



Kingdom of Hejaz (1916)

MUNUC 33
ONLINE



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LETTER FROM THE CRISIS DIRECTOR

Hello Delegates,

My name is Mateo Arrizabalaga and I will be your Crisis Director for the cabinet of the King of Hejaz. A little about me, I am a second year at the University of Chicago potentially majoring in History or maybe something else. This will be my fourth year participating in MUNUC, I did two as a crisis delegate, and last year I was an assistant chair on the Ad hoc committee of the secretary general. I am also CD for a committee at ChoMUN, UChicago's college conference, along with Danny.

I am really excited about this committee. The time period and location are very interesting and there is a lot going on in the world at this time, and we have lots of exciting ideas for conference. I enjoy the relative obscurity of the subject and hopefully you learn something new.

I am very conscious of the fact that these are difficult times and we want to make this as stress free and enjoyable of a process as it can be for you. I have been where you are so if you have any questions or concerns at all feel free to reach out.

Mateo Arrizabalaga

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LETTER FROM CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Kingdom of Hejaz! My name is Danny Seplow, and I am thrilled to be your Chair for this committee. Our committee takes place during a transformative time in an often overlooked part of the world, and I am excited that we will get to explore it together.

I am a second year student at the University of Chicago majoring in History and minoring in Near Eastern Language and Culture. However, I am notoriously indecisive, and that is all subject to change. This will be my first time chairing a committee. I was an AC for the 1970 Oman crisis committee at last year's MUNUC. I am also a Crisis Director for the Napoleon's Elba Exile committee at ChoMUN, the collegiate conference hosted by the University of Chicago.

At conference, I will be chairing as Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, who will be declaring independence from the Ottoman Empire and trying to form his own kingdom on the Arabian Peninsula. This will not be an easy task, and you will be met with numerous obstacles from regional rivals and global superpowers alike. Although the Arab Revolt is often thought of as just another theater of WWI, hopefully you will soon see that it had a rich history of its own and large regional ramifications.

We want our committee to be an inclusive environment where all delegates can feel comfortable. We ask that you refrain from islamophobia, human rights violations, homophobia, transphobia, racism, and sexism. The Middle East is a complex region that is so much more than orientalist characterizations found in mass media, so please avoid reductive stereotypes and jihadist terrorism. We will not tolerate any of these in either backroom arcs or frontroom directives. We trust you to be mature and use your best judgment to avoid offending other delegates in committee or being purposefully incendiary. The goal of the committee is to educate and entertain, not offend. In addition, please avoid any remarks about the current state of Saudi Arabia. Not only is the time

period different, but they were a rival tribe of the Hashemite Kingdom of Hejaz. The current politics and policies of Saudi Arabia have little relevance to our committee's historical setting.

Although the real Kingdom of Hejaz was short lived, hopefully you all can more successfully navigate regional rivalries and geopolitics. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at dseplow@uchicago.edu.

Best,

Danny Seplow

GEOGRAPHY OF HEJAZ

Physical Geography

Hejaz is located on the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It borders the Red Sea, opposite the nation of Egypt. Surrounding Hejaz are Yemen to the South, Transjordan and Iraq to the North, and the desert-heavy region of Nejd to the East.

The peninsula has many natural resources including copper, zinc, iron, and even some gold. The proximity to the Red Sea has also created several large salt deposits.¹ Much of the Kingdom of Hejaz lies on the Arabian Shield, a geographic region comprising primarily of hard rock and little arable land. This region also receives little rainfall and thus has little vegetation. Most of the region is dotted with sharp, rocky mountains and hills jutting out of the desert.² The few pockets of fertile land lie in the numerous oases that punctuate the arid desert. These have been historically important to trade, allowing caravans a place to rest, drink water, and purchase food. Though much of Hejaz is inhospitable, the area directly bordering the Red Sea is a sandy coastal plain called the Tihamah. The Tihamah is slightly more arable than other parts of the peninsula. Most of Hejaz is mountainous, with the Hijaz range in the North and the Asir range in the South. The peninsula is also crisscrossed by Wadis, dried up river beds that are often used as roads.³ All this together makes for a region difficult to navigate, and even harder to develop.

¹ Michael L. Zientek and Greta J. Orris, "Geology and Nonfuel Mineral Deposits of the United States," Open-File Report, November 25, 2005, <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr20051294A>.

² Glen F. Brown, Dwight L. Schmidt, and A. Curtis Huffman Jr., "Geology of the Arabian Peninsula; Shield Area of Western Saudi Arabia," Professional Paper, January 1, 1994, <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/pp560A>.

³ Klaus Kästle, "Map of the Arabian Peninsula," Nations Online Project, 2019, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/Arabia-Map.htm>.



Topographic Map of the Arabian Peninsula with Modern Political Subdivisions⁴

Climate

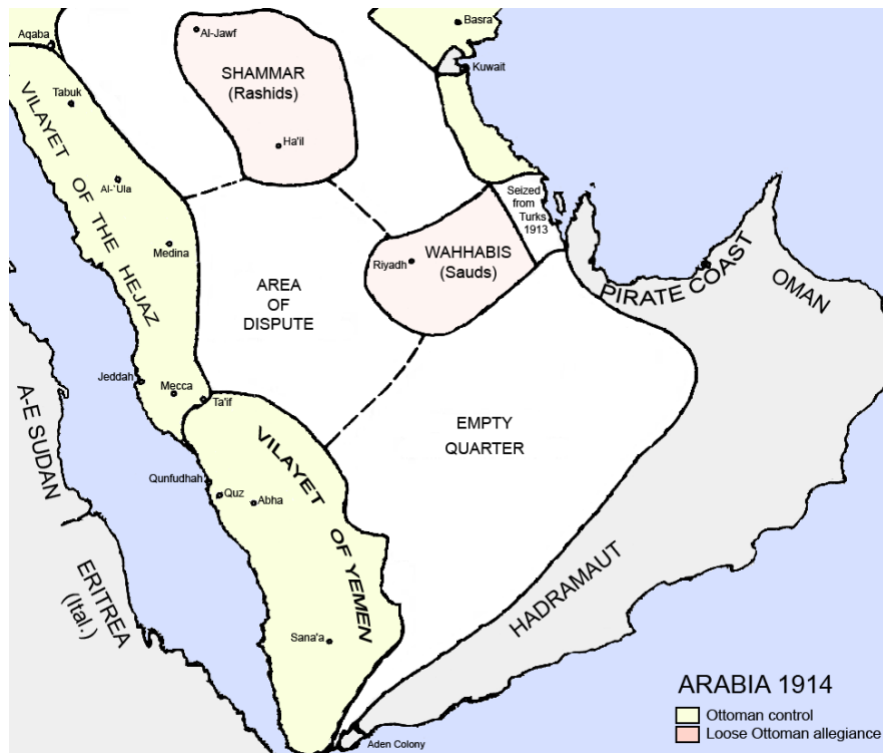
Hejaz can be roughly divided into two different climatic regions: hot and humid on the coast of the Red Sea, and hot and dry further inland. Both regions have high average temperatures and irregular rainfall, but the humid coastal regions are slightly less arid. There are only a handful of areas in Hejaz where large scale agriculture is feasible. Most of these locations are around oases. Nighttime temperatures can drop drastically, making for a harsh and unforgiving desert climate. The winter months are warm, and the summer months are scorching. The time of year thus plays an important factor in migratory routes of both nomads and pilgrims.⁵

⁴ "File: Saudi Arabia Relief Location Map.jpg," File: Saudi Arabia relief location map.jpg - Wikimedia Commons, June 11, 2019, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File%3ASaudi_Arabia_relief_location_map.jpg.

⁵ Mohammed Bagader, "Climate Adaptability in the Hejazi Traditional Architecture," *International Journal of Heritage Architecture: Studies, Repairs and Maintenance* 1, no. 4 (2017): pp. 683-693, <https://doi.org/10.2495/ha-v1-n4-683-693>.

Major Cities/Ports

Hejaz had a total population of about 750,000 people in 1916. Of these, about 80,000 lived in Mecca, 40,000 in Medina, and 30,000 in Jeddah.⁶ Many of the remaining people either lived as nomads or in smaller towns dotted around the region.



Map of the Arabian Peninsula, 1914⁷

Mecca is the holiest city in Islam and the largest in the region. It contains the Great Mosque, the destination of the annual Hajj Pilgrimage and has been an important stop along transit routes for centuries. Historically, the city served as a major stop along caravan routes, but its economic role has since been surpassed by its importance in Islam. On account of its religious significance, only Muslims are allowed entrance into the city. It is surrounded by several large mountains. The low elevation combined with the dry climate leaves it vulnerable to flash floods.⁸

⁶ Randy McNally, *Pocket Atlas of the World* (New York, NY: Rand McNally and Co., 1921).

⁷ "File:Arabia 1914.Png," File:Arabia 1914.png - Wikimedia Commons, June 3, 2020, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File%3AArabia_1914.png.

⁸ John Bagot Glubb and Ass'ad Sulaiman Abdo, "Mecca," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., September 18, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mecca>.

Medina is the second holiest city in Islam after Mecca. The city is about 2,000 feet above sea level and was built on a fertile oasis. Like Mecca, only Muslims are allowed to enter the city. The city also contains an important mosque, the Prophetic Mosque (Al-Masjid an-Nabawi). The city has a large agricultural sector that focuses on fruits, vegetables, and cereals. Medina utilizes Turkish plumbing, aqueducts, and streams from local mountains to irrigate the soil. It lies at the end of the Hejaz Railway that begins in Damascus.⁹

Jeddah is the largest port in the Hejaz region. Historically, it served as the port of Mecca, facilitating pilgrims and trade. For centuries it has played a massive role in the Hajj as well as smaller pilgrimages to holy sites across the peninsula. The majority of pilgrims traveling by sea come through this port on the Red Sea.

Tabuk is not as large as some of the other cities in Hejaz. It is in the northern part of the peninsula and an important stop on the Hejaz Railway. The city is also known for its date palm groves and a Turkish fort on the outskirts.¹⁰

⁹ Ass'ad Sulaiman Abdo and John Bagot Glubb, "Medina," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., September 18, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/place/Medina-Saudi-Arabia>.

¹⁰ The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Tabūk," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., January 8, 2015), <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tabuk>.

HISTORY OF HEJAZ

Pre-Islamic History of Hejaz

Despite being strongly influenced by the birth and spread of Islam, Hejaz has a vibrant pre-Islamic history dating back millennia that remains relevant to the present culture and politics of the region. Like much of Arabia, tribal units have been the primary power players in the area. At various times, different tribes have exerted enough power to form larger kingdoms and rule over larger domains. The most noteworthy examples of these kingdoms are Nabataea and Thamud. Assyrian texts attest to the Thamud being a kingdom in Hejaz in 715 BCE and lasting well into the Common Era.¹¹ The Kingdom of Nabataea, who ruled territory similar in boundaries to Transjordan, lasted from around the fourth century BCE until their conquest by the Romans in 105 CE.¹² Both cultures were known for their characteristic houses and tombs carved into the sandstone of the region, of which the most prominent in Hejaz is Mada'in Saleh near Mount Athlab.¹³



Houses at Mada'in Saleh¹⁴

¹¹ "Thamud (Nation of Prophet Saleh)," Madain Project, accessed June 16, 2020, <https://madainproject.com/thamud>.

¹² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Nabataean," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., November 12, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nabataean-people>.

¹³ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Thamūd," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., April 21, 2016), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Thamud>.

¹⁴ Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:Madain Saleh (6730299351).Jpg," File:Madain Saleh (6730299351).jpg - Wikimedia Commons, January 6, 2018, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File%3AMadain_Saleh_%286730299351%29.jpg.

Outside of these kingdoms, Arabia was a hodgepodge of various tribes — many of which were nomadic pastoralists. Their social structure was based along familial ties. In addition to nomadic tribes, there were a handful of sedentary tribes based in the major cities of the time. These cities largely came to prominence from their location on the trade routes of the region and served as important rest places for caravans crossing the desert. Even before the rise of Islam, the most important city in Hejaz was Mecca.¹⁵

Quranic tradition points to the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, as the founders of Mecca. However, what is historically known is that the city was founded in an oasis on the main caravan route coming out of southern Arabia.¹⁶ Along with its economic status, Mecca was known as an important place of religious pilgrimage. At the time, Arabia was home to practitioners of a large variety of religious beliefs including Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and local polytheistic religions.¹⁷ The tribes of the region had their own polytheistic traditions in which idolatry, the worship of idols, was prominent. Many cities hosted idols representing the most important deity for the local ruling tribe. Mecca was home to a temple known as the Kaaba which was home to 360 different idols representing a large number of different religions. People came from the surrounding region to pray to the idols in the temple and trade in the city. Sometime in the 5th century CE the Quraysh tribe came to control the city of Mecca cementing their place in the future of the region.¹⁸

Islam as a Religion

Islam is a complex religion with many different sects practiced globally. This section cannot hope to be comprehensive nor all-encompassing. We aim to be respectful while focusing on what will be most relevant to the committee.

Islam is a monotheistic religion founded by the Prophet Muhammad originating in the Arabian Peninsula. Muhammad was born around 570 CE in Mecca and was raised by his uncle and

¹⁵ "Pre-Islamic Arabia," Boundless World History (Lumen), accessed June 16, 2020, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-worldhistory/chapter/pre-islamic-arabia/>.

¹⁶ "Mecca," Britannica School (Encyclopedia Britannica), accessed June 16, 2020, <https://school.eb.com/levels/high/article/Mecca/109828>.

¹⁷ "Pre-Islamic Arabia."

¹⁸ Ibid.

grandfather. According to Islamic tradition, Muhammad received the word of Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel, and he passed these teachings on to his followers. His followers then recorded the word of Allah as the Quran, the holy book of Islam and the highest source of Islamic law. The Quran is divided into 114 passages called *suras*, each focusing on spiritual and ethical teachings or ways to form an orderly and moral community. Along with the Quran, there exists the Hadiths: a collection of the sayings and actions of Muhammad used to elaborate on certain aspects of Islamic law and provide an example for how to be a good Muslim.¹⁹

Within Islam there exist a number of sects that, although in agreement on the basic tenets of faith, differ on certain issues. The most prominent sects are Sunni and Shia. After the death of Muhammad in 632, a dispute arose over who should inherit his legacy and lead the new religion. Some thought it should be decided by consensus of the *ummah*, or the community, others thought it should be passed down to a member of the family of Muhammad. The former group triumphed in this initial disagreement, and Muhammad was eventually succeeded by Abu Bakr, but many thought it should have gone to his son-in-law, Ali, instead. While Ali did eventually become Caliph, leader of the Islamic state, it was only after two others were assassinated. Those that thought the Caliph should have been Ali initially became known as the Shiites, for Shiat Ali, or followers of Ali. Those who thought the Caliph should be decided by consensus became known as the Sunnis, for Sunnah, or the prophet's tradition. Over the following centuries, the two sects have continued to diverge along other issues and developed their own cultural practices. Although these are the two main sects of Islam, they each have developed further subdivisions and other major sects exist. Generally, Sunnism expanded West towards Africa and Europe while Shiism expanded East toward Asia.²⁰ Within Hejaz, Sunni Islam is more prominent, however both branches participate in the Hajj and as such can be found within the region.

Wahhabism is a radical sect of Sunni Islam. It was founded in the 18th century by theologian Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, who made a pact with Muhammad bin Saud, founder of the house of Saud, to spread his interpretation of the faith across the Arabian Peninsula. Wahhabism seeks to

¹⁹ Annemarie Schimmel, Muhsin S. Mahdi, and Fazlur Rahman, "Islam," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., August 15, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam>.

²⁰ John Harney, "How Do Sunni and Shia Islam Differ?," The New York Times (The New York Times, January 3, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/04/world/middleeast/q-and-a-how-do-sunni-and-shia-islam-differ.html>.

return to a 'pure' form of Islam that adheres strictly to Sharia (laws based on several key early Islamic texts). These laws control both public and private life. They prescribe subordination of women to their husbands and fathers. Sharia law has strict punishments for crimes, including the death penalty for homosexuals. Part of the strict adherence to Islamic law is the prohibition of veneration of tombs as supernatural and a general abhorrence of all things ornate and elaborate.²¹ The house of Saud used this new dogma to establish the first Saudi state in the region of Nejd in 1745, often using military force in order to spread their doctrine. This state was defeated by the governor of Egypt in 1818 but was refounded in 1824. In 1891, it was defeated again by an alliance of rival tribes. The house of Saud has continued to adhere to Wahhabism and enforce its rules upon its domains.²²

Hejaz During the Spread of Islam

Islam was founded by Muhammad in the year 610 CE in the city of Mecca, positioning Hejaz to be an important region for centuries to come. At the time, Mecca was a polytheistic religious hub for all of Arabia, and much of its economy was dependent on the Kaaba for religious tourism and pilgrimages. When a new religion appeared that preached monotheism, many of the residents of Mecca looked unkindly on it, viewing it as a threat to their livelihood. In 622, Muhammad and his followers left Mecca for the city of Yathrib (Medina) to escape the persecution they faced in Mecca. This trip became known as the Hegira and marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

From his base in Medina, Muhammad continued to expand Islam through conversion and war. For years, the Muslims clashed with Meccan caravans until, in 624, the leaders of Mecca raised an army to quash the Muslims once and for all. The two groups met at the Battle of Badr, and though severely outnumbered, the Muslims managed to defeat their enemies. This military accomplishment spurred Muhammad forward, and after engagements with various other tribes, the Muslims eventually returned to Mecca in 630—this time as conquerors. By the time of the Prophet's death in 632, he was the most powerful man in Arabia with the capital of this new Islamic state in Medina.

²¹ "Wahhabism: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?," The Week UK (Dennis Publishing Limited, August 17, 2017), <https://www.theweek.co.uk/87832/wahhabism-what-is-it-and-why-does-it-matter>.

²² Galina Yemelianova, "Explainer: What Is Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia?," The Conversation (The Conversation, May 4, 2020), <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-wahhabism-in-saudi-arabia-36693>.

Following the death of Muhammad, he was succeeded by his companion Abu Bakr, who continued to expand the caliphate until he ruled all of the Arabian Peninsula. Under the following two caliphs, expansion continued and Syria, the Levant, Egypt, and the majority of the Sassanian Empire came under Islamic control. As the capital of what is known as the Rashidun Caliphate, Medina was one of the most important cities in the world at the time. When the fourth Caliph, Ali, came to power the Islamic world was less stable, and he moved the capital from Medina to Kufa (modern day Iraq) in order to better rule the frontiers. The capital of the Islamic world never returned to Hejaz and its importance decreased as such.

The next Caliph, Muawiya I, broke precedent by naming his son as his successor, starting the first Islamic dynasty, the Umayyad dynasty. The Umayyad dynasty expanded the Islamic state to its largest united form before eventually falling to another dynasty. In the centuries that followed, there were several different dynasties and the capital of the Islamic world moved from Kufa to Damascus to Baghdad to Cairo, but it never returned to Hejaz. Despite this, Hejaz remained important as the religious center of Islam. Many of the most powerful Islamic dynasties continued to be from Meccan families.²³

Hejaz as an Ottoman Province

Ottoman Conquest

Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, the Ottoman Empire expanded through the Middle East. Hejaz was first claimed by the Ottoman Empire after they conquered Egypt in 1517. After a period of negotiations, the Sharif of Mecca became a vassal of the Ottoman Sultan. Hejaz would remain part of the empire for the next 400 years.²⁴

The Ottoman Empire's domain was vast and most of the territories were far away from the imperial capital, Istanbul. This created a largely decentralized system of governing. Most of the wealth generated in Arabic-speaking parts of the empire was centered in the provinces of Egypt, Iraq, and

²³ Khan, Syed M. "Islam." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Last modified November 25, 2019. <https://www.ancient.eu/islam/>.

²⁴ Mahmud Ali Ghul and Robert Bertram Serjeant, "Arabia since the 7th Century," April 30, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Arabia-31558/Arabia-since-the-7th-century>.

Syria. Although Hejaz had little economic relevance compared to the previously mentioned provinces, it was still a crucial part of the Ottoman plan for maintaining power and legitimacy. As the locale of the two holiest cities in Islam, the Hejaz region gave the empire prestige. Through being the protectors of the Hajj and other pilgrimages, as well as countless holy sites, the Sultans could portray themselves as caliphs and successors to Muhammad.²⁵

The two major political forces in Ottoman Hejaz were the valis and the emirs. The valis were Turkish governors who represented the central Ottoman government. The emirs, a title given by the Ottomans meaning 'prince,' were the Sharifs of Mecca, somewhat autonomous local rulers. These Sharifs were members of the Hashemite family, descended from Muhammad. The relationship between the emirs and the valis fluctuated over the several hundred years of Ottoman control. Depending who held the title of emir and how friendly they were to the Ottomans, the emir would be given support and a certain level of autonomy. Sometimes this relationship was more strained than others, but the emirs rarely rebelled.²⁶ Within the province, emirs had strong control over appointing political representatives and near total control over legal matters. One of the few aspects the emirs did not control was the Ottoman troops within Hejaz; that was a power reserved for the valis. The central Ottoman government had little control over the emirs. The largest way they exerted influence was by educating the sons of the emir in Istanbul, teaching them Ottoman ways of governance and thinking. If the emir was uncooperative, the Ottomans could send his heir to depose and replace him.²⁷

The Ottoman government had little presence to the citizens of Hejaz. The only taxes they paid to the government in Istanbul were tariffs on imports coming in through ports. The Hejaz populace was never conscripted into the imperial army. For the most part, the extent of Ottoman presence was giving gifts to the Holy Sites and protection from outside threats. Most of these gifts went to the cities. This meant that, politically, most of the urban population aligned with the emirs. They wanted protection, gifts, and autonomy. When the Ottomans provided these, as they usually did, both the

²⁵ William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia: the Hijaz under Ottoman Control, 1840-1908* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1984), 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

townspeople and the emir acted peacefully with each other and with the government in Istanbul. It was nomadic groups, who received comparatively less, who resented Ottoman rule the most.²⁸

The First and Second Saudi States

The al-Saud, a powerful tribe, succeeded in creating an independent state in the Arabian Peninsula twice during the Ottoman period. Although the Ottomans had control over Hejaz and other regions of the Arabian Peninsula, the central desert from which the al-Saud family originated never fell under Ottoman rule. In the late eighteenth century, the al-Saud family conquered much of the Arabian Peninsula, creating the First Saudi State. They instituted the principles of Wahhabism where they could. Their conquest extended to eventually capturing both Mecca and Medina. The First Saudi State was eventually defeated by the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali in 1818, driving the al-Saud back into the desert. The Second Saudi State was created in 1824 with the city of Riyadh as the capital. This state lasted for several decades until a succession crisis caused a civil war, destabilizing the newly formed state. The al-Saud family eventually recaptured Riyadh in 1902.²⁹

Increasing British Influence

The British had a long interest in securing the Red Sea, initially for access to the coffee trade in Yemen and later to maintain their shipping lanes to India. Egypt had first entered the modern European psyche when it was occupied by the French in the Napoleonic Era. During the late 19th century, Britain began to play a dominant role in Egyptian politics, eventually occupying it in 1882 and making it a veiled protectorate. However, even before this, Britain had become a major player in Red Sea politics after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. To protect trade to India, most of which traveled through the Red Sea and Suez Canal, Britain took a dominant role in the region. Britain also began to expand its consular services in Hejaz because it feared backlash from its Muslim subjects across its empire if it did not. The British presence in Hejaz further expanded in the 1890s and 1900s,

²⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

²⁹ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Saud Dynasty," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., April 17, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Saud-dynasty>.

especially in regard to trade. Many British merchants took residence in Jeddah, building up both the city and the port.³⁰

A Weakening Ottoman Empire

By the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was one of the oldest empires in the European sphere. The Ottomans were a far cry away from their zenith of power centuries before. Many in Europe had even taken to calling them the "Sick Man of Europe." The Ottoman Empire had spent the majority of the 19th century trying to modernize and reform many of its institutions. This period was known as Tanzimat and produced legal, political, economic, educational and military reform. Although the Ottoman state modernized in many aspects, it proved to be too little too late, and the empire continued its decline into the 20th century.

The Ottoman Empire was led by a variety of Sultans in the 19th century. Some of them were earnest reformers who put the needs of the empire above their own. However, many others were more interested in self-enrichment and living lavishly. This weak leadership led to political unrest and many territorial losses. These reforms were also met with hostility from religious leaders who feared their power and authority would wane as the empire secularized.³¹ The period of Tanzimat culminated in a constitution that was written in 1876 only to be abandoned two years later. The increasing reliance on foreign support was an example of the weakening Ottoman state in the 19th century. The Ottomans took out many loans and tried to attract foreign investors to fund their modernization projects. Other European states supported the Ottomans in order to prevent rival powers from absorbing too many former Ottoman provinces. For example, France and Britain supported the Ottomans during the Crimean War to prevent Russia from expanding their territory.³²

³⁰ Saleh Muhammad. Al-Amr, *The Hijaz under Ottoman Rule, 1869-1914: Ottoman Vali, the Sharif of Mecca, and the Growth of British Influence* (Riyadh: Riyadh University Publications, 1978), 169-172.

³¹ "Tanzimat Reforms," Religious Literacy Project (President and Fellows of Harvard College), accessed June 26, 2020, <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/tanzimat-reforms>.

³² Bernard Lewis, "The Ottoman Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: a Review," *Middle Eastern Studies* 1, no. 3 (1965): pp. 283-295, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206508700018>.

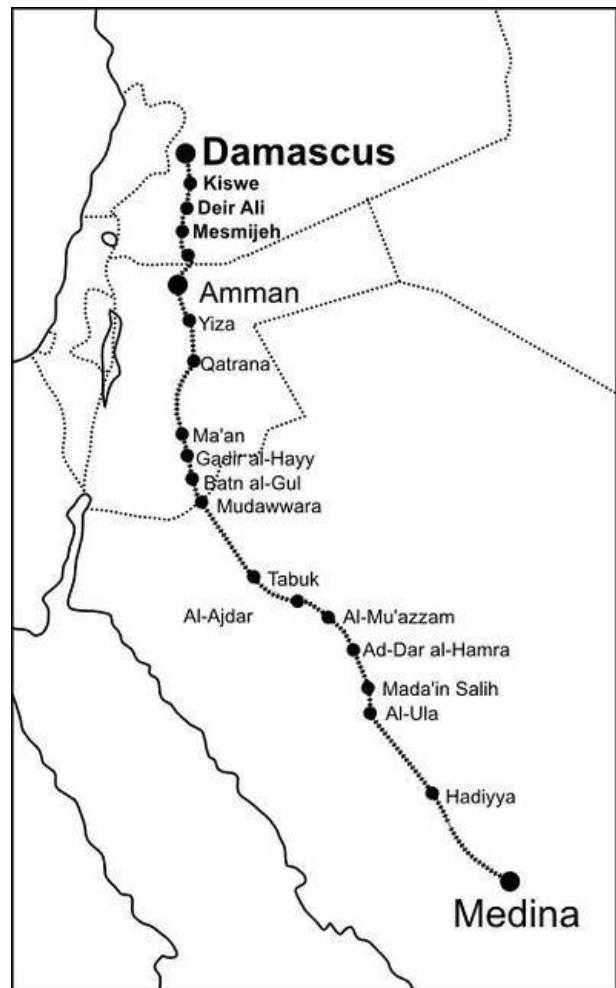
By the early 20th century, the Ottoman Empire was a shadow of its former self. It no longer had the territorial reach, economic power, technological superiority or military might that it once did. What was left was a few reformers struggling to keep the empire intact while others plundered the decaying remains.

STATE OF AFFAIRS: DOMESTIC

Infrastructure on the Arabian Peninsula

Hejaz Railway

Construction of the Hejaz Railway began on September 1st, 1909. It was created with two purposes — to make pilgrimage to the holy sites in Mecca and Medina easier and to strengthen ties to the far reaches of the Muslim World. It began in Damascus and ended in Medina. The nature of the terrain required the construction of over 2000 bridges and overpasses. The railway replaced camel caravans as the dominant form of transportation in pilgrimages across the desert.³³ The railway itself served as a cultural hub for travelers from Anatolia, Asia, Russia, and elsewhere. In addition to serving pilgrims, the railway also acted as a way for the Ottoman Empire to more easily ferry troops up and down the Arabian Peninsula.³⁴



Port of Jeddah

Jeddah has long been a major port on the Arabian Peninsula. It was founded as a fishing village over 2000 years ago. The port rose to prominence in 647AD when the third Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan,

³³ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Hejaz Railway," April 4, 2015, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6026/>.

³⁴ Mike Bishop, "Hejaz Railway," Flickr (Yahoo!, May 8, 2009), <https://www.flickr.com/photos/thearmaturapress/3511839192>.

designated it as the official port of Mecca to serve as the entryway for pilgrims going on Hajj.³⁵ Acting as the hub for all pilgrims arriving by sea, Jeddah has historically been a cosmopolitan city, with citizens from across the Islamic world. As a regional hub, Jeddah soon became a major mercantile center, with an economy largely dominated by trade. This wealth allowed merchants to invest in many lavish mosques and public spaces.³⁶

Trading Routes/Caravans/Other Transportation

Camels are often called the “ship of the desert.” They have served as the lifeblood of the peninsula for millennia. Rather than individual camels and riders making the long, dangerous journey across Arabia, caravans of up to 10,000 camels have traditionally been used to carry supplies and goods. Caravans routes are restricted by the harsh landscape and are forced to follow paths that run through oases. Many of these paths run along wadis or dried-up riverbeds. The largest caravans traditionally traveled not for commerce but rather for pilgrimages. Many smaller caravans were made up of merchants carrying their goods across the desert. The advent of more sophisticated travel methods, like steamships and trains, eliminated the need for most travel by caravan. However, there are still some who travel by caravan, like the nomadic Bedouin tribes.³⁷

Socio-Economic

Oil

This committee will begin in 1916. Oil was not discovered in large quantities on the Arabian Peninsula until 1938. In addition, most of the large oil fields on the peninsula are in the East, along the Persian Gulf. The Hejaz region has not been recognized to hold any significant oil reserves. This is unlikely to change in the future.³⁸

³⁵ “Jeddah Islamic Port,” World Port Source (World Port Source), accessed September 28, 2020, http://www.worldportsource.com/ports/review/SAU_Jeddah_Islamic_Port_281.php.

³⁶ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, “Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah,” UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2014, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1361/>.

³⁷ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Caravan,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., May 30, 2018), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/caravan-desert-transport>.

³⁸ Michael Quentin Morton and Ph.D. Rasoul Sorkhabi, “The First Discoveries of Oil in Saudi Arabia,” GEO ExPro, April 17, 2018, <https://www.geoexpro.com/articles/2018/04/the-first-discoveries-of-oil-in-saudi-arabia>.

Ancient Gold Mines

Arabia has been home to several prominent gold mines dating back to antiquity. The largest and most notable of these in the Hejaz region is the Mahd ad Dahab gold mine. Some claim that this mine supplied gold for the biblical Israeli king Solomon. It continued to operate under the early Islamic caliphates. However, since about the thirteenth century, there have been no large-scale mining projects.³⁹

Religious Tourism/Pilgrimages

While pilgrimages are not a practice exclusive to Muslims, there are many pilgrimages in the Islamic faith. The most important of these is the Hajj, a pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Mecca. All Muslims who are healthy and financially able must complete it at least once in their life. The Hajj takes place during one month of the Islamic calendar. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar. As such, it is not lined up with the more accepted solar Gregorian Calendar. This means that the time and season of the Hajj change each year. The Hajj has several rituals associated with it. Similar to the Hajj, the Umrah pilgrimage also goes to Mecca, but can happen at any point in the year. There are many other pilgrimages that happen around the Islamic world.⁴⁰

Historically, the Hajj has been a very profitable venture for the Hejaz region and a major part of its annual revenue. Most of this wealth comes from the pilgrims buying local goods, giving gifts, and being taxed. In the nineteenth century, European powers became increasingly involved in the administration of the Hajj, on account of new Muslim subjects in their colonial possessions. Their role in the Hajj increased even more with the development of steamships. European capitalism increasingly extracted wealth from pilgrims during their voyage. The European ships transporting pilgrims were cramped and harsh. Many wealthy pilgrims used to give grandiose gifts along the

³⁹ Baker Khudeira, "Mahd Ad Dahab Gold Mine," Mining News (Ashgill Australia PTY.LTD), accessed September 27, 2020, https://www.miningnewsfeed.com/reports/Mahd_Ad_Dahab_Gold_Mine_Others_2019.pdf.

⁴⁰ Sophia Arjana, "Islamic Pilgrimages and Sacred Spaces," The British Library (The British Library, December 3, 2018), <https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts/articles/islamic-pilgrimages-and-sacred-spaces>.

caravan routes during their Hajj, but this has become much less common now that a majority of pilgrims arrive by ship. An influx of poorer pilgrims also adversely affected the local economy of Mecca, forcing the Sharif to raise taxes to make up for the drop in revenue.⁴¹

The Hajj has been affected by outbreaks of disease and wars throughout history. The outbreak of World War One was no exception. When the war began in 1914, the British government, having a vested interest in Muslim Indians being able to complete the Hajj, declared that they would not attack any holy places during the pilgrimage so long as the Ottoman Empire allowed Indians to attend safely. Russia and France also vowed to not interfere. Despite this assurance, the British Indian government discouraged Indians from attending the Hajj but did not ban it. The Hajj continued as normal, although smaller in numbers.⁴²

Tribal System

The tribal system is among the strongest forms of identity for many Arabians, second only to Islam. Lineage and familial relationships are important facets of Arabian society. Much of the social hierarchy is designated through tribal descent. Those from esteemed tribes are often prohibited from marrying those from lesser tribes, or those unaffiliated with any tribe. A vast majority of nomads belong to tribes, while the percentage in urban areas is slightly lower.⁴³

Tribes are organized into subtribes and smaller family units. The smallest of these designations, usually referred to as a lineage, is usually descended from one ancestor about three to seven generations back. Arabian tribes are patrilineal, meaning that children belong to the tribe of their father. Lineages are often close knit, share animals, water holes, camp together, and even share grudges against those who wronged a fellow member. The tribal structure has slightly weakened over time as larger portions of the Arabian Peninsula have settled and given up the nomadic life. The

⁴¹ Sylvia Chiffolleau, "Economics: Agents, Pilgrims, and Profits," *The Hajj*, January 1, 2017, pp. 155-174, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cb09781139343794.010>.

⁴² John O'Brien, "Pilgrim Traffic during the First World War," MTBlogName, March 19, 2014, <https://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2014/03/pilgrim-traffic-during-the-first-world-war.html>.

⁴³ "Tribes And Tribalism: Arabian Peninsula," Encyclopedia.com (Encyclopedia.com, September 28, 2020), <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/tribes-and-tribalism-arabian-peninsula>.

benefits of living in a tribe are less integral to daily life in the more established sedentary lifestyle. Though tribal tensions have been an obstacle to creating a lasting state on the Arabian Peninsula in the past, some, like the early Islamic states, have been successful in uniting the region under a central authority.⁴⁴ Given the ongoing shifts in tribal dynamics, some believe this to be increasingly feasible once again.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

STATE OF AFFAIRS: GLOBAL

Weakened Ottoman Empire

The years between the Tanzimat era and World War I saw the Ottoman Empire continue to deteriorate. Although advancements were made in technology, transportation, education, and the economy, the empire failed to further liberalize. Dissidents were met with violence and power remained concentrated under the Sultan. As instability was met with force, existing suppression of ethnic minorities worsened. There were massacres of Armenians in 1894, 1895, 1896, and 1909.

One of the most prominent organizations to criticize the Sultan was the Committee of Union and Progress, or CUP for short, but more commonly known as the Young Turks. Many members of the CUP fled to Western Europe as exiles—fearing their safety in the empire. While the Young Turks were united in their opposition to the Sultan, they differed on most other issues. In 1908, a large portion of the army revolted, spurring mass revolt across the empire that the Sultan could not quell. They did not have many concrete demands beyond the restoration of the old, short-lived constitution that had been in place from 1877-78. After more political upheaval, most powers of the Sultan were given to parliament. This new, democratic, government lost many territories in the Balkans to rebellion and annexation over the following years. Despite weakening military might, many advancements were made domestically, including widespread industrialization and increased focus on education. One of the major, and most alienating, policies of the Young Turks was their emphasis on Turkish nationalism and forced Turkification. This was one of the leading factors causing resentment among the Arabs going into WW1.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Malcolm Edward Yapp and Stanford Jay Shaw, "Rule of Abdülhamid II," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., August 8, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ottoman-Empire/Rule-of-Abdulhamid-II>.

The Great War and Armenian Genocide

In 1914, years of built-up tensions and increasingly militaristic governments led Europe into war. The Central Powers of Austria-Hungary and Germany were pitted against the Allied Powers of Great Britain, France, and Russia. Despite initial offensives on both the Eastern and Western Fronts, combat quickly fell into a stalemate that gave birth to the trench warfare for which the Great War has come to be known. War broke out in early 1914, and by that winter, Germany had used their influence with the Young Turks to bring the Ottoman Empire into the conflict on their side. Germany hoped that the addition of the new ally would divert Russian and British forces away from the two main fronts and help them win the war.⁴⁶ The addition of the Ottoman Empire to the combatants led to the Middle East becoming an important battleground for the next several years.

The Ottomans launched an eastward campaign into the Russian-controlled Caucasus in an ill-fated attempt to seize Baku. After this failure, the Young Turks blamed the Armenians in the area and said that they had sided with Russia. On April 24, 1915, Ottoman forces rounded up several hundred Armenian intellectuals, arrested them, and executed them. This was the beginning of a genocide that included rape, torture, and mass murder. The Young Turks ordered the military to “deport” anyone they “sensed” was a security threat, leading to death marches of men, women and children across the Syrian desert to concentration camps. Abandoned Armenian property was seized by the Ottoman state. Armenians in the Ottoman military were disarmed and transferred to labor battalions where they were worked to death or executed. Many died from exhaustion, exposure and starvation. At least 1.5 million Armenians were killed. The genocide is typically said to have lasted from until 1917, although smaller scale massacres continued until 1923. While there were 2,133,190 Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1914, there were only about 387,800 by 1922.⁴⁷

Denial of the Armenian Genocide will not be tolerated in this committee. Please do not make attempts at humor on the subject; it is a sensitive subject, and its impacts are still felt by millions of people to this day. Do not include any genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against

⁴⁶ John Graham Royde-Smith and Dennis E. Showalter, “World War I,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., September 10, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I>.

⁴⁷ John Kifner, “Armenian Genocide of 1915: An Overview,” The New York Times.

humanity, or ethnicity-, religion-, or race-specific oppression in your crisis arcs or directives; doing so will result in disciplinary measures. We trust that, by electing to participate in this committee, you accept the standards of maturity and decency that we expect.

Britain, concerned that the Ottomans posed a threat to their shipping in the Mediterranean and their strategically important Suez Canal, launched two major campaigns: one in the Dardanelles and one in Mesopotamia. Starting in November 1914 with the occupation of Basra on the Persian Gulf, British forces quickly marched up the Tigris towards Baghdad. In 1915, the British advance was stopped in Al-Kut and surrounded by Ottoman troops. The Mesopotamian campaign ended in failure in early 1916 when 10,000 troops at Al-Kut surrendered to the Ottomans. The objective of the Dardanelles campaign was to capture Gallipoli, with the eventual goal of capturing Istanbul. Despite sending almost 500,000 troops the Ottomans were entrenched enough that they were able to beat back the assault and the allied powers were forced to withdraw at the end of 1915 having captured nothing and almost 200,000 casualties.

The failures of the two major campaigns against the Ottoman Empire led the British to look for other strategies to achieve victory in the Middle East. Despite previously turning down a request for aid from the Sharif of Mecca the reality of the situation led the British government to change their mind. In a series of correspondences between Sharif Hussein and Sir Arthur McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, resulted in Great Britain promising financial and military aid for a revolt against the Ottoman and the eventual recognition of an Arab state. An Arab revolt would require the Ottomans to redistribute their troops leaving other areas vulnerable to British attack without the need to commit many of their own troops. Sharif Hussein was seen as a good candidate to lead the revolt as he was popular among the existing Arab nationalist movements due to his Hashemite pedigree and he had clashed with the increasingly centralized Ottoman government.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Alia El Bakri, "Revolutions and Rebellions: Arab Revolt (Ottoman Empire/Middle East)," New Articles RSS, May 25, 2018, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/revolutions_and_rebellions_arab_revolt_ottoman_empiremiddle_east.

Allies and Enemies

Great Britain

Of all the major European Powers, Great Britain has the greatest interest in the Middle East. Following the discovery of oil in northern Persia, Britain developed this region in order to supply their naval empire with the oil it needed. Britain's other strategic holding in the area was the Suez Canal, which was crucial to their continued control of India and their colonial holdings in the East. Starting in 1915, Sharif Hussein started corresponding with Arthur McMahon about support for an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire. In return for this, Hussein hoped to achieve independence for the Arab countries east of Egypt, however McMahon proposed excluding a large area of land west of Damascus as part of the French sphere of influence and Baghdad and Basra as important to British interests. Ultimately the letters were vague and did not result in any formal treaty or designation on who would be able to rule what should the Arab revolt ultimately succeed.⁴⁹

France

Like Britain, France saw the Great War as an opportunity to expand their empire. They shared several key motivations with Britain for expanding into the Middle East, most notably protecting the Suez Canal, other economic prospects, and prestige. However, another major reason was religious influence. The territories of Syria and Lebanon had large Christian populations that France saw both as a motivation and a means to gain support and legitimacy in the region. Like all imperial powers, money and expansion were always the ultimate goal for France.⁵⁰

Al Saud

The Al-Saud family was driven out of central Arabia after the failure of the second Saudi state in the late nineteenth century. By the turn of the century, the family was living as exiles in Kuwait. Ibn

⁴⁹ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Hussein-McMahon Correspondence," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., June 8, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Husayn-McMahon-correspondence>.

⁵⁰ William I. Shorrock, "The Origin of the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon: The Railroad Question, 1901–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, no. 2 (1970): pp. 133-153, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800024016>.

Saud, a young member of the family, retook Riyadh—his family's former capital—with only a few dozen men in 1902. This rallied many of the Al-Saud's former allies to support them in their efforts to conquer the peninsula. The conquest of Riyadh also caught the attention of the Turks, who sent troops to quash his forces. After several years of fighting, the Turks could no longer maintain their supply lines and withdrew from central Arabia. Without interference from the central Ottoman government, Ibn Saud conquered most of the Arabian Peninsula and set his sights next on the Hejaz region.⁵¹

⁵¹ John Bagot Glubb, "Ibn Saud," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., November 5, 2019), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ibn-Saud>.

BIOGRAPHIES

Salma al-Maghrib - Minister of Water and Irrigation

Salma has always had a passion for gardening. From an early age, she would grow figs in her backyard. Her budding fig farm became renowned in her hometown of Tabuk. Word of these juicy figs soon reached all corners of Hejaz. Merchants carried her figs to the major other major cities of the region, garnering her a little regional acclaim. However, her figs did not fare well in the desert heat, so she kept her operation primarily local. Her fig passion continued throughout her education. She never finished her schooling, instead dropping out to support her family and pursue fig farming. With no more school to hold her back, Salma devoted every hour of every day to attending her fig groves. She grew so many figs in Tabuk that the local elites frequently talked about them. Word eventually spread to Sharif himself. Sharif, hoping to apply her farming techniques, and to increase regional fig yield, appointed her to be Minister of Water and Irrigation for the entire province.

Maryam umm Eliana - Minister of Justice

Maryam umm Eliana was born in Hejaz, but at a very early age, her family relocated to France. Her parents were both passionate pastry chefs, and although she shares their passion, her first dedication is to a free Arab state. Growing up in France at the turn of the 20th century, she was exposed to a number of ideologies and systems of belief. After graduating from secondary school, Maryam studied law at the Sorbonne and graduated with top marks. Despite having the potential for a lucrative career as a Parisian lawyer, Maryam chose to return to her homeland for the first time in over 20 years and help free Hejaz from imperial Ottoman rule. As a result of her high education and unique upbringing, she speaks five languages: French, English, Arabic, Turkish, and Latin. She has many well-educated friends back in Paris. Due to her language skills and her background in law she was able to get a job working for Sharif Hussein. Hussein admires her commitment to the cause of Arab liberation, and upon declaring his revolt, he appointed her to oversee the creation and administration of the legal system of the new state.

Jirjis bin Harish - Minister of Health

Jirjis bin Harish grew up in the city of Tabuk. He came from a middle-class artisan background. His father was a cobbler. From a young age, Jirjis was obsessed with animals. He befriended a local oryx, who he named Ori. Tragedy struck when he was 14—Ori died peacefully from old age. To further pursue his love of animals, Jirjis decided to spend his weekends and summers volunteering at a local zoo. When it was time to go off for college, Jirjis was admitted to the University of Baghdad. He dreamed of studying veterinary medicine, but his parents did not approve of this, so he settled for human patients. Upon graduating, Jirjis returned to Tabuk where he opened a private practice. One night, he woke up in the middle of the night and realized that humans are just smart animals. Since then, he devoted himself completely to his work, making many connections throughout the Arabian medical community in the process. His reputation as a skilled physician made him a shoe in for Minister of Health when Sharif was assembling his cabinet.

Ali bin Hussein - Crown Prince of the Realm

Born in 1897, Ali is the eldest son of Sharif Hussein and the heir apparent to his throne. Like most sons of local Ottoman bureaucrats Ali was sent to Istanbul to receive his education. Since his father was appointed Sharif in 1908 Ali has served as his right-hand man. The prince is in charge of the day to day running of the royal household and palace. Despite being educated in Istanbul Ali does not get along well with the Ottoman leaders and strongly supports his father in his quest for an independent Hejaz. Ali's two younger brothers, Abdulla and Faisal, are also an important part of the royal family but they are not extremely close as they all spent their childhoods away from home.

Farid bin Dana - Mayor of Tabuk

Farid bin Dana never thought his career path would lead him to becoming mayor of Tabuk. From a young age he was always fascinated by rocks. He would kick them, open them, stack them, and sometimes, just plain stare at them. Farid never formally went to school, instead working odd jobs to assist his impoverished family. With the few lira that he could save, he purchased as many geology

books as he could find. He became so knowledgeable about the citizens of Tabuk began to start calling him 'Professor.' Despite not actually being tenured (or even having any diplomas), Farid would still teach lessons to anyone who would listen in the city square. The number of 'students' he had soon grew rapidly, along with his regional notoriety and acclaim. One day, Faisal, a son of the sharif, attended one of his lectures about a new and novel theory, tectonic plates. Faisal was enraptured by the words that Farid spoke. Soon enough, Farid was invited to the royal palace, where he explained the idea of moving continents to Sharif. Although Sharif didn't fully understand (and honestly thought that he was a little crazy), he deemed him to be an educated man. When the position of mayor of Tabuk opened up, Farid was appointed by the sharif, primarily because he was the only citizen of Tabuk the sharif could think of that day.

Nawfal al-Nashra - Mayor of Medina

Nawfal al-Nashra was born in Medina, and if the stories are true, has an ancestral connection to the family of Muhammad. Like most Arab lineages, these claims are slightly suspect. But what is not in doubt is the fact that over the last century, his family has cemented themselves as one of the most important power brokers in Medina. Complicating this ascent to power has been the local religious authorities, notorious for attempting to exercise control over the city. The rise of the al-Nashra family has fomented much tension in recent decades. Because of his family's rivalry with the religious establishment, rather than receiving his education in Istanbul or Baghdad, Nawfal was sent off to England first for boarding school and later attended Oxford College. Upon his return to Hejaz Nawfal demonstrated that his family's political prowess lives on in him and has maneuvered his way into being the de facto mayor of Medina and one of the most important players in the Arab Peninsula.

Naji al-Bariq - Mayor of Mecca

Naji al-Bariq has always been a little jealous of his cousin. Naji is a member of the Quraysh tribe and a distant 3rd cousin of the Sharif. While this sounds like it would lead to a life of luxury and easy living, Naji has had to work hard to earn his position. For starters, Naji only ever saw his cousin, the Sharif, at the yearly family reunion. Although Naji did get his appointment as Mayor of Mecca

through nepotism, he didn't traditionally have many responsibilities or powers. The Sharif ran most of the day-to-day goings on of the city. With the onset of the war, and later rebellion, the Sharif had much more important things to look after than the mundane operations of the city. This left Naji much more powerful than before and determined to prove himself to his cousin.

Farid bin Adeeb - Mayor of Jeddah

Farid bin Adeeb was born into a working-class family. His father offloaded cargo and did other miscellaneous jobs around the harbor. When he was old enough, Farid got a job aboard a ship, ferrying pilgrims to the Hajj from Egypt. This was not glamorous, but it was honest work, and it allowed him to save up enough until he eventually purchased a small ship of his own. Through a series of keen business decisions, he soon came to own his own fleet, *Farid's Fantastic Ferries*. Unfortunately, when war broke out, the Ottoman government confiscated his ships and enlisted his crews to serve as cargo ships. This left him distrustful and filled with animosity towards the Sultan, making him a natural ally of Sharif. His intimate knowledge of trade routes and maritime activity around the Red Sea made him highly qualified for the position of Mayor of Jeddah.

Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi - Imam of Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (Great Mosque of Mecca)

Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi was born in Indonesia, far from the arid deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. It was his desire to study Islamic jurisprudence that led him to emigrate from his homeland and move to the Ottoman empire. Ahmad eventually settled in Mecca where he worked his way up to be chief Imam of the Great Mosque of Mecca. He believes strongly in the importance of education and encourages his followers to study mathematics, history, and astronomy, along with the Islamic teachings. As he is not an Arab, he does not have any strong feelings about Pan-Arabism, but the Ottoman empires push towards secularization goes against his beliefs.

Ali al-Tamsah - Imam of Al-Masjid an-Nabawī (Mosque of the Prophet, Medina)

Ali al-Tamsah was born the son of a lowly cobbler in the town of Badr. He had a comfortable, although not extraordinary, upbringing, going to the local religious school and helping his dad in his

shop. Nawfal did exceptionally well in school, standing out for his impressive grasp of Islamic law. After school he travelled to the nearby city of Medina to continue his studies, ultimately becoming an imam and notable ulama of the shafi'i school of sharia. He loves reading and is always trying to use his studies to inform the way he interacts with the world and his advice to his congregation. Despite being more interested in the scholarly aspect of being an imam than preaching, over the years he rose through the ranks until he was the head imam at the mosque of the prophet in Medina. As a scholar and high-ranking cleric, he sees it as part of his responsibilities to stay out of politics, however as a proud Arab, he sympathizes with the revolt and wants to help by advising Hussein on matters of Sharia and the Islamic faith.

Hajra al-Zeitoun - Ambassador to India

Hajra al-Zeitoun was born into a wealthy merchant family in Mecca. She traveled frequently with her father on his numerous trade voyages. One time, they went to India to ferry pilgrims to the holy land. Hajra fell in love with the county and its people. She spent the rest of her childhood begging her father to allow her to return to the nation of India, but he never did. Hajra was a decent student, but never excelled very far in her studies. However, what she did often read were novels and histories of India. Her father died when she reached adulthood, leaving most of his assets to his brother and business partner. Hajra did however receive enough to allow her to travel to India where she has lived the last several years. When war broke out, Hajra returned to her home country but still plans to return to India in the future. The Sharif needed an ambassador to India, which has one of the largest Muslim populations in the world, and Hajra's familiarity with the subcontinent (along with her father's friendship to the Sharif) made her the obvious choice.

Salma al-Masri - Ambassador to Egypt

Salma al-Masri was born in Cairo, Egypt to a wealthy trading family. While she was still young, her family resettled in Jeddah to avoid the economic downturn in their home country. Salma's father believed in education and educated her at home. She is very educated and speaks Egyptian and standard Arabic as well as English and French. When she got older, she never married but used some of her family money to start an orphanage in Jeddah. Her orphanage and philanthropy earned her

much praise within Jeddah, and she became a cult hero to many of the city's women. She was named as Ambassador to Egypt because of her language skills and popularity as well as her familial connections to her homeland.

Ilyas bin Zafar - Ambassador to the United States

Ilyas bin Zafar never had political aspirations. Hailing from a middle-class Meccan family, Ilyas worked afterschool at his father's falafel restaurant. When he was of age, he went to the American University of Beirut, where he majored in acting. His favorite playwrights were British and American, causing him to learn English. Upon graduating, he found out that the theater scene in Mecca was not as large as he had hoped. He eventually got a job working in the Ottoman bureaucracy instead. One day, while walking through the city, he saw an audition for 'American Ambassador.' Ilyas, misinterpreted this as a new play he had not heard before. He eagerly auditioned for the role. Sharif was disappointed that no one else with English proficiency showed up so he begrudgingly gave the position to Ilyas. When he showed up for what he thought were call backs, Ilyas was surprised to be appointed as Ambassador to the United States. After the initial shock, Ilyas took this recent development well, and began planning all the Broadway shows he would see once the embassy was established.

Akuei Mading - Minister of Hajj and Umrah

Born into the Dinka tribe of Sudan, Akuei grew up herding cattle before settling down in the bustling city of Khartoum. In Khartoum, he converted to Islam and eventually decided to go on Hajj to complete his conversion. From the moment he stepped foot on Arabian soil he knew that this is where he wanted to make his home. Immediately on returning home to Sudan, he started saving up and planning to move to Mecca. He started a business helping people go on Hajj because he wanted all Muslims to be able to have the same spiritual experience he did and eventually he moved to Mecca on a permanent basis, starting a hostel for visiting pilgrims. Eventually, the Sharif heard about his story and decided that he needed someone to help organize the annual pilgrimage and keep it orderly. Akuei was so good at his job that he was also put in charge of Umrah as well as all tourism to the emirate.

Taslim ibn Rasul ibn Jawad - Minister Foreign Affairs

Taslim's family was originally from Hejaz, but his grandparents moved to Istanbul while his parents were still children. Although he was educated in Ottoman schools and surrounded with Ottoman culture, he maintained an affinity for the Hejaz, visiting several times throughout his childhood. His family has served in the Ottoman bureaucracy for generations, and he was no exception. Taslim worked in the foreign ministry in his early career, serving as the deputy ambassador to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He did not agree with the Young Turks politically, so he resigned his position. He spent the next few years in Istanbul working for a local tailor. When he heard about the independence movement in the Hejaz, he promptly moved down South to offer his foreign relations experience to Sharif.

Rustam Haidar - Minister of Defense

Rustam Haidar was born in Lebanon to Shia parents. He grew up in a wealthy bureaucrat family. As a child he attended an Ottoman military academy before entering the army. During this time, he fought in several tribal skirmishes on the Arabian Peninsula, becoming skilled in desert warfare. He also met prince Faisal, with whom he soon became close personal friends. After his stint in the Ottoman army, Rustam moved to Mecca, where he became a personal advisor to Faisal. The two friends often debated politics. Rustam had a pro-Western philosophy and thought that they should emulate many European governmental structures. While the two did not always agree, they found common ground in that they both wanted to see an independent Arab state. When the revolt started, Faisal naturally appointed Rustam to be Minister of Defense for the new nation they were forming.

Kashif Gaffar - Minister of Interior

Kashif Gaffar has never had a strong political ideology. He was born in Iran to a middle-class family. As the son of a blacksmith, his parents could afford to give him a decent education. Upon leaving school, Kashif worked briefly for the Tehran police department. He was by no means a dirty cop, but

he was known to see things as a big picture, rather than focusing on every minor infraction. Kashif left the public police force for the much more lucrative offer of working security for the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, where he soon worked his way up to head of security. His record during this time was flawless: not a single security breach took place under his watch. This tenure as chief of security allowed Kashif to become familiar with many British officers and businessmen in the region. When the Sharif was assembling his cabinet, the British recommended Kashif for the position of Minister of Interior. Although his allegiance is less concrete than some of his fellow ministers, Kashif has good relationships with the international parties most interested in Hejaz's natural resources, and he can competently provide policing and internal security for the new nation.

Billah al-Taskis - Minister of Education

Billah always aspired to be an educator. She was raised in Taif in a middle-class family. Her father was a teacher at the local school and she always wanted to follow in his footsteps. She spent her youth studying and learning as much as she could until she went to university in Istanbul. Although Billah excelled in her studies, she was unable to find a job upon returning to Taif after her graduation. This spurred her to create her own all-girls school to educate the youths of Taif. Billah had a natural gift for teaching and her school became renowned for the quality of its education. Soon, the rich families from all across Hejaz started sending their daughters to Taif to be educated in her institution. The graduates of her school were so well educated that Sharif appointed her Minister of Education.

Danyal ibn Mikha'il ibn Kadeem - Minister of Transportation

Danyal has always been fascinated by trains. He came from a merchant family that ran a caravan from Aden to Beirut. His youth was spent making this trip several times a year. This made him intimately familiar with the wadis and trails that crisscrossed the peninsula, as well as a little bit about how the ports worked. He also became knowledgeable about the many tribal affiliations of the lands they passed. Danyal watched the construction of the Hejaz railway and saw how it dried up large amounts of caravan traffic upon its completion, his family's livelihood included. He was not resentful of the change, seeing the railway as change for the better that could lift up the entire

Arabian Peninsula. When Danyal heard that Hejaz was revolting, he volunteered to be Minister of Transportation, seeing it as an opportunity to make meaningful change. Everyone else was vying for more prestigious appointments, so there was not much competition for the position.

Yusuf bin Abdul Rahman - Minister of Commerce

Yusuf has no shortage of boastful claims. He claims that he is from a small Bedouin tribe in Transjordan. When he was fourteen, he claimed to have moved to Baghdad with only the robes on his back and not a single lira to his name. Once there, he allegedly opened a falafel stand using his grandmother's recipe. He claims that he soon expanded to become the biggest falafel stand in all of West Baghdad. When not running his falafel empire, Yusuf boasted about coming up with the idea for the Hejaz Railway and that he was descended from Napoleon and Al-Hakim, among others. None of these claims have yet been confirmed as false. Yusuf, being the generous patriot he is, voluntarily gave up his fortune when he heard about the rebellion in Hejaz, or so he claims. When first hearing of Yusuf's accolades and accomplishments, the Sharif immediately appointed him Minister of Commerce. However, he is becoming increasingly suspicious that some of Yusuf's claims might have been a little exaggerated. When the Sharif started poking around his past, he could not find anyone to confirm any aspect of Yusuf's stories, but Yusuf insists that's just because he changed his name before coming to Hejaz.

Auda Abu Tayi - Howeitat Emissary

Auda Abu Tayi was a nomadic Bedouin warrior of the Howeitat tribe. Renowned for his prowess in battle, Auda claimed the chieftainship of the eastern Howeitat and lived a largely nomadic life making a living by raiding Ottoman convoys and caravans through the desert. Because of how he makes his money, he has multiple bounties on his head from the Ottoman Empire. He is intimately familiar with the area around the Hejaz railway, where he is known to camp. Even though he is a warrior, Auda Abu Tayi has a reputation as a gracious and generous host and is always welcoming visitors in his camp.⁵²

⁵² "Lawrence of Arabia . Auda Abu Tayeh," PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), accessed September 29, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/players/auda.html>.

Hanif al-Matlahi - Harb Tribal Emissary

Hanif never aspired for power. As son of the old chieftain, he and his brothers knew they would be the future generation of leaders. While his brothers trained in martial techniques and tribal politics, Hanif was always more fascinated by festivals and folklore. His father often found him listening to stories in the tribal elders' tents while his brothers were riding horses. Shortly after the news that the Sharif was leading a revolt arrived, Hanif's father suddenly fell ill and passed away. Hanif's eldest brother, who had long advocated fighting the Turks, became the new chieftain. He appointed Hanif as emissary to this new Arab state, telling him not to return until every Ottoman was expelled from the peninsula.

Tariq al-Mosahi – Hudhayl Tribal Emissary

Born in Ta'if, Tariq spent his childhood reading. He loved reading the greats of Arabic literature and was inspired reading about the exploits of the early Islamic Caliphates. While growing up he considered becoming an imam before deciding on a career in tribal politics. After years of handling intertribal relations and building up a network within the Hudhayl tribe he became one of the most influential elders in his tribe. When it came time to pick a representative to the King, he was a natural choice and leapt at the chance. Tariq believes strongly that the Arabs deserve independence, but as a tribal leader he also knows that the individual tribes need their freedom.

Salim al-Marwani – Juhaynah Tribal Emissary

Although he was born in Tabuk, Salim's family were nomadic herders, and he spent his childhood crisscrossing the foothills of the Hejaz mountains. When he reached adulthood, he decided he wanted even more adventure than what he already had and set out to see the world. He travelled throughout the Middle East and northern Africa before getting a job on a freighter and sailing around the world. Eventually, he decided to settle down and returned to his hometown of Tabuk. Having saved all his money from working on boats for 20 years, by the time he came back he was one of the richer members of his tribe. He used his wealth for the betterment of his tribe, buying

livestock and sending the young men to school, and became a very well-respected member of the community.

Rashida ibnat Ahmad al-Quda'i – Bali Tribal Emissary

Rashida grew up in her family compound outside of Medina. The eldest daughter of the chief of the Bali tribe, she had lived a life of luxury and rubbed shoulders with the elites of the region. Her father loved her dearly and demanded that everyone treat her with the same amount of respect as her brothers. He made sure she was involved in the running of the tribe and she enjoyed being involved in the important decisions. Some of the other elders of the tribe rankled at a woman having so much power but eventually they saw how much of a natural she was.

Abu al-Khala – Solluba Tribal Emissary

Abu al-Khala grew up in the desert. His summers were spent hunting and subsisting in the brutal inner desert of the Arabian Peninsula. During the winters, he spent his time learning leatherworking from his father and serving as a guide for various Bedouin tribes. In this time as a guide, he experienced much mistreatment at the hands of his Arab employers, who looked down on him for being different. Despite all this, he still sees an Arab state as preferable to the existing Ottoman government. He hopes that the new government will be more tolerant of the diversity of people that live in the Middle East but worries that Arab nationalism will just drive the new state to be exclusionary. Abu has high hopes for the new state, but his ultimate allegiance lies with his people, the Solluba.

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