



# The Ottoman Empire embarrassed its ruler over Iraq by insisting on repeating its failure in confronting the Saudis

The rise of the first Saudi state in the Arabian Peninsula since the late thirteenth century AD and its expansion in its various regions constituted a political, cultural and civilizational renaissance that extended to its external borders. This, in turn, was reflected in the emergence and formation of a strong politically and militarily state.

The Ottoman Empire was suspicious of all the events and political developments in the Arabian Peninsula. The Ottomans realized the danger that the first Saudi state posed to their colonies in the Arabian Peninsula, its geographical borders, and its colonial influence in the region.

The Turks saw in the expansion of the first Saudi state, its development and religious renaissance in its Arab lands in the Najd region, a boldness and impetus that is unacceptable from the Turkish point of view. They saw that their expansion in eastern Arabia and their annexation of Al-Ahsa (1795) and their threat to Iraq constituted a threat to their strategic and economic interests, and similarly after their annexation of the Hijaz (1805). The Hijaz formed an aura of influence and religious prestige for the Ottoman state, so its reversion by the first Saudi state was a severe blow to that false influence and an end to the artificial Ottoman prestige in the Islamic world.


**Early on, the Ottomans realized the threat posed by the first Saudi state on their interests in the Arabian Peninsula.**


Therefore, the Ottoman Sultan Mahmoud I issued a royal firman to conduct military campaigns to eliminate the first Saudi state, limit its activity and expansion, and not to be lenient in dealing with it. This was represented by assigning the governor of Baghdad, Suleiman Pasha, to carry out this task. If we take into account the date of the military campaign (1786), we will find that it was at a relatively early period in the beginning of the campaigns directed at targeting the emerging first Saudi state. Suleiman Pasha, in turn, commissioned Thuwaini bin Abdullah Al Shabib, head of Al-Muntafiq, to prepare and lead the military campaign directed against the Saudis, which the historian Ibn Bishr describes by saying: "In Muharram, Thuwaini bin Abdullah bin Muhammad Al Shabib marched with the soldiers, and he had incalculable equipment and armament, so much so that the loads of guns and cannons and their machines amounted to seven hundred loads".

The Iraqi historian Othman bin Sanad Al-Basri, a contemporary of the events, also confirmed that campaign by saying: "He marched in battalions like mountains and processions in which blades shine". He headed with those large forces with the intention of attacking the capital of the Saudi state "Diriyah". He started with Al-Qassim and attacked its towns with his large army, besieging them for days and pounding them with cannons. He did not succeed in entering the smallest of its towns, "Al-Tanuma", north of Al-Asyāh, which showed great resistance and great steadfastness from its people in the face of the campaign. However, nothing but steadfastness helped, except that Thuwaini was able to deceive the people of the town with safety, but he did not fulfill his promise with them, so he took control over the town, plundered it and killed all its people except the homeless.


The sources indicate that the number of dead reached about one hundred and seventy men, then the military campaign headed to the city of Buraidah. He fought its people and surrounded it with his soldiers, but he retreated after a dispute occurred in his homeland over the leadership of the tribe, as his cousin turned against him and he was forced to retreat with his army.

Despite the failure of that military campaign, the Ottoman Empire did not despair of re-asking the governor of Baghdad, Suleiman Pasha, to attack the Saudi capital. However, the aforementioned governor began to fabricate many reasons for his inability to conduct a military campaign against the Saudi state. One of those reasons was that his forces could not fight the Saudis in remote desert areas or in unknown land and harsh climatic conditions, and the army included various elements of Arabs and Kurds, and that doing such a thing would have unknown consequences. However, the Ottoman Sultan's insistence more than once on the governor Suleiman Pasha to prepare a military campaign to fight Al-Diriyah and occupy Al-Ahsa after the Saudis recovered it, made the governor Suleiman Pasha finally respond to the Sultan's orders. He prepared two campaigns to occupy Al-Ahsa. In 1797, he commissioned Thuwaini bin Abdullah again to prepare a military campaign to confront the Saudis, attack Diriyah, and occupy Al-Ahsa.

Thuwaini carried out the order of Suleiman Pasha and began to mobilize the crowds for the campaign against the Saudis, making Al-Jahra a center for that campaign, and he continued to mobilize his forces there for three months, during which tribes, clans and government soldiers joined him. The campaign moved through land and sea towards Qatif, but the factors of failure were going with it, as there was a great discrepancy in its elements, especially between the tribal leaders. Thuwaini was close to some of them and ignored the others. Therefore, the result was that Thuwaini was betrayed and killed on the battlefield. This assassination was enough to disrupt the campaign. In the end, the campaign failed and had to go back to where it came from.

Military campaigns continued from the side of Iraq at that time, in implementation of Istanbul's orders. The governor of Baghdad, Suleiman Pasha, received other strict orders from the Ottoman Sultan to march to the Arabian Peninsula to strike and eliminate the Saudis. In 1798, he prepared a large campaign led by his deputy, Ali Al-Kikhia, and supported him with various weapons and equipment. The campaign included various regular military forces in addition to the Kurdish and Arab tribal forces.

The Iraqi historian Yassin al-Omari estimated that these forces amounted to about twenty thousand fighters. The British Resident in Baghdad "Harvard Johns" also watched the great preparations of the campaign that were camping outside the walls of Baghdad on the western shore of the Tigris River. After Ali Al-Kikhia completed his preparations, he left Baghdad with his large army, heading towards Basra. The campaign proceeded until it reached Basra, and there it was divided into two parts. The first part included the knights and clan forces, headed by the leader of the Iraqi campaign "Ali Al-Kikhia", and they headed towards Al-Ahsa by land. As for the other part, it includes infantry, artillery and heavy munitions teams, where the aforementioned commander rented some of the ships that sailed towards Uqair port on Al-Ahsa shore.


**The Iraqi campaign is considered the first Ottoman attempt to eliminate the first Saudi state.**


The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

The military campaign, with its land and sea divisions, continued until it entered Al-Ahsa after much suffering and trouble. As soon as Al-Kikhia approached Al-Ahsa, the campaign attacked the Saudi forts and imposed a siege on them for a period of three months. However, the Saudi garrisons were able to vigorously confront the violent campaign, as the historian Rasoul Al-Karkawli refers to this by saying: "Government forces were camping in the desert, which had no vegetation. As a result, camels were emaciated and unable to carry weights. Nearly nine thousand camels perished, ammunition and equipment dwindled. The soldiers were thinking about their fate and the doom that awaited them, and they went to their commanders urging them to hurry back because there was no point in staying there. The Iraqi campaign returned from Al-Ahsa after several months without achieving any victory or any significant goal, and its only result was a truce and reconciliation between the governors of Baghdad and the first Saudi state.

## References:

- 1) Document No: (BOA.H.H. No, 6701), Archives of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Istanbul.
- 2) Othman bin Bishr, Title of Glory in the History of Najd, Investigated by: Abdul Rahman Al Sheikh, 4th Edition (Riyadh: Ministry of Education, 1971).
- 3) Bridges, A Brief History of Wahhabism, translated by: Owaidah Al-Juhani (Riyadh: King Abdulaziz Foundation, 2005).
- 4) Rasoul Al-Karkawli, Dawhat alwuzara' fi tarikh waqae baghdad Alzawra, translated by: Musa Kazem Nawras (Beirut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, 1963).
- 5) Yassin bin Khair Allah Al-Omari, Al-Durr Al-Maknoun fi Alma'thir Almadia min Alqurun, British Museum Copy, London, No: (IOR. Add. 123312).
- 6) Othman Bin Sanad, Readings of Al-Saud with the good news of Governor Daoud, investigated by: Imad Abdel Salam and Suhaila Al-Qaisi (Mosul: Dar Al-Hikma, 1991).
- 7) Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman, The First Saudi State, 5th Edition (Cairo: University Book Centre, 1987).