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# The Ottomans and Al-Ahsa

## The collapse of the sick man's empire started from Najd

The recapture of Al-Ahsa and its annexation to the Saudi state constituted a strong blow and humiliation for the empire of the sick man, given the way and how King Abdulaziz Al Saud recaptured this part of the homeland. The writings agree that the number of Saudi forces at that time did not exceed 600 fighters, in the face of more than 1,200 members of the Turkish army.

Perhaps the shock of the Turks exceeded this limit when they lacked any legitimate or popular justification for the rule by force. This happened when the tribes and the entire population expressed their adherence to their pledge of allegiance to the Al Saud family, after the Ottoman administrator stipulated that the people express the desire to integrate into the Saudi state. This is what King Abdulaziz agreed to because he was certain of the loyalty of Al-Ahsa's people to the Saudi state.

The political expression announced by the residents of Al-Ahsa would be a source of inspiration for international organizations that would raise such expressions to the level of political contracts that recognize the region's belonging to its political origin. This fact would be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly six decades after that date. Resolution No. 1541 (December 1960, 15) stipulated that the will of the population to integrate within the sovereignty of the state is expressly expressed through free formulations that reflect their conviction of the change in their political, economic and social situation.

However, this natural political situation didn't satisfy the Ottomans, who considered the independence of Al-Ahsa as a setback for the Turkish project in the region, especially since Al-Ahsa provided them with important financial returns in addition to its distinguished geographical location, which made it a gateway to the rest of the Arabian Gulf.

In the face of this political and popular challenge, the Ottoman Empire would try to recover its control over Al-Ahsa, especially since it saw in its collapse serious repercussions on its influence in the region that may reach Yemen and the Hijaz and may extend beyond the Arabian Peninsula. The Ottomans were encouraged to take this step due to the lengthy report of the dismissed administrator of Al-Ahsa, Nadim Pasha, who addressed it to the Grand Vizier and the Ministries of Defense and Interior.

Through the text of the report, Nadim Pasha praised the plans to restore Al-Ahsa, deluding the Sublime Porte that the internal situation in Al-Ahsa was in a state of anger, dissent, and instability in relations between the ruling family and the residents of the region. Those were the subjective and objective conditions that Nadim Pasha considered suitable to exploit by trying to win over a group of notables and figures to subjugate Ibn Saud and return Al-Ahsa to direct Ottoman colonial rule.

The Ottoman ambitions in Al-Ahsa required a re-understanding of the new strategic environment, especially after the failure of attempts to repel King Abdulaziz's forces, as well as the attempts to restore Qatif and Uqair, without neglecting Britain's silence and turning a blind eye to the failed Ottoman attempts to launch from Bahrain to re-subjugate Al-Ahsa. This prompted King Abdulaziz to protest against Sheikh Issa, as well as the British resident in the Gulf, explaining that he wanted to open a new page of cooperation with Britain, which wanted to send a message to King Abdulaziz bin Saud to dismiss any projects to go from Al-Ahsa towards the coastal areas.

At the central level, the urgent need to reoccupy Al-Ahsa prompted both the Ottoman Minister of Interior, Talaat Pasha, and the Minister of War, Anwar Pasha, to become personally involved in directing efforts to achieve this strategic goal. Here, the Turks resorted to the classic methods in mobilizing some opponents and some figures in the region against King Abdulaziz, and they found in Abdulaziz bin Rasheed an objective ally to implement their plans to recover Al-Ahsa.

It can be said that the plans of Talaat Pasha and Anwar Pasha were welcomed by a group of figures who considered the increasing influence of King Abdulaziz as a direct threat to their influence and presence, so they tended to the Ottomans. Although King Abdulaziz treated them kindly in many situations and supported them, the character of some shows their true nature, especially those whose betrayal penetrated their bodies and mixed with their blood until it reached the brains.

The power of King Abdulaziz and the support of most of the tribes for the third Saudi state prompted the Turks to rule out the military solution in principle, and then they made an offer to the new ruler of the Saudi state in parallel with stopping their support to Ibn Rasheed's projects and telling him by Suleiman Pasha that they did not intend to cooperate with him militarily to subjugate the new Saudi ruler.

**The lines of the Ottoman proposal are clear in ensuring the loyalty of King Abdulaziz to the Ottoman state in return for giving him expanded autonomy under Turkish sovereignty. That matter was summarized by the proposals presented by Talib Al-Naqeeb (the former administrator of Al-Ahsa), which include:**

- | Finding a way for a peaceful and consensual solution.
- | Any solution must be under the banner of the "Islamic Caliphate".
- | Preserving the unity of the nation.
- | Avoiding the violent approach in resolving conflicts.

In light of the new ottoman trend, the delegation would move to Kuwait and from there to Al-Subayhiya, where King Abdulaziz resides, as the latter refused to enter into any direct negotiations before he knew the intentions of the Turks towards Ibn Rasheed's projects. They assured him that there was no intention of coordinating with the latter and that matters had been settled in the direction of adopting an agreement with him only that would be binding on both parties.

The Saudi-Ottoman agreement was decisive in directing King Abdulaziz bin Saud to complete the unification of the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula at a time when regional and international conditions ensured an end to the last manifestations of the Ottoman occupation of the Arabian Peninsula.