

DESIRES OF HEDJAZ STRIP PARIS CRITICS

Arab Kingdom's Aspirations Clash with French Aims in Asia Minor.

PRINCE BEFORE CONFERENCE

Faisal's Presentation of His Case
Will Probably Be Referred to
a Special Committee.

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Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PARIS, Feb. 6.—The Conference today heard the claims of the King of Hedjaz as explained by the delegation headed by Prince Faisal, a picturesque Arab who wears a khaki uniform and the resplendent headdress of the chiefs of his nation. It is not to be supposed that the presentation of the case of this recently created monarchy—for the King of Hedjaz was until the later stages of the war known as the Grand Shereef Hussein—could create disturbance within the inner circle of the Council of Ten, but it has caused at least a ripple of excitement on the surface of the Conference.

In one section of the Paris press there appears today a vehement onslaught on the procedure of the "Big Five" in calling Prince Faisal before them. The King of Hedjaz, it is asserted, is merely a vassal of Great Britain, receiving British subsidies and speaking only by the British book. Why, it is asked, should a serious-minded conference listen to claims which were on a par with the stories of the Arabian Nights? One French paper remarks that "the vallant Emir is asking for Hedjaz the whole Arab world, including Syria and Mesopotamia, Damascus and Bagdad.

Like most generalizations, this sweeping assertion is hardly in strict accordance with the facts; nevertheless, there are aspects of the Hedjaz claims to which from the French point of view there are serious objections. As for the charge that the King of Hedjaz is merely a vassal in British pay, it is pointed out that his actual independence was recognized by the Allies soon after he had in November, 1916, assumed his new title at the request of the Ulama and notables of Mecca, which contains the tomb of the Prophet and is the holy city of the Mohamedans, and that the subsidies he received from Britain were war grants furnished for the prosecution of the war, just like those made to other countries fighting Germany and her allies.

The main difficulty in connection with this particular problem lies in the treaty concluded between Great Britain and the King of Hedjaz, under which Damascus was to be included in the territory awarded to Hedjaz. Damascus lies near the border line between what were generally looked upon as likely to be the spheres of control of Great Britain and France. According to this purely tentative demarkation of spheres of influence, Palestine, from near the Sea of Galilee to the Egyptian border, would be placed under the aegis of Great Britain, acting as special guardian of the newly constituted Zionist nation, while the country north of the Sea of Galilee to Asia Minor would be within the sphere of French influence. One section at least of French opinion is strongly opposed to Damascus remaining under control of the King of Hedjaz, by whom it is now being administered.

It is quite obvious that, while the Council of Ten may have considered that it had good reason to listen to the Hedjaz claims, their consideration of them must be merged in the solution of the much greater question of the disposition of all the Turkish dominions in Asia now occupied by the Allies. It was stated this afternoon that the probable course of action by the Council would be that, after hearing Prince Faisal's presentation of the Hedjaz case, it would refer these special claims to a committee which should study them in their relation to the whole problem of Turkish settlement.

The particular difficulties of the Hedjaz affair are only one illustration of many complexities of the whole question. "America to the rescue!" is the slogan heard in some quarters where it is urged that European rivalries in Asiatic Turkey can best be disposed of by the United States undertaking the administration of territory where it is universally agreed that it could have no selfish purposes to serve.

Failing American assistance, the disposition of the Turkish dominions under the trusteeship of the various European powers most interested will undoubtedly present many difficulties, but none which is in any sense insuperable. In fact, speculation is already keenly at work over various schemes of distribution under which this, that and the other special interest of Great Britain, France, Italy and Greece can be conciliated by processes of compromise. The study of these processes will be the work of special committees; so that at this stage it would be idle to predict which power, for instance, shall be trustee for Constantinople or the other cities and territories of the Turk.

England Suggested as Mandatory.

PARIS, Feb. 6.—The Supreme Council today heard the claim of Hussein, King of Hedjaz, speaking through his son, Prince Faisal. The Prince maintained that Arabia, including Syria and Mesopotamia, had a non-Arabic population of less than 1 per cent., and that the principles of nationality enunciated by President Wilson should leave the Arabs to govern Arabia, with possibly some mandatory to develop intercourse with the outside world.

The Prince is said to have advocated Great Britain as the mandatory for Arabia. This has aroused sharp criticism from French newspapers, owing to the French interests in Syria. The semi-official Temps asserted today that the Prince had received large British subventions, and asked in an editorial:

"Has the Prince who addressed the great powers today some particularly great powers today some particular obligation toward some of his hearers?"

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