Possibility of the over-running of Jordan by Israel

The Jews possess considerable political skill and an enormous power over world publicity – particularly in the USA. Israel, imitating the methods of Hitler and Stalin, would start with a publicity campaign that the Arabs were attacking her. Her 'publicity superiority' is so overwhelming that she could work up a worldwide press campaign with no foundation of fact at all (we have seen it done). She would then launch 'police action' to 'restore order', and would be able to simultaneously to produce 'quisling' Arabs in Palestine prepared to tell press-men that they would sooner be ruled by Israel than by King Abdullah.

Britain could only physically stop Israel from over-running Jordan by sending a considerable number of ground troops. This would probably involve moving a formation overseas. Meanwhile UNO and the USA would be brought into play by the Jews to gain time and postpone the adoption of drastic measures by Britain.

If the Israeli army reached Amman and set up 'quisling' Arab government and made an agreement with it, it would be extremely difficult for British troops to land and re-conquer the country. The Israelis would probably not attack unless they believed that they could do this.

In other words, the best way to prevent an Israeli attack on Jordan is to keep the Arab Legion strong enough to resist Israel until British forces can arrive.

5. TNA: FO 816/173, 18 March 1951

Glubb to Kirkbride

Everybody I speak to seems to agree with you that infiltration is largely an economic question, rather than one of revenge. The economic situation has got much worse lately owing to the all-round rise in prices and is likely further to deteriorate owing to bad crops. The prospects of peace and quiet on the Israel armistice line seem therefore to be pretty bad.

The only thing which can help us to reduce infiltration is better economic conditions for the refugees. However at the moment we are going rapidly in the other direction.

The solution of nearly all our problems lies in getting the refugees settled. They do nearly all the infiltrating, and as they get hungrier and more desperate, they will do more. A man can get to the stage when he does no mind if he gets shot and would positively like to go to prison, to get food and three blankets and a roof over his head. When he gets to that stage, you cannot stop infiltrating.

6. TNA: FO 371/91223/E1192/29/G, 23 May 1951

A chain of Gibraltar's. Being a note on British policy in the Middle East

Assumptions

This paper has been based on the following assumptions:

1. Britain's position in the Middle East has been very seriously weakened since 1945.
2. The maintenance of that position is still of vital importance to her.
3. This is an age of small nationalisms. The craze will pass, but meanwhile it is still growing and may well continue to do so for several generations to come. This will be long enough to eliminate Britain from the East, unless she finds a remedy.
4. Many of the small countries of the Middle East have retained their independence for centuries owing to physical barriers, such as mountains and deserts, which the army of thirty years ago could not negotiate – or only with immense difficulty. Examples are central Arabia and Persia. To modern armies, these barriers are no longer formidable.
5. In addition to the lessening importance of physical barriers, the fact that modern war depends on mass industrial production, makes small unindustrialised nations far more helpless than ever before, vis-à-vis the really great powers.
6. We thus reach a paradox. Emotionally the small governments of the East are, for the first time, all passionately anxious to be independent. Physically, modern industry, means of

communication and weapons, makes their continued independence impossible. A hundred years ago, they could have been independent, but they did not particularly want to be so.

7. Their emotional nationalism makes it very difficult for Middle East countries to consent to be satellites. They have an inferiority complex already.
8. The logical course would be for the small Middle East countries to accept garrisons of troops of Western powers, on the understanding that these garrisons do not interfere in their internal affairs. But in the East and the Middle East, foreign garrisons are still regarded as a badge of servitude. The situation in Egypt indicates that this (the obvious solution) is unworkable.
9. We therefore find a dilemma. These small countries could be defended, if they allowed the Western powers to establish garrisons, bases and airports in their countries. Only Jordan has agreed to this. Their refusal to accept such an arrangement makes it impossible for them to be defended in the event of another world war.
10. This is the dilemma which this paper attempts to solve. It will be noted that the dilemma is largely a military one.
11. Our final assumption therefore is that our Middle East bases must be maintained. This paper assumes this as an axiom and endeavours to discover how.

Requirements of a base

The requirements of a Middle East base are as follows:

1. To provide a place where British forces, land, sea and air can be stationed in peacetime. The mere presence of troops and bases in a given area of a sub-continent automatically lends power and prestige to the government to which they belong.
2. A base, however, is of course most valuable if is so placed that it can actually be used as a base for active operations and not only as a site for a peace time garrison.
3. A third consideration is that the base selected should possess a reasonably healthy climate, suitable for British troops in peacetime.

Application to the Middle East

(A) Egypt is in many ways the ideal base, possessing as it does harbours and airports, workshops and repair facilities, and road and rail communications. In the event of war with Russia, advanced operations bases would also be required north and east of Egypt.

(B) The jealously of the Egyptian government rends the Egyptian base extremely precarious as a long-term investment. It no longer seems to be economical to spend large sums of British money on building bases in the territory of independent governments. As often as not, within a few years, the base is abandoned under pressure of local government, which receives for nothing all the priceless installations built with British taxpayers money. The Middle East is strewn with bases, camps and installations built by His Majesty's Government and now occupied by the local armies. Habbaniya and Faid may soon be added to the list.

(C) In my opinion, it is a waste of money to continue to build expensive bases, on other peoples territory, where British forces only remain on sufferance.
Corollary: Territories must be acquired in possession as crown colonies and used as bases.

(D) British bases are intensely resented, if in the vicinity of cities and politicians. It is therefore impossible to expect to be able to retain bases in the vicinity of harbours, cities and industrial installations. If possible, the right to occupy these areas in wartime should be secured by treaty. If not, they will have to be occupied by force in war.

(E) Meanwhile the only way to ensure permanent bases for the future is to secure the cession of a territory in desert areas, and thus build up a chain of Gibraltar's.

The objection to this is of course the cost of constructing a base in a remote piece of desert. On the other hand, on a long term basis, money spent in a Crown Colony is comparatively secure, whereas money spent in installations in Egypt, Iraq or similar countries will probably be thrown away and the base be abandoned in a few years for political reasons.

(F) There are several actual and concrete advantages inputting bases in deserts:

1. They will be far from politicians and centres of population.
2. Any inhabitants there will be poor and backward, and thus will be delighted by the arrival of the British, bringing prosperity and money.
3. Deserts may be hot, but they are usually healthy.

7. TNA: FO 816/175, 14 June 1951

A note on the possibility of raising an Arab army

Introduction

The corollary of this plan is the present proposal for the recruitment of Arab armies to hold these bases. The two proposals are indeed mutually interdependent. For example, it would be possible today to raise Arab armies for the British service except that there is no British territory in the Middle East where such forces can be recruited and stationed.

Nationalism in the North

It will be seen that this state of affairs renders it no longer politically possible to raise British Imperial troops in the Northern Arab countries. This is for two reasons:

1. Because the people of these countries do not in any case make very good soldiers.
2. More important, because the tide of nationalism is flowing so strongly that any man who enlists in a foreign army, in his own country, cannot escape the charge of being a traitor.

Permanent British officers

The question of British officers is one of immense difficulty in dealing with all Arab troops including the Arab Legion. Regular officers who are seconded for only three years scarcely begin to know the language or the people. Yet officers who remain more than three years believe, and doubtless correctly, that their military careers will suffer.

Nothing can be done in raising Arab armies until more satisfactory arrangements can be made for British officers.

Practical steps

If His Majesty's Government is interested in the idea of raising Arab imperial troops, I suggest that a tentative beginning be made. The first problem is to find British bases to do it in. It cannot be attempted on the soil of any of the northern Arab countries. If the Gaza strip or a base in Sinai were obtainable, either these might do – preferably the base in Sinai.

In my paper 'A chain of Gibraltar's', I suggested that the Sinai base be at the top of the Gulf of Aqaba, but a site on the extreme sought of the Peninsula – where there are also some islands – might be as good, as it would be on the route of shipping going up and down the Red Sea. The important point is that it be British soil outright, given (or sold) to Britain by Egypt as the price of evacuating the Canal Zone.

As, however, these arrangements are likely to take some time, we must begin raising our Arab troops elsewhere.

8. TNA: FO 371/98882/ET1202/1, December 1951

A note on political difficulties in Jordan

When King Abdullah was murdered, outside observers prophesised immediate collapse of Jordan. When this did not take place, the same commentators swung to the opposite extreme of optimism, and alleged that the crisis was past and all was well. Neither of these views is correct, nor were they ever shared by competent local residents.

Jordan did not collapse immediately on King Abdullah's death for the following reasons:

A. The violence, treachery and suddenness of the crime shocked everybody. Many of the late King's enemies were moved to sympathy.
B. The hostile elements inside Jordan were scattered, disorganised and discouraged by the apparent stability of the King's rule.

They could not get together and organise themselves for action at short notice.

C. The government was a going concern. The King, before he was murdered, did not interfere seriously in the day-to-day administration, so that his disappearance did not immediately throw the machine out of gear.

To the surprise of outside observers, nothing happened in Jordan.

Long term results

Whereas the world seems now to think that everything is as usual in Jordan, the long-term effects of the death of King Abdullah are only now becoming apparent.

(1) King Abdullah had ruled for 30 years, ever since the First World War. No violent changes, revolutions or coups d'état had taken place during that period. Stability is largely a matter of habit. People become used to a certain regime until they assume unconsciously that it will never change. All the other Arab countries had suffered violent upheavals since 1920, but Jordan had not experienced one. For this reason, the King's murder produced a tremendous nervous impact. At one blow, the sense of continuity and stability was destroyed. After one such blow, public opinion seems still to be in a mental state of uncertainty and agitation, expecting further changes.

(2) Although warnings had been received in the past that the King might be murdered, nobody really believed it could happen. Since the assassination, however, many people constantly say that if it was so easy to kill the King, why not other lesser people. Outstanding personalities are nervous and have personal bodyguards. Unpopular officials receive anonymous letters threatening them with assassination. Every day there is a new rumour of who is going to be murdered next. Amongst excitable people, stability and instability seems to be largely a mass psychological question.

(3) The King's death has resulted in a revolutionary change in the constitution. The throne has been completely deprived of power, so that even if King Tellal were to develop like his father in the course of time, he will never be in a position to wield authority.

Jordan has thus embarked on the slippery slope of democracy, a system which has reduced every other Middle Eastern country to chaos. It is true that the new Jordan constitution gives very wide powers to the Prime Minister, a fact which offers more prospect of stability than exists in Syria for example. But the transfer of power from a King to a Prime Minister is in any case a move towards instability. A Prime Minister commands no loyalty as a King does and, moreover, has no automatic hereditary successor should he disappear.

9. TNA: FO 371/98861/ET1018/1, 1 July 1952

A note on the situation in Jordan

Union and the throne

Until a year ago, observers, bound to admit the stability of Jordan, usually added a note of warning. 'Wait till King Abdullah dies and Kirkbride is moved', they said, 'and Jordan will become like any other Middle East country'. King Abdullah did not die – he was murdered. His successor is too ill to reign. Kirkbride has gone. There is not much more that can happen to us – yet Jordan is still as quiet and as stable as ever.

Indeed two remarkable and encouraging facts have emerged from the recent hostile foreign press campaigns against Jordan.

The first of these is that the idea of succession by the West Bank is dead. Two or three years ago there were still people who talked about an independent government in Arab Palestine. Such a solution is never heard of now. The 'Palestinians' still have much to complain of, but succession from Jordan is no longer a solution which they consider.

The second remarkable development which has recently been noticeable is the universal devotion to the throne. King Tellal is as popular as ever, even with those who realise that he will never be fit to reign. Whatever solutions are proposed, not even the wildest politician has suggested a republic or a change in the constitution. The Hashemite family seems entirely to command the loyalty of the people of Jordan.

10. TNA: FO 371/98886/ET1206/3/G, 5 November 1952

Glubb to Robertson

I cannot help feeling that you have received a rather distorted impression of the situation and of our relations with the Jordan government.

Firstly no pressure to reduce British officers has been exerted by the Jordan government. A year and a half ago (or perhaps two) the then minister of defence asked me if I could avoid further increases. I said I would try.

Far from reducing the numbers of British personnel, their numbers are still increasing steadily. The number of British personnel has nearly doubled in three years. It will reach a new high peak next year.

But although the Jordan government is NOT insisting on a reduction in the number of British officers, I consider it essential that we should exercise self-control. Looking at one Eastern country after another going sour on us during the last 30 years, it strikes me that in most causes the reason has been lack of self-control on our part.

At the moment the number of British officers is not being challenged, but I do not wish to profit by this quiescence to increase their numbers unnecessarily. To do so might gradually build up opposition. Once the opposition declared itself, we should be obliged to get rid of a large number of officers, and nobody than would thank us – they would claim the credit for having frightened us into compliance.

I realise, therefore, that (as you say) there are arguments for further considerable increases, but I am sure that we should be unwise to act on them. I am convinced that a wise policy of self-control at this stage may ensure the continuance of the present friendly atmosphere for many years to come. Further rapid increase in British personnel might still be feasible for some time, but they might well lead to a crisis a few years hence, and then an 'Abadan' collapse.

Now the point to realise is that the Arab Legion as an army on this scale has only been in existence for 10 years. It only began to try and be an operational force of all arms five years ago. As a result, there has not been time for young Arab staff officers to grow up to the level of battalion commanders, or senior staff officers.

But apart from lack of time, there is no reason why they should not be any of these things. With Arab officers at the Staff College, at Warminster, and on senior staff officers courses, there undoubtedly will in the course of a few years, be perfectly competent Arab officers to fill all these jobs.

I realise perfectly that the efficiency of the Arab Legion is due to its British officers, but I should like to explain that British officers are required for two reasons:

(a) As technicians, in which I include trained staff officers.
(b) As the real leaders.

It is very important to realise these two classes. The great majority of our British officers are now employed as technicians, that is to say in skilled work for which no Arab officers is yet available. But given time and training, there is no reason why Arabs should not fill nearly all these jobs. It is an illusion to imagine that Arabs cannot be engineers, or signallers, or staff officers or anything else. I do not think that they are in any way inferior to British officers in intelligence.

The reason why Arab armies are never much good is due to faults of character, not to inability to acquire technical skills. The failures result from nepotism in promotions, from graft, from political influence in the army and similar rackets.

This is where British leadership comes in. But for this purpose, only a fraction of the present number of British officer's is required. My motto for British officer's has always been 'very few but very good'. I have not been able to adhere to this motto lately, because increasingly technicality has obliged us to introduce a mass of British personnel because they possess certain technical skills. As years go by, this type of British officer should

become fewer. The British leaders are infinitely more important than British technicians. The leaders must be men of really outstanding quality. How to obtain and keep such leaders in the future is much more important than the number of minor officers now employed.

Increases in the number of British officer's up to a certain point means increased efficiency. Further increases above this point cause a rapid fall in efficiency.

Now there are two methods which can be used in deciding how many British officers to employ. The first is the reservation for British officers of all jobs above a certain rank. The object of this method is to ensure that the British have complete control. This was the TJFF method. Fifty years ago, this method might have been successful. Today it defeats its own object, because it invariably leads to disloyalty among the Arab officers, who spend the whole of their lives in the lower ranks.

The second method is to follow efficiency only. This is the method which we try to observe. The fact that no pressure is exerted upon us to reduce British officers is because the Arab officers in the army can see that efficiency (not racial superiority) is the factor which we consider when making appointments. They are obliged to admit that wherever there is a British officer, his presence is necessary to ensure efficiency.

The Jordan government never interferes in promotions, much less insists on the promotion of inefficient officers.

There is not at present the faintest indication that the Jordan government have any intention whatever to interfere with promotions.

The only reason why the Arab Legion is hitherto a success is because genuine friendship and trust exists between us.

If ever we were reduced to forcing them to comply with our wishes by threatening to cut the subsidy, the continuance of the present happy situation would be seriously jeopardised. We might oblige them to submit, but our mutual trust and happy cooperation would be destroyed.

11. MEC: Melville Papers, box 7, no. 61, 14 January 1953

Are we playing our part?

Part I. Military

Introduction. The sole value of this alliance to Jordan is for protection against Israel. The object of the alliance from the British point of view is to secure an ally against Russia. Jordan on the other hand feels no animosity against Russia, and Britain is friendly with Israel.

Lack of British sympathy. Living in Jordan, I am aware of a cooling in the cordiality of Anglo-Jordan friendship. Until about two years ago, British visitors to Jordan invariably introduced themselves by saying how delightful it was to find themselves in Jordan, Britain's courageous and faithful ally, and how different the atmosphere was as compared with that in other Eastern countries. They no longer say this.

Similarly the British press used frequently to publish laudable articles on Jordan. These no longer appear. On the contrary, the British press contains articles about the Arab countries or the Middle East. Jordan is lumped in as just one more Arab country.

This deterioration in Anglo-Jordan relations seems to be partly due to the apparent failure of the British public to realise that Jordan is an ally.

A one-way alliance. Now in East Jordan, there is still the old deep and genuine friendship for Britain. This is an emotion not based on interest. But the West Jordanians (or Palestinians) have none of this feeling – many on the contrary are resentful and even hate Britain.

The reason why there has not been more anti-British agitation in 'Arab Palestine' is that Britain and the Arab Legion are their only present defence against the Jews.

If, however, the impression continues to spread that Britain has no intention whatever of fighting the Jews for the sake of Jordan, then the raison d'état for a treaty with Britain ceases to exist. It is impossible to deny that it is Britain and the British themselves who

are (perhaps unconsciously) continually creating the impression that they have no intention of honouring the treaty by fighting the Jews, if the latter attacked Jordan.

These considerations have acquired an entirely new importance during the last six months owing to the rise of military dictators, Adib Shishakli and Mohammed Neguib. The ignominious defeat of the Egyptian and Syrian armies in 1948 had hitherto rendered any hope of Arab help against the Jews seem entirely futile. Hence Jordan was compelled to rely on Britain alone. But these two dictators can now blame the previous defeat on the rottenness of the old regimes which they overthrew. This propaganda, together with the purchase of a number of tanks and aircraft, are sufficient to enable a few Palestinians to hope that it may soon be possible to denounce the Anglo-Jordan treaty and to rely on Syria and Egypt against the Jews.

Part II. The economical problem

A subsistence allowance. I would like to emphasise here that I am not trying to beg. The following points may help to clear my intentions.

(1) When I say that Jordan can scarcely survive economically, I rely on the statements of financial officials, should these facts be in doubt, I venture to suggest that HMG might send Treasury experts to ascertain the real situation.
(2) Morally, Britain is responsible for having, by her policy, created a state in such a geographic position. That it is economically extremely difficult for her to survive. Having created it in such a manner, Britain is morally responsible for keeping it alive.
(3) If we neglect the moral side of the question, and regard it purely as practical politics. If Jordan collapses owing to lack of economic support, there will be a scramble for her territory. Israel will probably get most of it, and Syria and Saudi Arabia each a small slice.

Economically, Jordan is in an extremely precarious position. Technically, Britain is only responsible for the Arab Legion. But if Jordan disappears, the Arab Legion will be swept away in the ruin.

It may be true that Jordan lives on the British subsidy, but the Jordanians are proud, and in the past they have been a very staunch and faithful little people. It is unworthy of Britain to taunt the Jordanians with the fact that they live on the subsidy. Such references to financial favours will certainly be fatal to the friendship.

Summary

Financial. Economically, Jordan is in an extremely precarious position. Technically, Britain is only responsible for the Arab Legion. But if Jordan disappears, the Arab Legion will be swept away in the ruin.

The issue is plain. Britain must do whatever is necessary to keep Jordan alive, of alternatively Jordan and the Arab Legion will disappear.

Political. Jordan used to be proud of being Britain's ally, and Britain use to regard Jordan with affection. These emotions seem to be disappearing – on the British side as much as, or more than, on the Jordanian.

Cannot Britain once more conjure up some of that cordial feeling for Jordan, which used to be expressed by her four or five years ago.

It may be true that Jordan lives on the British subsidy, but the Jordanians are proud, and in the past they have been a very staunch and faithful little people. It is unworthy of Britain to taunt the Jordanians with the fact that they live on the subsidy. Such references to financial favours will certainly be fatal to the friendship.

12. TNA: WO 32/17582, 11 February 1953

A note on refugee vagrancy

The results of the 1948 upheaval will take many years to smooth out. Meanwhile infiltration is an immensely complicated social problem, which can only be dealt with if handled dispassionately and humanely. Machine guns do not provide the ideal solution.

In 1948, the Jews solved the problem by driving the Arabs out, in many cases with considerable brutality. The most usual method was to plant a battery of Jewish mortars and bombard the Arab villagers till the inhabitants evacuated.

When the Jews occupied the towns of Lydda and Ramle, trucks containing loud speakers drove through the streets, announcing that all Arabs must leave the town within 30 minutes. At the same time, all means of transport were seized. A certain amount of shooting and raping was going on, and the inhabitants (chiefly women and children) fled out of the town on foot. As they streamed over the fields, the Jews shelled them with mortars. July in the coastal plain is hot, and many small children died of thirst and heat exhaustion before reaching Arab lines.

Six months before the end of the mandate, a British officer well known to me was talking to a highly respectable Jewish official, who was a district administrative officer under the mandatory government. The British officer remarked that the Jewish government looked like having trouble with the large Arab minority who would be living in the future Jewish state. The Jewish official replied, 'Oh I don't think so. A few nicely arranged massacres and you will find that the matter will solve itself'. This incident occurred several months before the shooting and massacring began.

There are old stories now, I am no Jew-baiter and I do not wish to re-open old wounds. But it is impossible fully to understand the present situation, unless we remember past events which have produced these conditions.

In politics, brutality eventually exacts its own price. The nuisance of infiltration is the price the Jews are paying for the brutality with which they liquidated the Arab resident in their country.

In brief, infiltration is an extremely complicated problem. Some of it is done with a view to stealing, in other cases the object if perfectly innocent, or involves private, commercial or smuggling activities not in any way hostile to Israel.

The only real cure for infiltration is to find work and a livelihood for the refugees.

Cooperation with Israel

The Jordan thesis on infiltration has remained unaltered for the past three years. The Jordan government believes that infiltration is a problem. It cannot be eliminated until the refugees find work and living but it can be greatly reduced by cooperation between the Jordan and Israel forces. This cooperation must take place directly between local offices on both sides and it must be direct and quick.

The Jewish attitude

In Jordan, we are unable to deduce what the Jews are trying to do. We only suffer their actions without being able to interpret their motives.

In spite of this, however, we can now see that Jewish actions follow a regular pattern. Every now and then, they agree to our proposals for cooperation, local officers are authorised to cooperate and trans-border telephones installed. An immediate relaxation of tension ensues and incidents drop very nearly to nothing. After a month or two, a few incidents occur and a few minor recriminations are exchanged. After three or four months, the Jews suddenly announce that Jordan has broken her pledge to stop infiltration, and Israel therefore refuses to cooperate any more. Incidents increase, and a few days later the Israeli army crosses the border, attacks a number of villages and kills the inhabitants. Shootings, incidents, and raids by the Israeli army continue for a month or so, and then the Jews agree once more to cooperate, incidents drop to nil and liaison in inaugurated once more. The cycle occupies about six months.

We are ignorant why the Jews perform this cycle. My own conjecture is that the Jews have a psychological impulse to use force. Persons or nations who have suffered persecution or who have long been slaves, long to inflict the same hardship on others. The Jews, so long scorned and oppressed, love to prove to themselves that they are no inferior to other races and that they themselves can kill, and smash and crush to powder.

Punishing the natives

The Israelis have an irresistible desire to be a 'herrenvolk', to have another weaker race at their mercy. In most cases, this complex

is probably unconscious. It inspires them to choose brute force as the best solution, although they subsequently justify their action by arguments.

The majority of infiltrators caught by the Jews are shot dead on the spot without any semblance of a trial. The conquistadores of Cortes and Pizarre can scarcely have been haughty and callous to the natives than are the Israelis today. It is surely an irony that, at a time when the greatest nations of the west are abjuring their former contempt for coloured people, the persecuted Jews should start a new Imperialism in Asia.

One of two courses

These constant Jewish attacks against innocent civilians greatly increase the difficulty of preventing infiltration. The people of the villages nearer the demarcation line live in constant fear of Jewish attacks and massacres. It is not they in most cases who infiltrate – it is the inhabitants of the dreary and sordid refugees camps inside Jordan. Thus the Jewish massacres almost without exception fall on innocent people. The indignation and bitterness produced by these massacres is intense, and is directed both against the USA and Britain (as the powers who support the Jews) and against the Jordan government itself, for its omission to take action to prevent such incidents. When the Jordan government wishes to increase the severity of the penalties inflicted on infiltrators, it meets with strong public opposition. It is accused of servility and cowardice for not only bowing to Jewish terrorism, but even punishing its own countrymen to please the terrorists. Thus Jewish acts of terrorism, allegedly intended to reduce infiltration, actually creates an atmosphere which it makes it more difficult for the Jordan government to prevent it.

In any case, it is extremely doubtful whether more and more repression would produce any affect. Hatred and despair produce profound psychological changes. There seems also to be some deep psychological urge which impels a peasant to cling to and die on his land. A great many of these wretched people are killed now, picking their own oranges and olives just beyond the line.

Figures and distances

It is not the Jordan government which is to blame. This state of affairs was not made by Jordan, but by the Jews, the policy of

Britain and American and the UNO. I am personally unable to find a single wrong act which Jordan has committed. She has always accepted British advice, she has always obeyed UNO orders, she has attempted to conciliate the Jews – but circumstances have been too much for her.

Is there something behind it?

Sometimes one wonders whether 'infiltration' is not a valuable political asset to Israel. During the recent crisis, the Hebrew press had made frequent references to the need 'to settle this trouble once and for all', and others holder, have openly stated that Israel will not be at peace until her frontier is the Jordan.

Is she really seizing on the pretext in order to create an atmosphere favourable for further expansion? When the opportunity will come it is difficult to foresee, but all this immense propaganda effort may well be intended to convince the whole world that the Jordan government cannot keep order. When the auspicious moment arrives, Israel will then be able to march in, on the Hitlerian pretext that the Jordan government cannot preserve order and the Israeli army has to occupy certain areas in order to restore order. It is a technique with which the Nazis and Soviets should have made us familiar.

The cleverest in the world

'The Jews', said a statesman of the last century 'are the cleverest people in the world and the least wise'.

Never has this dictum been truer in the last few years in Palestine.

Precariously clinging to a bridgehead in Asia, they spend their time shooting the inhabitants of that continent, pouring scorn upon them, outwitting them spurning them, hating them. Where do they think they are getting to?

Yet while still yearning to kill, crush and dominate, the Jews are already tasting the fruits of their own actions. Their economic crisis is caused by the fact that other Asiatic nations will not trade with them. They need peace, but they cannot have it, because they want peace with domination.

I believe that this continued Jewish terrorism, is not only a crime but a mistake. I believe that the Jews could have peace, if they would cease to be conquistadors and agree to cooperate.

13. Glubb Papers (2006 accession), box 36, 14 January 1954

After Qibya

It is not the details of these incidents which matter so much as the psychology behind them. The Israelis have never for one moment diverged from their basic policy – namely the use of brute force. Where force failed to produce any improvement, they never seem to have doubted the wisdom of their policy – they merely thought that the force used had not been enough, and decided to use more force.

The failure of force

To a spectator trying to appraise the situation impartially, the Israeli infatuation for violence seems to be suicidal. Perhaps we must remember that the extremists (if not all Israelis) believe that they drove Britain out of Palestine by the use of terrorism. The British evacuation in 1948 perhaps permanently convinced them that terrorism was the weapon of victory. If in 1953 terrorism has not brought Jordan to her knees, then obviously the terrorism has not been brutal enough. If they can step up the terror, victory will be won.

Yet to the impartial observer, the exact reverse seems to be the case. The original infiltrators were harmless and unarmed, seeking lost property or relations. Yet Jewish terrorism made the infiltrators into gunmen. There was little or no hatred of the Jews in Jordan, even after the fighting in 1948. Now hatred increases year by year. Jordan almost made peace in 1949, now peace seems hopelessly out of the question. The Jews must trade with the Arabs, yet they continue to shoot them on sight. Why do they do this?

Arab unity

The Jews were successful in 1948 because the so-called Arab states were divided. As long as they remain divided, Israel is safe. If the Arab states unite, Israel is lost.

If the Jews go on relying on violence, they will compel the Arabs to unite – surely a suicidal policy.

Qibya seems to have given an immense fillip to plans for Arab unity. A year ago, no one would have dreamed that the Arab League would vote large sums of money to help Jordan. Plans for full federation of the Arab states are in the air – largely as a result of Qibya. Within the Arab countries, anti-West nationalism and communism have gained a fresh impetus. The continuance of Israel's 'mad-dog' policy may well be fraught with disastrous consequences for Western influence in the Middle East.

14. TNA: FO 371/110925/VJ1202/14/G, 11 July 1954

Jordan's National Guard

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the existence of the National Guard alone has kept the new Jordan together since 1949. It has certainly played a very big part in holding the East and West Bank's together. It has proved the sincerity of the new Jordan Government and the Arab Legion to the Palestinians.

The enemies of Jordan have increased their pressure on her to such an extent that the government are seriously disturbed and need some extra support from HMG to sustain them.

The National Guard is one of the most important factors in the future life of Jordan. It can either make the British and Arab Legion position supreme, or, if it is taken over by them Arab League or Egypt, it can be used to neutralise the Arab Legion and its influence. In such an event, the struggle to maintain Britain's position in Jordan will have received a severe blow. It is not possible, in the face of popular enthusiasm, to stop the development of the National Guard. It is a question merely whether it will be for us or against us.

The development of the National Guard could be of great benefit to Britain in the event of a major war against Russia, provided that the National Guard remains under the control of the Arab Legion.

15. TNA: FO 371/110887/VJ1052/19/G, 9 December 1954

Glubb to Lord Harding (CIGS)

Nobody could agree with you more fervently than I do that our real and vital objective is to prevent war between Israel and Jordan, which would only lead to disaster for us all.

The local politicians (and indeed nearly all Jordanians) cannot believe that Israel would attack Jordan if she really believed that Her Majesty's Government would interfere by force. Unfortunately, a great many Jordanians and Israelis do not believe that Britain would use force. The first essential therefore seems to be to convince both parties that Britain would fight.

I cannot help thinking that Britain might make her intention to defend Jordan clearer publicly, especially as she made a public statement that she is prepared to fight for Israel if attacked. I know that Her Majesty's Government have told the Israeli government this diplomatically, but they do not appear to have done so publicly.

Meanwhile I am deeply anxious at the situation for two reasons:

(a) Israel is genuinely anxious that the Arabs may grow powerful in the future – perhaps ten or fifteen years hence. If the Arabs really become strong and got together, Israel's present frontier is indefensible. Consequently it is a profound temptation to them to seize the Jordan river frontier line while they are still in a dominating military situation, thereby giving them a securely defensible frontier against a possible Arab comeback later.
(b) On our side, the correct military course might possibly be an immediate withdrawal to the Jordan when the Jews advanced, in the hopes that Britain would come to our aid and enable us to reconquer the West Bank. But two consideration render such a course virtually impossible:

    (1) Jordan itself would probably not survive. The government in Amman would be overthrown, possibly with a massacre of Europeans. The British officers of the Arab Legion might be murdered.

(2) If the Israelis occupied the West Bank they would probably immediately set a puppet Arab government for Arab Palestine. This Arab 'government' would declare its desire to unite with Israel and to break off from Jordan etc. and would appeal to UNO not to allow Britain to engage on an aggressive war against Israel.

It seems to me therefore that Jordan might have collapsed in chaos and Israel be in possession before British reinforcements arrived. Most of the members of the UNO would be anxious to accept a fait accompli, sooner than prolong a war. In this case it might be difficult for Her Majesty's Government to recommence hostilities.

16. MEC: Melville Papers, box 7, folder 61, 5 June 1955

Glubb to Duke

The King has been led (by bad advisers) to believe that as long as HMG pay a subsidy all the senior posts in the Arab Legion will be reserved for British officers. He believes that Jordanian officers will be prevented from reaching the higher ranks.

I have told him that this is not the case, but some of his advisers continue to tell him the opposite.

The King wants to replace British officers by Jordanians. The King has been led (by bad advisors) to believe that as long as Her Majesty's Government pay a subsidy all the senior posts in the Arab Legion will be reserved for British officers. He believes that Jordanian officers will be prevented from reaching the higher ranks. I have told him that this is not the case, but some of his advisors continue to tell him the opposite.

I venture to suggest, therefore, that our first object should be to convince him that this is not correct. The presence of British officers in the Arab Legion is <u>not</u> due to political reasons. It is fully recognised by HMG that in due course Jordanian officers will take over.

The question of the replacement of British by Jordanian officers is purely a military matter. The Arab Legion has only really been

trained and organised as an independent army prepared for war since 1948. The senior Jordanian officers who have been trained in modern war are only 33 years old. No Jordanian officers have actually taken part in a war with modern weapons. Britain is able to supply older and more experienced officers who have fought in World War II and in many cases in other wars also. From the purely military point of view, the Arab Legion is still in need of such experienced.

HMG considers that the question of the replacement of British by Jordanian officers can NOT be made the subject of political bargaining, but can only be settled by military experts on the basis of military considerations.

The point on which HMG insists is that the military efficiency of the Arab Legion must not be allowed to fall. It is suggested that HMG consult the C-in-C Middle East on the general subject of what steps can be taken to enable Arab officers to reach higher rank and take over gradually from British senior officers in the years to come.

King Husain has a youthful urge to do everything himself. He wants to govern Jordan himself, with ministers who obey his commands. He has a similar urge to negotiate direct with Her Majesty's Government to remove senior British officers, without consulting me. His advisers, as to the need for British officers or otherwise, are two lieutenants, who are his ADC's, his cousin Amir Zeid, who is a cadet at Sandhurst, and so on. He rarely consults any body over 30 years of age.

A situation in which the King provokes a crisis with me on the advice of couple of second lieutenants makes it difficult to maintain discipline. His Majesty considers himself to be an expert on military matters as a result of having spent nine months at Sandhurst.

In conclusion I should like to add that King Husain is not anti-British. All the circumstances combine to make him Anglophile.

He is, however, extremely young, enthusiastic, headstrong and temperamental. He needs very skilful handling. He dislikes the company of middle-aged people, and is a great advocate of youth.

He has, during the past year, acquired a (perhaps justified) contempt for the selfish courtiers and politicians who toady to and flatter him in Amman. He is apt to extend his contempt to the rest of the human race, a fact which makes him too self-confident, if not conceited. All this, to such a young man, has tended to give him a rather swollen head. This makes him behave in a cavalier (even rude) manner to others and to show a lack of politeness and consideration, which provokes resentment (although he does not show the fact). But it is not merely a question of snubbing him and pitting him in his place. He is extremely violent in his tempers, and very headstrong and high-spirited. It is probably best to treat him quietly and patiently and hope that he will grow out of the cruder manifestations of extreme youth.

Beneath his violence and general troublesome emotions he has a great deal of character, idealism, a warm heart and immense enthusiasm and zest for life.

In conclusion I may add that there is no demand at present from the Jordan Government or the public for the removal of British officers. The demand is a result of a personal complex of the King's.

Everything is therefore progressing reasonably favourably in Jordan, if the King can be calmed down and prevented from smashing everything up.

17. TNA: FO 371/115907/VR1092/370, 22 October 1955

An extremely conjectural memo on Egyptian policy

The Egyptian character

The Egyptian seems to be chiefly characterised by pomposity and boastfulness. He has an insatiable lust to be important and applauded. Generally speaking, he is inefficient in action. His big talk rarely results in action. As a soldier, the Egyptian fellah is capable of patient endurance in defence. The officers rarely, however, have the courage or initiative to act on the offensive.

The Egyptians' power of speech must not, however, be despised. It is a most formidable weapon. Surrounded by excitable and

temperamental races, with whom he shares the Arabic language, the Egyptian is capable of working his neighbours into waves of frenzy during which they may do almost anything. This Egyptian gift of eloquence has been made immensely more powerful and dangerous by broadcasting. Radio has enabled demagogues to stir up the Arabic-speaking peoples from Morocco to the Persian Gulf.

Egypt and Jordan

For various reasons, therefore, Egypt finds in Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia a group of countries ready to follow her lead.

But Jordan remains a thorn in her flesh, which causes her infinite annoyance and mortification. Jordan's geographical position prevents the Egyptian-Syrian alliance becoming a 'bloc'. Jordan's situation, both financial and military, compels her to depend on Britain – a situation incompatible with the complete subjection to Egypt.

Egypt would, therefore, dearly like to see the disappearance of Jordan from the map. She might well be willing to let Israel move forward to the Jordan, if the East Bank of the Jordan were as result to be divided up between Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Reports have recently been received to the effect that Egypt has decided to turn all her efforts to the creation of a rebellion in Jordan, in the hope of destroying the present regime, including the throne and the British alliance, and setting up a republic controlled by Egyptian puppets.

Whether she act by stirring up rebellion in Jordan or by trying to throw Jordan to the Jewish wolves, there can be no doubt that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are bitter haters of Jordan. No flirtations with King Husain can alter this fact. The only thing which could change it would be if Jordan threw over Britain in return for ten millions a year from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and thereby become their vassal.

Egypt and Israel

These are the problems which engross Egyptian politicians. The tension with Israel is merely an Egyptian instrument to further her dominion over her 'allies'.

Egypt wants to strengthen her army to safeguard herself against the possibility of a Jewish invasion, but such a contingency is fantastically remote. The Sinai desert is a formidable obstacle. The great powers would surely intervene before Israel could conquer Egypt, and the former could scarcely send her army to Egypt leaving all the Arabs threatening the territory of Israel.

The chances of war

He is a rash man who would prophesy what is going to happen next in the Middle East.

If, however, the arguments used above are correct, there would not appear to be a very great danger of war between Egypt and Israel.

Egypt and arms for Israel

In reality Egypt is rendering an immense service to Israel, by all this shouting, threatening and buying arms. Egypt makes all this shemozzle in order to draw the limelight of the world, and thereby impress the other Arab states into accepting her leadership. She has amply succeeded in drawing attention to herself lately, and the western powers have played into her hands by their manifest consternation of the Czech arms deal. American statesmen particularly keep saying that the chances of war between Egypt and Israel are very serious.

With all their unattractive qualities, the Egyptians have a sense of humour. As I do not believe that they have the least intention of having a war with Israel, they may be getting a lot of quiet fun over the gloomy predictions of American statesmen.

Like an American film state, an Egyptian dictator must be in the limelight. It does not really matter whether his turn is tragic or vulgar as long as he is in the headlines.

Israel and Jordan

All this Egyptian hoo-ha will make Israel much stronger. She will probably get more arms, much sympathy and perhaps a treaty with the USA. This will not worry Egypt, who has no intention of having a war with Israel.

The only country at which Israel throws covetous eyes is Jordan. Not indeed because Jordan is being troublesome, but because she still holds half Jerusalem and the balance of Palestine. Sooner or later, Israel is almost certain to have a try at moving her frontier to the Jordan.

18. MEC: Melville Papers, box 7, no. 61, 9 November 1955

Jordan and the Baghdad Pact

The new look Middle East

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the Middle East is no longer divided into two camps of Arabs and Jews, although unfortunately the Western powers still seem to be thinking largely on these lines. Israel is so self-centred she can see no problem but her own and is constantly referring to the Arabs as such as united in enmity to herself, thereby confirming the Western in the belief that the Arabs v. Jews is still the major issue.

Not only is the Middle East no longer split between Arab and Jew, but the present arms race is not only a race between Arabs and Jews but between the Egyptian group and the Iraqi group. There is very nearly as much bitterness and hatred between the two Arab groups as there is between the Arabs and the Jews. Not only so but the two Arab groups seem likely to fall into the world picture, one being pro-Russia and the other pro-Western democracies – a development which would, of course, greatly widen the gulf between them.

At the present moment Jordan, small though she may be, seems to hold an immensely significant position. If Jordan were to join the Baghdad Pact, Lebanon might be encouraged to resist Egyptian domination and if Lebanon could be swung, Syria herself might eventually find herself isolated.

If, on the other hand, Jordan steps out, or leans to the Egyptian side, Iraq will tend to give up the Arabs as a bad job, will intensify her relations with the Baghdad Pact powers and go into isolation as far as other Arab countries are concerned. Such a development would throw Jordan and Lebanon back into the lap of Egypt, and

would tend gradually to erect a sold Arab bloc under Egyptian leadership and in agreement with Soviet Russia.

I cannot help feeling, therefore, that just at the moment Jordan has become immensely important and that it is worthwhile going a very long way and incurring heavy expense in order to seeing Jordan into the right camp at this crisis. As soon as this has been done the same effort should be directed towards Lebanon, where the Egyptian-Saudi party are already extremely active.

I do not believe that the Egyptian government have the least intention of engaging in hostilities with Israel. To them the Palestine question is merely a political platform by means of which they aspire to achieve the leadership of the Arab world. The general feeling of resentment throughout the Arab countries against Israel and her alleged champions, the Western powers, enables Jamal Abdul Nasser to become a national hero by fulminating against the Jews. I do not believe for a moment that he has the least intention of becoming involved in action against them.

Personally, I believe that it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that the Arab-Israel quarrel is no longer the major problem of the Middle East. The Arabs, as I have said do not believe that Egypt is going communist, and Jamal Abdel Nasser would be ill advised to do so.

19. MEC: Melville Papers, box 2, no. 21, 28 November 1955

Memorandum on Jordan

Intensification of anti-British activities

Jordan is the chief stronghold of Britain in the Middle East, and hence the first move is to get Britain out of Jordan. Egypt and Saudi Arabia set themselves to do so together. Several methods were employed at once. King Husain is flattered and told that the British are his only enemies. The Saudis, seeing him poor, give him handfuls of money. The press is bought complete, regardless of cost. Gangs of infiltrators are recruited to draw down on Jordan reprisal attacks from Israel. Plans are discussed for civil disorders in Jordan.

Loss of initiative

The most significant aspect of all of this is that Britain has lost the initiative. It is Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Yemen who are always attacking. We endeavour belatedly to ward off the blows. Henceforward Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen have Russia behind them in their attempts to drive Britain out.

Pressure on Jordan

I do not believe that anyone in England realises the intensity of the present Saudi-Egyptian pressure on Jordan. The King is young and bewildered. The ruling classes and the government of Jordan still look almost entirely to Britain for help and support. But they are afraid, and lack initiative and moral courage, and they have no leader. They want someone outside to pull them together, and make up their minds for them.

Jordan instability

Jordan is the most stable country in the Middle East because of the Arab Legion and British support. In so far it is unstable, the fact is due to the instability of the King, whose constitutional power to appoint and dismiss cabinets renders him supreme.

Jordan must sign

Responsible people in Jordan agree that the present fluid situation is extremely dangerous and that the only way out is for her to adhere to the Baghdad Pact. The impetus must come from Britain, who can act in two ways:

1) By pressure and threats to stop the subsidy.
2) By a gift to persuade her to sign voluntarily.

If Britain were to try and compel Jordan to sign solely under threats of stopping the subsidy, one of two things would happen.

1) Jordan would sign, but considerable resentment would be engendered in the King.
2) The alternative possibility is that Jordan would refuse. The King, who is highly emotional, might fly of at a tangent and sign an agreement with Egypt.

Loss of Britain's position in Jordan

If Britain's bluff were called and were to lose her position in Jordan, she would lose everything here. Not only would the Arab Legion British officers go, but the RAF stations at Amman and Mafraq, the units at Aqaba and the pre-positioned stores would be lost.

20. TNA: FO 371/121462/VJ1015/8, 21 December 1955

Glubb to Melville

Jordan has just narrowly missed a revolution. If it had succeeded there would have been a leftish republic under Egyptian protection. This republic would have denounced the treaty with Britain and dismissed me and all British officers. Egypt and Saudi Arabia announced today that they are ready to pay subsidy if Britain stops paying. Presumably if Jordan denounced the treaty Israel would sooner or later advance to the Jordan River. In this case a further half million refugees would arrive in Amman as fugitives and chaos result. Alternatively Israel army might come to Amman.

Life now returning to normal at least temporarily. We shall probably have a breathing space of a few weeks. Extremist elements are few in number but well organised. Majority population are loyal and reasonable but unorganised and inarticulate. Thus crowd of a few thousands in Amman nearly overthrow whole regime. In course of next month we must organise loyal elements in all towns and in tribes and villages.

Conclusion

The reports discussed in this book, which are a very small proportion of Glubb's oeuvre, provide remarkable and prescient insights into the Middle East during the heyday of Britain's imperial presence in the region. The quantity and variety of documents written by him make it possible to provide an assessment of his service in Iraq and Jordan. The reports also show that his analysis of some issues, such as raiding and the tribes, and the role of the army, were timely. Glubb was an important figure because of his contribution to various successful policies, and the early reports show that he was willing to criticise the failings of official policy. Indeed the reports cited in this book show that he never missed an opportunity to critique government policy on a variety of subjects. It is possible to argue that this was a weakness because he alienated officials in Whitehall. A second weakness was his tendency to write unsolicited memoranda that had nothing to do with his role as commander of the Arab Legion.

Glubb's service in Iraq was important because he developed a lifelong affection for tribesmen and their way of life. More significantly, he established how to control the desert without resorting to coercive techniques, which were clearly influenced by methods of tribal control adopted in India. The key lessons he learnt in Iraq were the importance of mobility in the desert, which was based on constructing forts, and the value of recruiting the Bedouin. Following his arrival in Jordan in November 1930, Glubb was instrumental in controlling the desert periphery of the state. One of his most significant achievements in Jordan was the incorporation of the tribes into the state. His monthly desert reports provide remarkable insight into the tribal population of Jordan, and reinforce his reputation

as an expert on tribes. The demarcation of regional frontiers had profound implications for the tribal population of Jordan. The long tradition of tribal raiding was impermissible because of the significant diplomatic implications of tribes crossing newly drawn frontiers. These contrived borders meant that the tribes could not retaliate against incursions from Saudi Arabia, and diplomatic attempts to achieve restitution were usually inconclusive. The tribes in southern Jordan were severely affected by raiding from Hejaz and Najd, and the impact of locusts and drought. Glubb commented in great detail about the impoverishment of the tribal population, and the remedial steps that could have been instigated by the government to ameliorate this situation.

Glubb's policy of recruiting the sons of tribal families into the Arab Legion's Desert Patrol was a groundbreaking innovation. As a result of their service in the legion, the tribes' attitude towards the central government changed. Hitherto, they regarded the government as their mortal enemy, but military service gave them an outlet for their traditional custom of raiding. More significantly, the recruitment of tribesmen into the Arab Legion transformed the tribal population into one of the states' most loyal group of adherents. Glubb was a strong supporter of the tribal way of life, but the reports show that the policy of recruiting tribesmen and controlling the desert periphery of Jordan undermined the tribes' autonomy.

Glubb's views on desert control and the protecting Jordan's frontiers had long-term significance. Although he and the Arab Legion succeeded in preventing raiding and counter-raiding across the territory's southern frontier, an equally significant challenge was posed by events in neighbouring Palestine following the outbreak of disorder in 1936. Glubb's argument that British troops should not be sent to Jordan was undoubtedly correct because of the financial and political implications of such a step. The British Army's suppression of the revolt in Palestine was highly coercive, and Glubb was rightly concerned that if British forces were used against the population of Jordan it would have entailed an insurrection that would have been difficult to control. The authorities employed subtle methods that included the payment of subsidies to the leading shaikhs and the implementation of job-creation schemes. Notwithstanding these techniques, controlling Jordan's frontiers proved to be an insuperable challenge for Glubb and his successors. A combination

of circumstances, such as lengthy frontiers with hostile neighbours, has made the country especially vulnerable to opposition groups over the decades.

Nonetheless, one of Glubb's significant contributions to Jordan was the gradual development of a model of policing that relied on minimum force, unlike most of the neighbouring states. In marked contrast with Jordan's neighbours, the security forces have with certain exceptions, such as when the integrity of the state was challenged, adopted a minimum force policy. Furthermore, Jordan's location means that it has been consistently susceptible to insurgents using its territory. Control of the kingdom's frontiers has therefore been consistently problematic, and, as Glubb argued in the 1930s, the government has to be eternally vigilant and should not take the tribal populations' loyalty for granted.

The Arab Legion was expanded in the late 1930s in order to control the rugged northern and western frontiers of the country, and the ongoing civil war in Syria shows that Jordan continues to be threatened by external forces that have potentially significant implications for domestic security. The security situation in Palestine between 1936 and 1939, and the possibility that the predominantly Arab areas of Palestine could have been allocated to Jordan, appeared to be an obvious solution. Glubb presciently argued in 1938 that the better-educated Palestinian population would influence Jordanian politics heavily. This is precisely the situation that came to pass following the First Arab-Israeli War and Jordan's annexation of the West Bank in 1950.

Events in Palestine and their potential threat to public security in Jordan led Glubb to write scathing comments about the Palestinian political class and its Zionist opponents. The reports reveal a degree of contempt for almost all Arab politicians in the Levant, with the exception of King Abdullah I. In contrast with Glubb's favourable attitude towards the tribal way of life in Jordan, the reports were also consistently scathing of the settled population in the Levant and Egypt. He argued that townspeople were fundamentally different from the tribes, and as a result of the introduction of European-style education the urban population had lost touch with their cultural heritage. The reports show that Glubb held the political class in low regard because he viewed them as venal, and his analysis reflected the longstanding distinction between tribes and the settled or urban

population. He strongly supported the benevolent autocracy that characterised Jordan, but he believed that monarchical rule was dated. Instead he argued in favour of autocratic government, but it is unclear from his writings what sort of regime he envisaged. Although Glubb's critique of the political elites in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine might have been accurate, there is little indication in his numerous writings of any viable alternative.

During the Second World War, Glubb managed to find the time to write a series of memoranda in which he castigated the models of imperialism that the British adopted in Iraq and Palestine. His views on the failure of Britain's role in Iraq are important because they provide important insights into why contemporary Iraqi politics appears to be so ineffectual. However, his contention that the Iraqi Army should have been abolished was unrealistic, but his comments about the problems in raising an army are of contemporary significance in Afghanistan and Iraq. That is because creating armies is a lengthy process rather than a short-term palliative designed to serve limited political objectives.

Glubb's most significant contribution in Jordan was the transformation of the Arab Legion from a gendarmerie to a professional, long-service army. The legion's role in the invasions of Iraq and Syria during the Second World War showed that it was capable of limited military operations. Thereafter, it played little more than an ancillary role in the Second World War in the Middle East. Glubb was clearly frustrated by the British Government's denial of any effective role for the Arab Legion, but during the war it was expanded at British expense. This was a very important process because the legion had a political and military impact that was out of proportion with its small size.

The post-Second World War era was dominated by the British decision to withdraw from Palestine in May 1948. Glubb correctly argued that the Palestine mandate was an unmitigated disaster for Britain's prestige in the Middle East. He held the British Government responsible for the detrimental impact the mandate had on the Palestinian population. Nonetheless, he argued that the Palestinian political leadership, especially Hajj Amin al-Husayni, failed the population because of internecine squabbles, and their consistent rejection of proposals to partition Palestine. In 1946, Glubb changed his mind about the efficacy of Jordan annexing the Arab areas of Palestine.

This policy would have been beneficial to King Abdullah I and his long-running aspiration to expand his Lilliputian state, but this was contrary to the established policy of the Foreign Office, which opposed the expansion of King Abdullah's realm. Nonetheless, the Foreign Office was forced to change its policy on the future of Palestine as a result of events on the ground. Glubb's views show that he was determined to act in the perceived interests of King Abdullah and Jordan in advocating the expansion of the state at the expense of a Palestinian state that would have almost certainly been dominated by the mufti.

Glubb's determination to act in Jordan's political and strategic interests is borne out by his efforts to expand and re-arm the Arab Legion at all costs. This proved to be a wise policy because King Abdullah and Glubb were concerned that the British withdrawal from Palestine would leave Jordan vulnerable to its predatory neighbours. Nonetheless, Glubb's attempts to expand the legion were curtailed by financial stringencies in London. The Arab Legion and Glubb cultivated a remarkably close relationship with the British military authorities in Palestine and at the headquarters of the British MELF in Egypt. This proved to be beneficial during the course of the First Arab-Israeli War because the Arab Legion received intelligence on Israeli forces. There are also indications that the British military authorities gave more logistical assistance than Glubb was willing to acknowledge.

The First Arab-Israeli War in 1948–1949 was Glubb's greatest military and political challenge. The Arab Legion's successful role in the war made Glubb's reputation, and had it not been for the conflict he might have been a minor historical figure. The Arab states' response to the crisis in Palestine was a case study in the failure of coalition warfare because they failed to establish a unified military plan. This meant that Glubb and the Arab Legion fought alone. Glubb was forced to follow the king's instructions that the Arab Legion defended Jerusalem at all cost. This was despite the fact that the legion was neither equipped nor trained for such an operation. It was widely but erroneously assumed that Glubb was following British orders to deploy the British-officered Arab Legion. The evidence clearly shows that the Foreign Office took various steps – the most important of which was the imposition of an arms embargo – that had serious implications for the Arab Legion.

Be that as it may, Glubb's position was imperilled with King Abdullah and his government by his unilateral decision to exceed the Arab Legion's budget, and the failure to defend Lydda and Ramleh. In spite of the legion's expansion, it was too small to take on a full range of operations, particularly against a numerically superior Israeli army. Therefore, Glubb was militarily wise to avoid extending the Arab Legion's area of operations, but this decision had very serious political ramifications. He and the British officers serving the Arab Legion were publicly vilified for the decision not to defend these towns, and Glubb almost resigned.

In spite of the Arab Legion's limitations, it performed well during the course of the First Arab-Israeli War in contrast with the armies of the neighbouring states that were numerically superior. The war had significant implications for Jordan and the Arab Legion. The influx of several hundred thousand Palestinian refugees placed considerable pressure on the Jordanian Government. Hitherto, Glubb had warned that the annexation of the Arab areas of Palestine would have significant political implications for the Hashemite kingdom. This is precisely the situation that came to pass during his final years in Jordan, and the annexation of the West Bank became a poisoned chalice for King Abdullah I and his successors.

One of the most significant problems the Jordanian Government faced in the post-1948 war era was the problem of controlling the kingdom's frontiers. In the aftermath of the First Arab-Israeli War, Palestinian refugees were determined to cross the ceasefire line with Israeli in order to reclaim lost property or commit acts of violence. The Israelis responded to so-called infiltration by launching operations along the frontier that were intended to deter the movement of refugees. Glubb was scathing of the Israeli Government's attitude towards the Palestinian population, and he controversially regarded it as akin to that of the Nazis. His anti-Israeli stance was clearly influenced by mounting evidence of atrocities committed by Israeli forces.

However, the Israelis were deterred from launching a full-scale operation because the Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 committed the British to support Jordan in the event of hostile aggression. The solution to this threat was to expand the Arab Legion during the early 1950s, but it is doubtful whether it would have been able to withstand an Israeli attack. The enlargement of the legion posed a

fundamental problem for Glubb and the British. The British Government funded the expansion for strategic reasons, but the transformation of the legion into an army meant that more British officers were required to fill command positions and provide logistical support. Only a handful of British officers originally served in the legion, and they were Arabists rather than professional soldiers. Glubb commented at length in his reports about the dilemma he faced in expanding the Arab Legion. He believed that officers should possess certain characteristics, such as the ability to command Arab troops, but it became very difficult to find enough officers who met his stringent standards. Glubb's policy of promoting Arab officers slowly became increasingly out of touch with the changed political circumstances in Jordan. He claimed that Arab officers were not denied promotion because they lacked sufficient experience, but there were significant political demands for the reversal of his policy.

Notwithstanding Glubb's attitude towards Arab officers, the Arab Legion and its successor, the Jordanian Arab Army has not interfered significantly in domestic politics. Nonetheless, some officers were heavily influenced by Arab nationalist sentiment during Glubb's twilight years in Jordan, but the army remained loyal to the monarchy. The Jordanian Army is a very unusual regional example of non-interference in political affairs. It has never launched a successful coup d'état, and Jordan is a notable example of successful civil–military relations in a region where armed forces have dominated politics.

Glubb's role as the British commander of an Arab army during the heyday of anti-imperialist Arab nationalism was a fundamental problem that was never solved. Although he held no rank in the British military hierarchy, he was still perceived in the regional press as an interloper and a symbol of the *ancien régime*. The Foreign Office and Glubb discussed his future in Jordan, but he was regarded as indispensable, and the British argued that no suitable successor was available. His position remained tenable during the reign of King Abdullah I, but the First Arab-Israeli War, the incorporation of the West Bank in April 1950, the impact of Israeli retaliatory operations and the rise of Nasserism undermined the patriarchal system of rule that characterised the king's reign. Glubb believed that he still had a role to play in Jordan and that the country was 'in the bag', and the Foreign Office believed him.

Glubb's contribution to the development of the Jordanian state and its armed forces was considerable. However, he was allowed to stay too long and during his final years in Jordan it was hard to determine precisely whom he was serving. He served as commander of the Arab Legion at the king's behest, and his role was dominated by political rather than military issues. Likewise, he revelled in his position as an unofficial servant of the British Empire, corresponding with high-ranking officers and submitting a variety of memoranda to London. In the end, his dual loyalty was unsustainable.

King Husayn's ascension to the throne in 1953 led to a fundamental change in the situation. For a combination of personal and political reasons, relations between Glubb and the king were strained. Moreover, the king was subject to various political forces, which he could not ignore. Glubb and the Foreign Office failed to see that his service in Jordan was no longer tenable, but nothing was done to deal with the problem. The complacent handling of King Husayn and the failure to identify the anti-British trend in Jordanian politics helps to explain why the king's dismissal of Glubb, despite his loyal service to Jordan, shocked the British Government, and almost led the Eden government to retaliate.

Notes

Introduction

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