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The Ottomans and the change in the power balance

At the beginning of the First World War on August 1914 ,3, the Ottoman Empire declared its neutrality. This was stated by the Grand Vizier to the British ambassador, despite the presence of a military delegation to reorganize and restructure its armed forces at the level of the German army. This resulted in a secret military cooperation treaty between the two countries. The Minister of War "Enver Pasha" was one of the important Turkish leaders for Germany. His bloody victories at the beginning of the war were a strong motive that encouraged him to declare war against Russia in October 1914.

On the other hand, Britain, France and Russia announced their entry into the war on November 1914 ,5. Hence, the Ottomans announced the general mobilization, including the events of Seferberlik in Medina. Almost three million volunteers across the Sultanate were mobilized by coercion. About 300,000 of them were killed during the war, and about half a million soldiers died from various causes, such as diseases, injuries, extreme cold, malnutrition, lack of equipment, and poor clothing, which was not suitable for wearing in the war. They made this diaspora themselves against their forces.

Matters escalated between the Ottoman Turks and the British, which made the British leave Basra and sever diplomatic relations. Britain declared war against the Ottoman Empire, and there was a landing of British forces near Al-Faw. On their way to Basra, they fought three small battles against the Ottomans, namely Al-Saniyah, Sihan, and Kut Al-Zein.

The general situation in Basra before the First World War was characterized by many disputes, suspension of newspaper work, arrests, and then exile. As a result, things worsened, security deteriorated, and thefts and assassinations increased.

After the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914, news reached that a British expedition would be dispatched to occupy Basra. The state's notables, most of whom were Zubair notables of Najdi origin, decided to meet with Imam Abdulaziz Al Saud. They were led by Abd Al-Wahhab Al-Mandeel, Abd Al-Aziz Al-Makenzi, Abd Al-Karim Al-Dakhil and Ahmed Al-Ibrahim Al-Rashid, then Talib Al-Naqib joined them, but their contacts with the British did not reach a conclusion. The delegation of those from Basra left Al-Zubair via Kuwait on the 5th of November, heading to Najd, and arrived at Buraidah on the 18th of the same month, while the Imam was there.

There, he hosted them and pledged on his part to make every effort he could to protect lives and property if Basra was subjected to misfortune, and he was determined to travel to rescue it. However, the news of the British occupation of the city, which took place on November 22-21, changed all the arrangements, and the delegation returned. Al-Naqib surrendered to the British and was exiled to India.

Despite all the general international events and the events of the Arabian Peninsula, Imam Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud's relationship with that region did not end after that. Rather, he was always in contact to find out what was going on, and he offered a helping hand and worked to improve the situation until the effects of the war subsided.

It was an important historical era that witnessed multiple conflicts. The Arabian Peninsula was going through a decisive transitional phase in its history, the most important of which was the revolution against Turkish subordination in some of its regions. His attitude (may Allah have mercy on him) was expressing a politician who saw that the Turks were going through a critical stage and that the chance of stabilizing security in his country would be lost if he announced his entry into the Great War, especially since Turkey is a party fighting a losing battle against the allies in the First World War. Therefore, he chose neutrality to preserve the state and the people after all the horrors and tragedies they experienced during the time of the Ottomans.