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"مذكرة قصيرة حول بدء حملة بلاد الرافدين والصعوبات التي واجهتها ونتائجها"

المكتبة البريطانية: أوراق خاصة وسجلات من مكتب الهند

IOR/L/MIL/17/15/76

١٩١٦ (ميلادي)

الإنجليزية في اللاتينية

مجلد واحد (٥ أوراق)

رخصة حكومة مفتوحة

المؤسسة المالكة

المرجع

التاريخ/ التواريخ

لغة الكتابة

الحجم والشكل

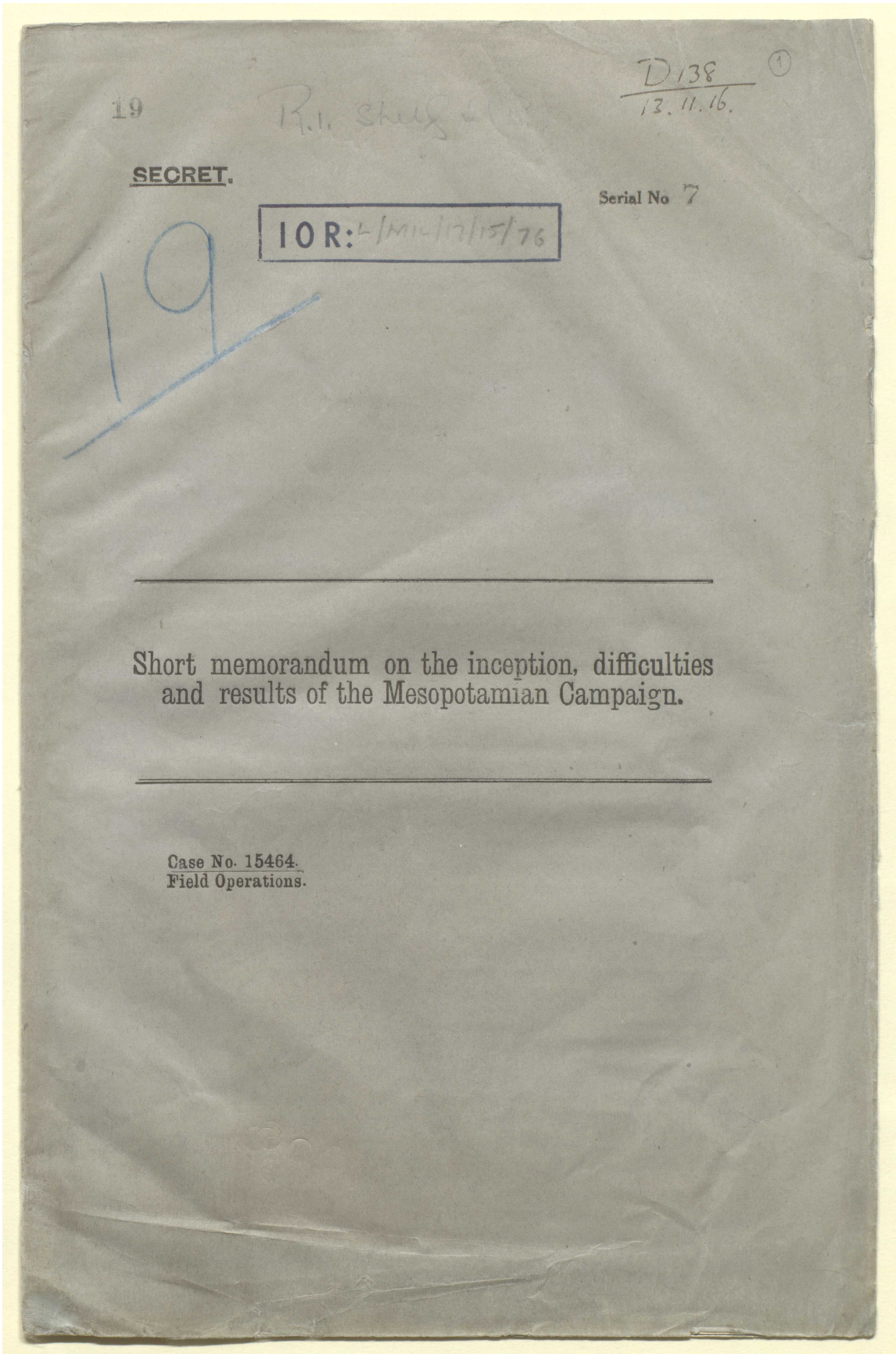
حق النشر



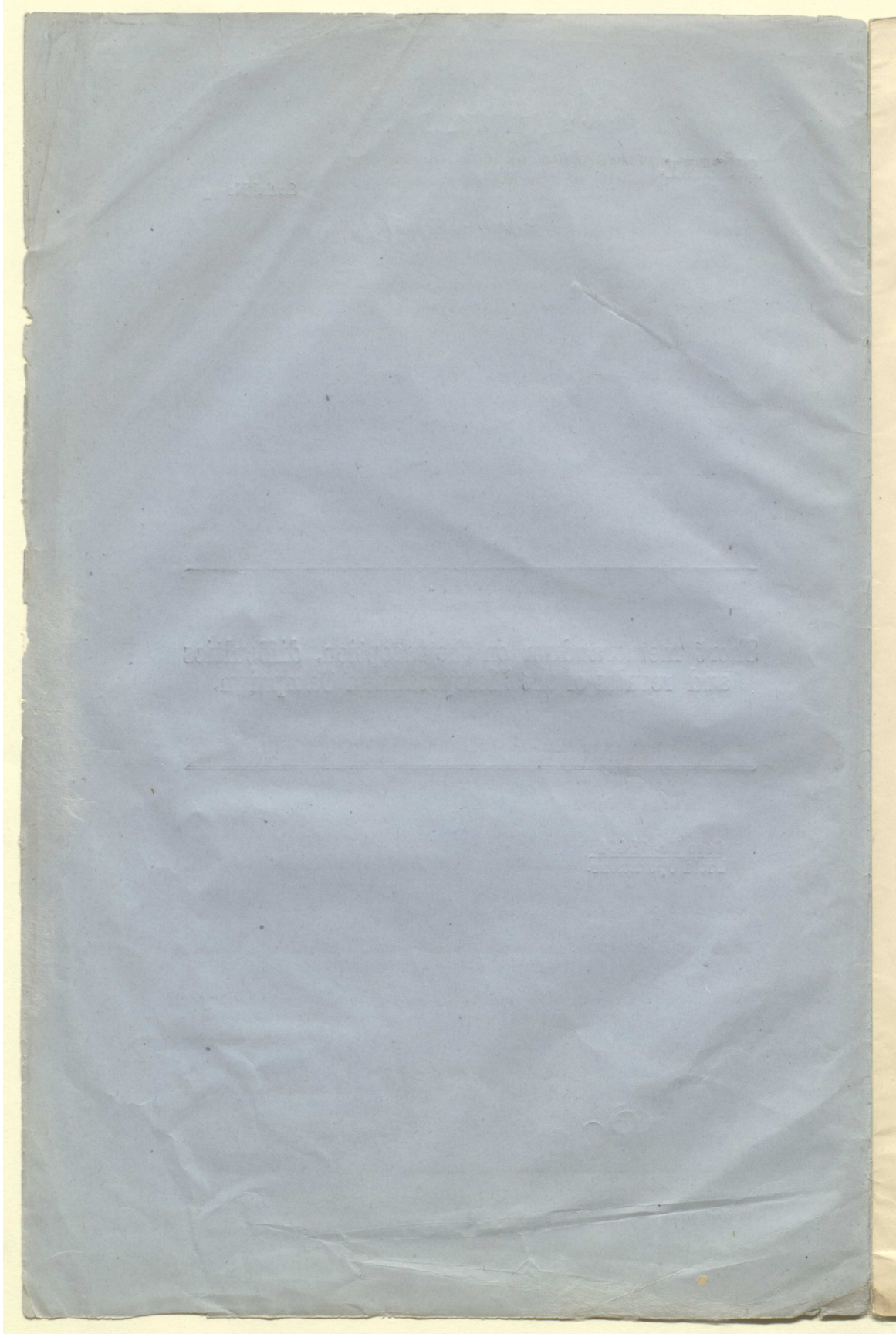
حول هذا السجل

الملف عبارة عن تقرير مطبوع يتكون من مذكرة حول بدء حملة بلاد الرافدين والصعوبات التي واجهتها ونتائجها، وطبعته هيئة الأركان العامة، الهند (شيملا، ١٩١٦). يقدم التقرير تفاصيل حول الموقف الحالي في بلاد الرافدين، والقوات الهندية والصعوبات التي واجهتها في ضوء الظروف السياسية، والإستراتيجية، والحالة المادية، والإمدادات الغذائية، والمناخ، والشعور المحلي، والتعقيدات الدينية. يحتوي الغلاف الأمامي على العنوان والرقم التسلسلي ورقم القضية ومصنّف على أنه "سري".

"مذكرة قصيرة حول بدء حملة بلاد الرافدين والصعوبات التي واجهتها
ونتائجها" [أمامي] (١٠/١)



"مذكرة قصيرة حول بدء حملة بلاد الرافدين والصعوبات التي واجهتها
ونتائجها" [أمامي-داخلي] (١٠/٢)



"مذكرة قصيرة حول بدء حملة بلاد الرافدين والصعوبات التي واجهتها
وتنتائجها" [٢و] [١٠/٣]

Short memorandum on the inception, difficulties and results of the Mesopotamian Campaign.

1. The intention of this paper is to explain as far as is within my cognizance the inception and progress in its various stages of the Mesopotamian campaign, the results attained, and the difficulties which had to be overcome in India in reaching these results.

2. The present situation in the Mesopotamia theatre is as follows :—

Our forces are in effective occupation of the entire Basrah *Vilayet* and are grouped so as to threaten effectively any move of the opposing enemy forces, thus assisting the Russians in Armenia and Persia, ensuring passivity in Pusht-i-Kuh and quiet in Arabistan and the oilfields, while covering preparations for an offensive, of which the direct result will be to enhance the above advantages.

This is, in brief, what has been achieved in a theatre in which Indian administration and Indian resources had the preponderating part.

3. In judging the adequacy or otherwise of this achievement, the force at the disposal of the Government of India must be considered.

The task of the Army in India previous to the war was defined in the conclusion to the Army in India Committee Majority Report as :—

"That while India should provide for her own defence against local aggression and, if necessary, for an attack on the Indian Empire by a great power until reinforcements can come from home, she is not called upon to maintain troops for the specific purpose of placing them at the disposal of the Home Government for wars outside the Indian sphere, although—as has happened in the past—she may lend such troops if they are otherwise available. Further that in present conditions if we provide a field army fully adequate to deal with the maximum external danger to which India is now exposed, *i.e.*, a war with Afghanistan in combination with the tribes, this Army will also suffice to meet any minor contingency arising elsewhere".

4. Before the operations in Mesopotamia were initiated this contingency had arisen elsewhere, and had been met as follows :—

When the present war broke out, India provided at once an expeditionary force for Europe of a strength of 2 Divisions and 2 Cavalry Divisions.

This entailed more than the numerical reduction implies, for the troops sent to Europe were, except for the formations retained on the North-West Frontier, the most ready for war in India.

A force was withdrawn for East Africa at the same time, the infantry strength of which aggregated 12 battalions, while the 6th (Poona) Division, the only remaining complete division except those essential for frontier defence, was prepared for service overseas.

In October and November 1914, in addition to the four additional field artillery brigades sent with the two divisions to France, 20 regular horse, field and heavy batteries (*i.e.*, all except 3 horse, 8 field, 3 howitzer and 6 heavy batteries) were despatched to England, and at the same time 32 regular British Infantry battalions (*i.e.*, all except 9) were sent home and 20 selected Indian Infantry battalions were despatched to Egypt. To replace these units, 29 Territorial field batteries and 35 Territorial battalions, with obsolete and inadequate equipment, were sent to India.

Concurrently with these exchanges, all regular 13-pr. and 18-pr. batteries were reduced to a 4 gun establishment to assist in meeting the call for guns from England.

5. The despatch of these formations and units, and the depletion of trained staff and of reserves in material and personnel which accompanied it, naturally lessened India's powers of meeting any further strain on her military resources. This strain came with the Mesopotamian campaign.

It will be convenient to recapitulate the situation as regards military resources in India when this campaign was initiated.

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Troops in India disposable after execution of promised exchanges :—

(i) The 6th Poona Division mobilized for service overseas and preparing for operations in Mesopotamia.

(ii) The frontier formations.

(iii) Internal security troops short of pre-war estimated requirements :—

1 British cavalry regiment as against 4

128 Field and Horse Artillery guns as against 144

34 British Territorial Infantry battalions as against 29 Regular.

14 Indian Cavalry regiments as against 22

31 Indian Infantry battalions as against 51

or a total of (ii), and (iii) still available in India for its security of—

27 Cavalry Regiments.

111 Infantry Battalions.

268 Mobile guns.

Thus India at that time, as now, had in hand barely sufficient Field Army troops to defend the North-West Frontier against aggression by Afghanistan or the tribes and an allotment of Internal Security troops already, according to pre-war estimates, dangerously below the safety level.

6. The Poona Division was despatched and attained the object of the operations for which it was detailed—the securing of Basrah. Increases of force were demanded, first by the action of the enemy and later by the altered policy of His Majesty's Government, which led to the despatch of the following additional troops from India :—

1 British and 4 Indian Cavalry regiments.

11 batteries (3 more in readiness to leave).

8 Regular and Territorial British and 26 Indian infantry battalions.

7 Field Companies, Sappers and Miners.

Details of despatches in administrative units, drafts, transport, munitions, etc., are available in other papers.

To replace troops despatched to Mesopotamia 16 Garrison and 4 Territorial Force battalions arrived from England and the provision by Nepal of 10 Nepalese battalions aided in easing the military situation in India.

At the present date (1st September 1916) the situation is as follows :—

	Cavalry Regiments.	Infantry battalions.	Mobile guns.
In Mesopotamia, including all units originally despatched from India to other forces, and diverted to other theatres, and units under orders for Mesopotamia,	10½	70	142
Captured at Kut	17	28
Sent to other theatres, including units earmarked in India but not yet despatched.	16	61	234
Remaining in India ... { Field Army ...	10	54	120
Internal security...	11½	56	102



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This conveys some idea of the extent to which the military system of India, limited in peace to preparations for the defence of India and action against Afghanistan, met the calls made on it in the Imperial cause.

7. Dealing more particularly with the campaign in Mesopotamia, the difficulties which the campaign has presented to India come under heads:—

- Political
- Strategical
- Physical
- Climatic
- Local feeling
- Religious complications,

which are discussed below.

8. *Political difficulties.*—India's interest in the Persian Gulf has been, previous to the war, mainly confined to the ports and the routes tapping inland trade.

British interests could be adequately safeguarded by commercial pressure and, though plans for the application of military force on the littoral were ready, there was little likelihood of their having to be put into execution.

In 1913-14, however, the acquisition by the Home Government of the oilfields placed a vulnerable objective within reach of hostile pressure. The value to a sea Empire of this objective, and its vulnerability, demanded a consideration of means of defence; while, as from its nature, political or commercial pressure could not be relied on to secure it, its defence devolved on the action of land forces.

The land forces required for this depended on the danger, and on the only occasion when the military authorities in India were consulted on the question, in January 1914, they gave it as their opinion that, in the event of local disturbances, from two brigades to a division would be necessary for the protection of the oilfields in the Karun area, but that in the event of major complications it was impossible to estimate its requirements.

9. The provision of the lesser force had already been foreseen in Plans of Operation for securing British interests in Persia and the Gulf—the method of coping with major complications depended on questions of Imperial strategy of which the Government of India was not sufficiently informed to forecast requirements.

10. The views of those responsible for this forecast do not appear to have been clearly focussed at the commencement of the Mesopotamian campaign.

The policy laid down by His Majesty's Government for the campaign as known to the Government of India at different stages was as follows:—

On 5th October 1914, to occupy Abadan and protect the oil tanks and pipe line.

An advanced force from the 6th Division was prepared for this and despatched to the Persian Gulf on 16th October 1914.

On 1st November 1914, the Secretary of State directed that the force was to attack Fao and clear the Turks out of the Shatt-al-Arab as far as Shamshumiya.

A second Brigade of the 6th Division, which had been prepared, had reinforced the advanced portion by end of November, and attained its object—the securing of Basrah.

(These orders, and the preparations made on them, did not provide for an advance up either the Tigris or Euphrates.)

Defensive operations followed (in which the remainder of the 6th Division joined and by the end of April the 12th Division, from India less one brigade from Egypt), which ended in an advance up the Tigris and Euphrates to Amarah and Nasiriyah with a view to ensuring the security of the Basrah *Vilayet*.

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These operations culminated in the advance through Kut to Aziziyah. On 24th October, after much correspondence, the advance on Baghdad was ordered.

During this time the Government of India was not made aware of any general policy governing the campaign from its inception—the indications pointing rather to an indefinite policy: a defensive in the first instance, then a cautious advance and finally a bold offensive followed each other with little notice of the change.

Since October 24th the policy has remained sufficiently definite, *i.e.*, the maintenance of as forward a position as possible, but the military execution of this policy has demanded several additions to the force already employed—entailing improvements in transport arrangements, which from their nature cannot be carried through with the rapidity of a change in a previously indefinite policy.

11. *Strategical difficulties.*—Previous to the war, responsibility for acquiring intelligence regarding Mesopotamia, with the exception of the portion south of a line Basrah-Akaba, had been taken over by the War Office, on whom the military authorities in India were in consequence dependent for the collated information on which to frame Plans of Operations. The information supplied proved to be inadequate and, in the absence of a definite policy and plan in respect of operations in this theatre, the preparations to carry it out, which would have made this deficiency evident, were not made in India; while no such plan was received from the War Office. Insufficiency of information, especially with regard to the rivers, has hampered both Commanders in the field and the Government of India in making timely forecasts of requirements.

12. The changes in policy have been referred to.

The procedure with regard to the management of the campaign was laid down by the Secretary of State as control of the scope of operations by himself and management by India.

13. *Physical.*—The physical difficulties of the theatre of operations are considerable and of a nature not contemplated in the preparations made by India for the primary rôle of her army, *i. e.*, operations on the North-West Frontier of India.

Although the base, Basrah, can be classed as a seaport, *the Fao bar*, restricting passage of vessels drawing over 18 feet, limits the number of transports which can be conveniently used, and, when the numbers required exceeded that limit, has entailed lengthy transshipping arrangements which have added considerably to the difficulty of maintenance from overseas.

Basrah Port was equipped to deal with a small mercantile shipping. The shipping to be dealt with during the campaign increased simultaneously with the increase of the force, which followed so swiftly on the changes of policy that it was impossible to provide the additional port facilities necessary to cope with the increased shipping. Congestion in the port, on the wharves, and in the depôts followed inevitably and has been and is one of the great difficulties with which the administrative branches in Mesopotamia have had to deal.

The navigation of the *Karun*, *Tigris* and *Euphrates* present markedly different problems, while the characteristics of the Tigris and Euphrates were little known previous to our advance up them.

River craft on these rivers was only sufficient for the requirements of a limited peace traffic with the repairing and docking facilities in proportion.

There was therefore no establishment for the building and upkeep of a river fleet suitable or sufficient for the requirements of operations. The output of similar establishments in India was limited, and dependent in large measure on import from overseas, and all ready-made imported craft have proved to have grave defects of some kind or other.

Construction in England has been slow, uncertain and subordinate to the Admiralty requirements, while the assembly of vessels sent out to be put together in Mesopotamia has been delayed by breakdowns in the workshops there.

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Some loss in transit occurred in ready-made craft sent from India, partly on account of construction and partly owing to unfavourable weather which in urgency had to be faced.

These difficulties combined to render the provision of river craft—up to the present the principal factor in the operations in Mesopotamia—a matter involving much greater delays than at first glance appear necessary. These delays have hampered the operations throughout, and could only have been avoided by preparation far in advance, which again would have depended for its extent on a defined policy, which was lacking.

Another difficulty in regard to river transport has been manning the vessels. The crews set free by purchase of vessels brought from different parts of the world could only be employed by inducements, which at times failed; or by compulsion, which was not attempted. The problem of the built-to-order vessels remains and will continue to present difficulties.

Further difficulties arise in regard to supplies.

Fuel suitable for the use of forces in the field is scarce and its carriage beyond the base adds to the task of the insufficient river transport.

Vegetables, grown in certain localities, are not procurable at the fighting front in adequate quantity, while the import of vegetables from overseas is hampered for much of the year by climate.

Forage, procurable locally in its season, has to be transported to the forces. At other seasons it has to be imported and transferred up river.

Food.—Insufficiency of meat on hoof to meet the requirements of the concentrated forces at the front is the principal problem, but the limited river transport tends to restrict the carriage of all but necessaries, so that the food problem cannot be ideally solved till the transport problem has been solved.

The expenditure of ammunition and the need for keeping up large reserves near the front has of course borne heavily on the river transport.

The absence of villages and towns at the battle front make the provision of shelter for the troops essential to the preservation of health in the hot season and desirable at all times. The supply of tents at the front has been hampered by the difficulty of river transport, and the provision of huts in localities where more permanent arrangements are possible has been slow for the same reason, as except for earth all materials have had to be brought up from the base.

14. *Climatic.*—Climatic conditions in Mesopotamia militate against operations for the greater part of the year.

Floods hampering movement, and, in the vicinity of the Tigris, restricting manœuvre and imposing grave disadvantages on the attackers, have seriously prejudiced the important later operations in Mesopotamia.

The damp areas left by the floods and the heat which followed the floods favour insect life with its disease spreading effects.

Heat has hampered movement, and its exhausting effect has predisposed to sickness.

The large amount of evacuation during the past three months is primarily due to this.

The variations of temperature experienced in winter, high winds, and cold followed by periods of warmth, have also had their effect on the sick rate.

Rain storms, heavy and frequent in the winter, impede movement to a peculiar extent owing to the nature of the soil.

Mirage is another difficulty which has to be experienced to be realised. It has never been experienced by our troops in the degree which it is met with in Mesopotamia.

Disease.—Tropical diseases, malaria, dysentery, the typhoids, and cholera have all to be combatted in conditions which impose every disadvantage on the human being.

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15. *Local Feeling.*—Local feeling in occupied districts has not affected the course of operations. Arab hostility has however been marked on all occasions where operations were not in our favour, has caused anxiety as to security of communications from time to time, and has caused a portion of the fighting forces to be detached from time to time to deal with it.

16. *Religious complications.*—While local feeling can be dealt with according to the needs of the situation, a feature of the campaign has been the marked aversion of certain sections of the Muhammadan elements of the Indian army to fighting the Tur's. The feeling has shown itself in desertions and in refusals to fight; and, though by no means general, its effect has been to lower the confidence of both leaders and men in their Muhammadan comrades. The difficulty has been met in part by the removal of trans-frontier Pathans to other theatres, but it has been a source of preoccupation which has added to the difficulties of the authorities in Mesopotamia.

17. The result of the operations conducted under these difficulties has been as follows:—

The original objective was attained successfully and speedily.

The retention of the occupied area entailed defensive operations, which eventually led to the effective occupation of the Basrah *Vilayet*, after a series of unbroken though hardly-won successes.

The advance to Baghdad, never contemplated in the original policy, and therefore carried out with insufficient preparation, failed after a well conducted advance, a hard fought action, and withdrawal to Kut in the face of superior numbers. Nevertheless this operation resulted strategically in so reducing the Turkish force in the Caucasus as to assist materially the Russian advance on Erzerum; and politically in placing Persia on our side and keeping Afghanistan quiet.

The operations for the relief of Kut, though unsuccessful and costly, have ended by leaving our forces on the Tigris in a forward position which—

- (i) Effectually protects Nasiriyah from attack, except by a difficult and hitherto unused line.
- (ii) Thereby secures the whole of the Basrah *Vilayet*.
- (iii) Prevents Turkish access to Southern Pusht-i-Kuh and the oilfields.
- (iv) Places us in a position now to hold the enemy's forces opposite us, to prevent undue detachment of force towards Persia or the Caucasus and to take full advantage of any opportunity for a forward move, thus co-operating effectually with the Russians.

That greater results were not attained may, it is considered, be found, not in physical or strategical difficulties (which appear in some form or other in every theatre) but in the lack of definite policy which has hampered preparation and execution.

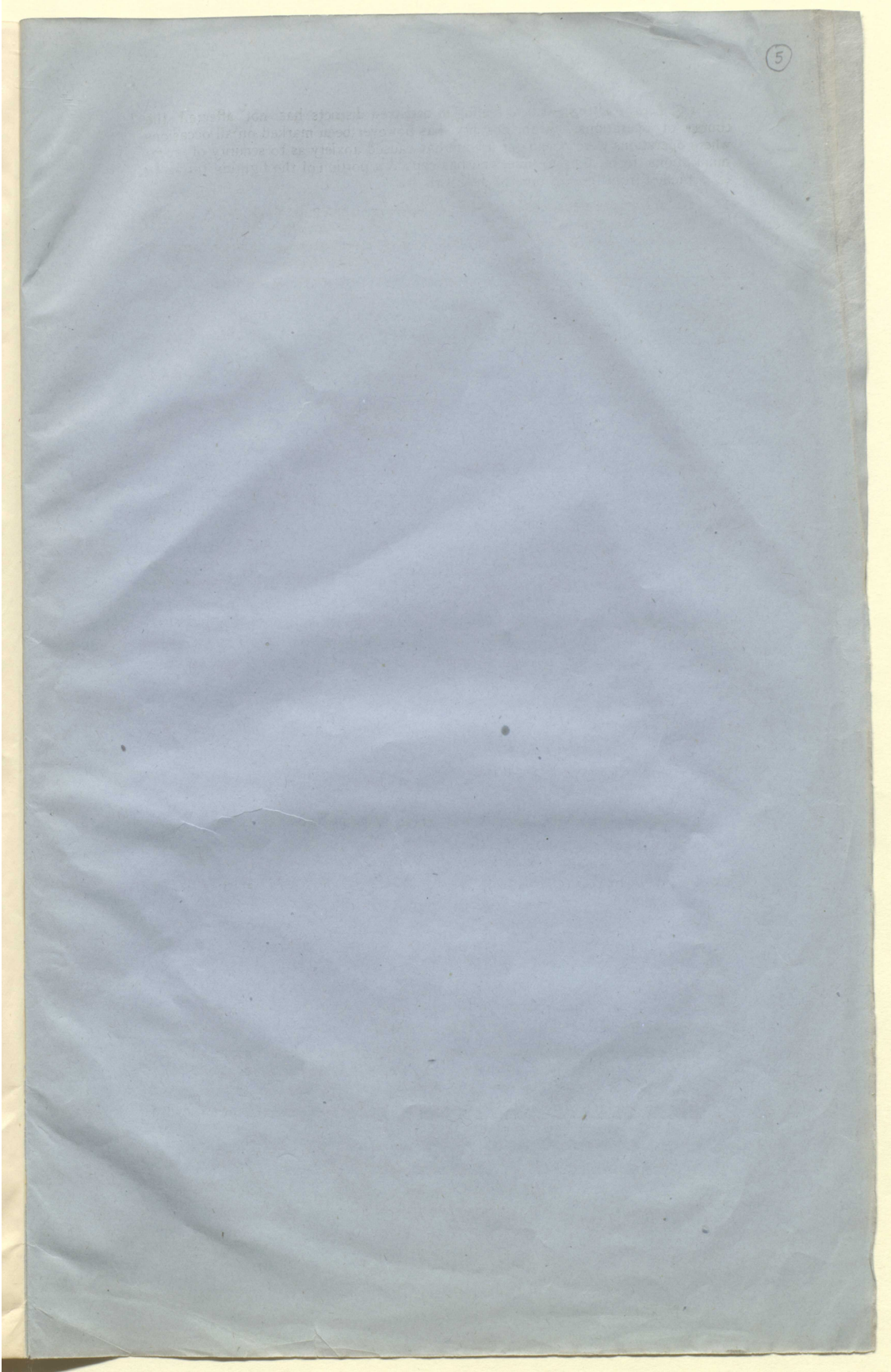
18. To sum up—in the first instance the limited object of the Mesopotamian campaign was successfully attained. After the failure of the Gallipoli undertaking, the greater importance of the Mesopotamian operations and the policy then and since adopted of keeping as high up the Tigris as possible has produced strategical results of great advantage to British interests in the East, while ensuring effective co-operation with our Russian allies and in a thoroughly effective way preserving tranquillity in India and on its border.

The result has only been secured by the employment of Indian military resources to an extent which, as shown above, created real risks in India for the whole period since the commencement of the war, during the most critical period of which India also carried out the most successful and extensive operations undertaken on the frontier since 1897.

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