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**'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and
creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner,
Montague, Churchill, self, and others'**

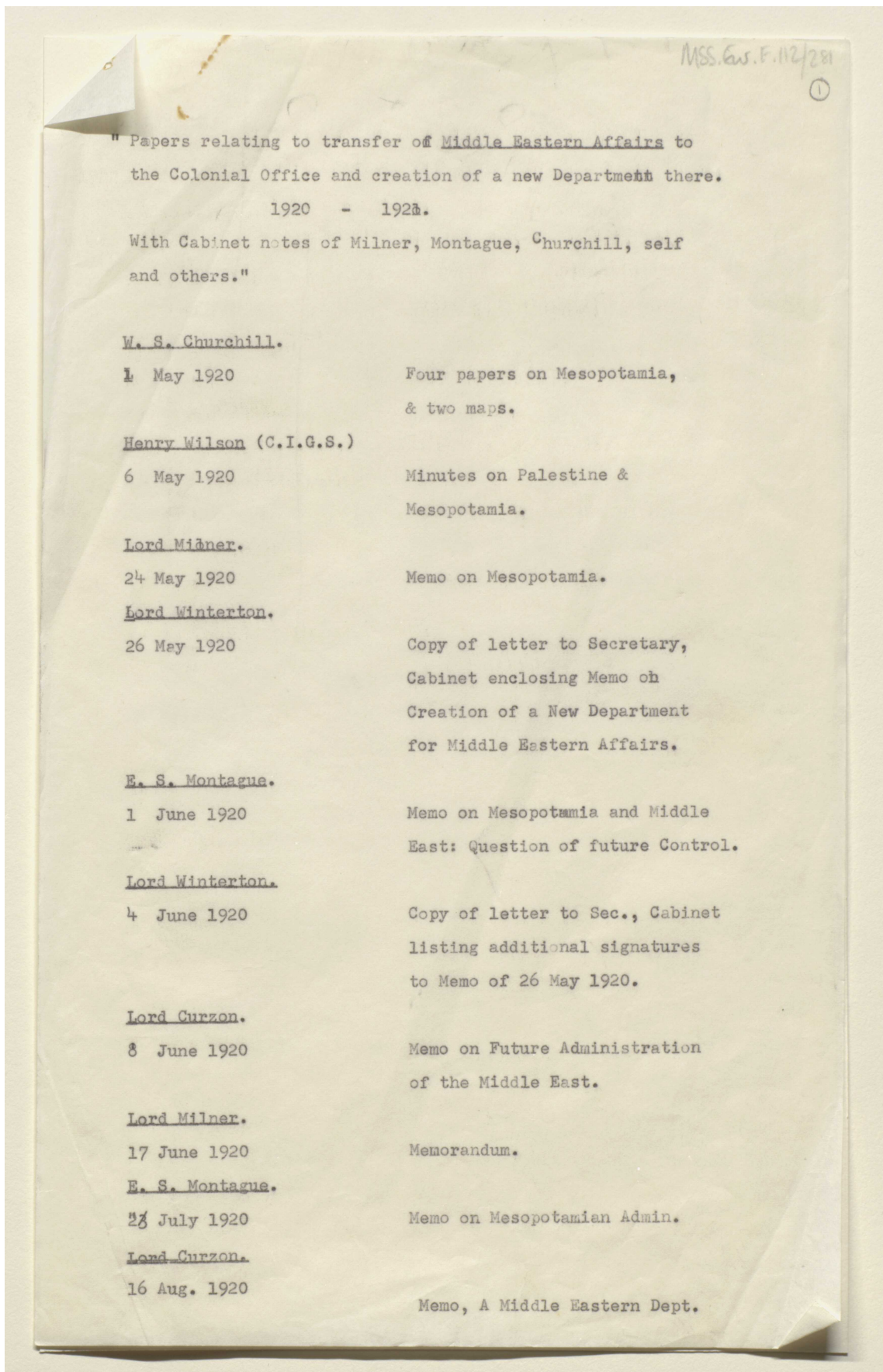
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| Holding Institution | British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers |
| Reference | Mss Eur F112/281 |
| Date(s) | 1 May 1920-10 Feb 1921 (CE, Gregorian) |
| Written in | English in Latin |
| Extent and Format | 1 file (68 folios) |
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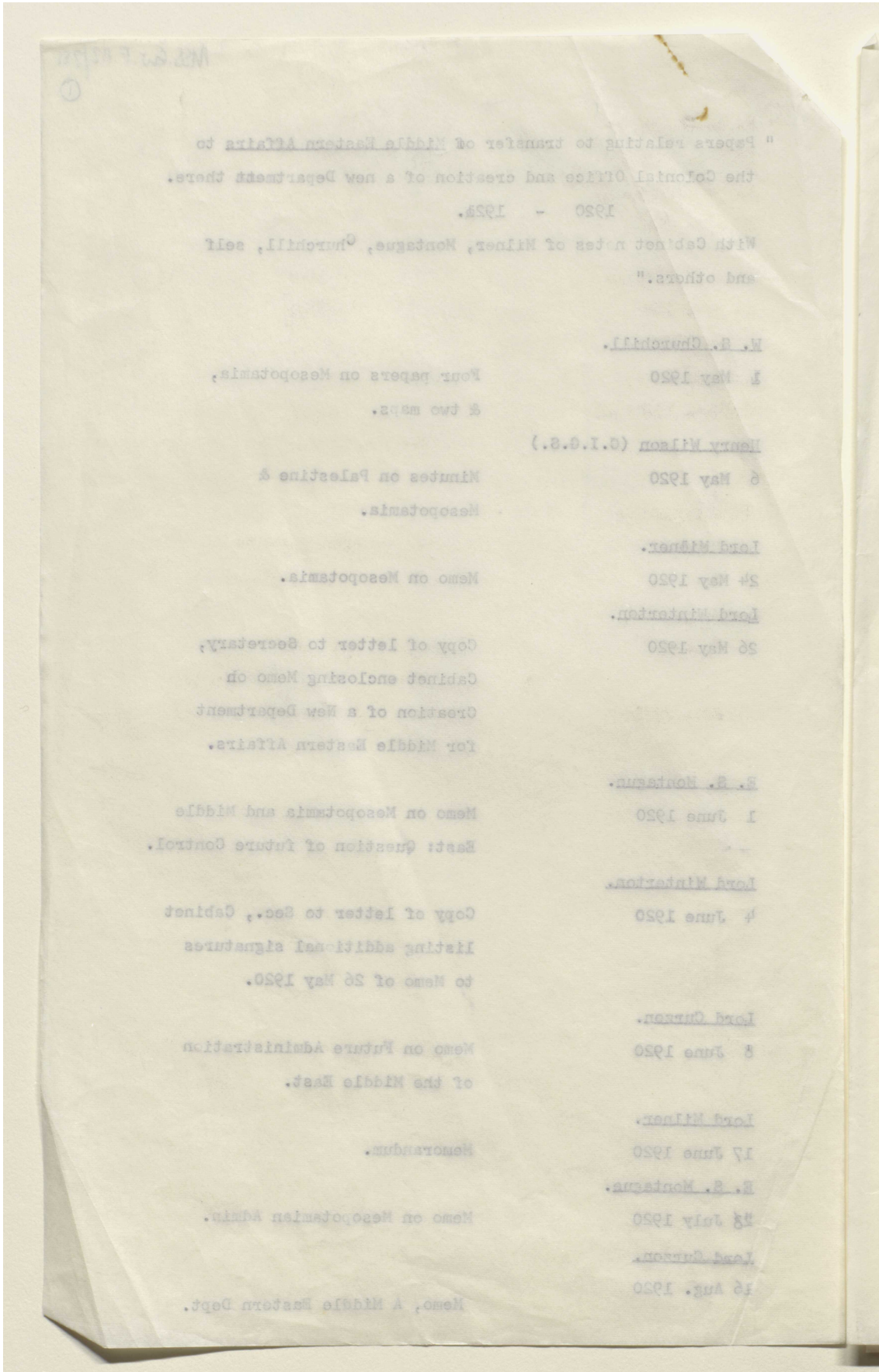
About this record

The file contains correspondence, minutes, memoranda, and reports concerning the administration of Mesopotamia and other Middle Eastern territories and the transfer of responsibility for Middle Eastern Affairs to a new department within the Colonial Office. Authors and correspondents include Curzon himself, members of the Cabinet, officials from the India Office, Foreign Office, Colonial Office, Air Staff, Imperial General Staff, and High Commission in Baghdad.

'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [1r] (1/136)



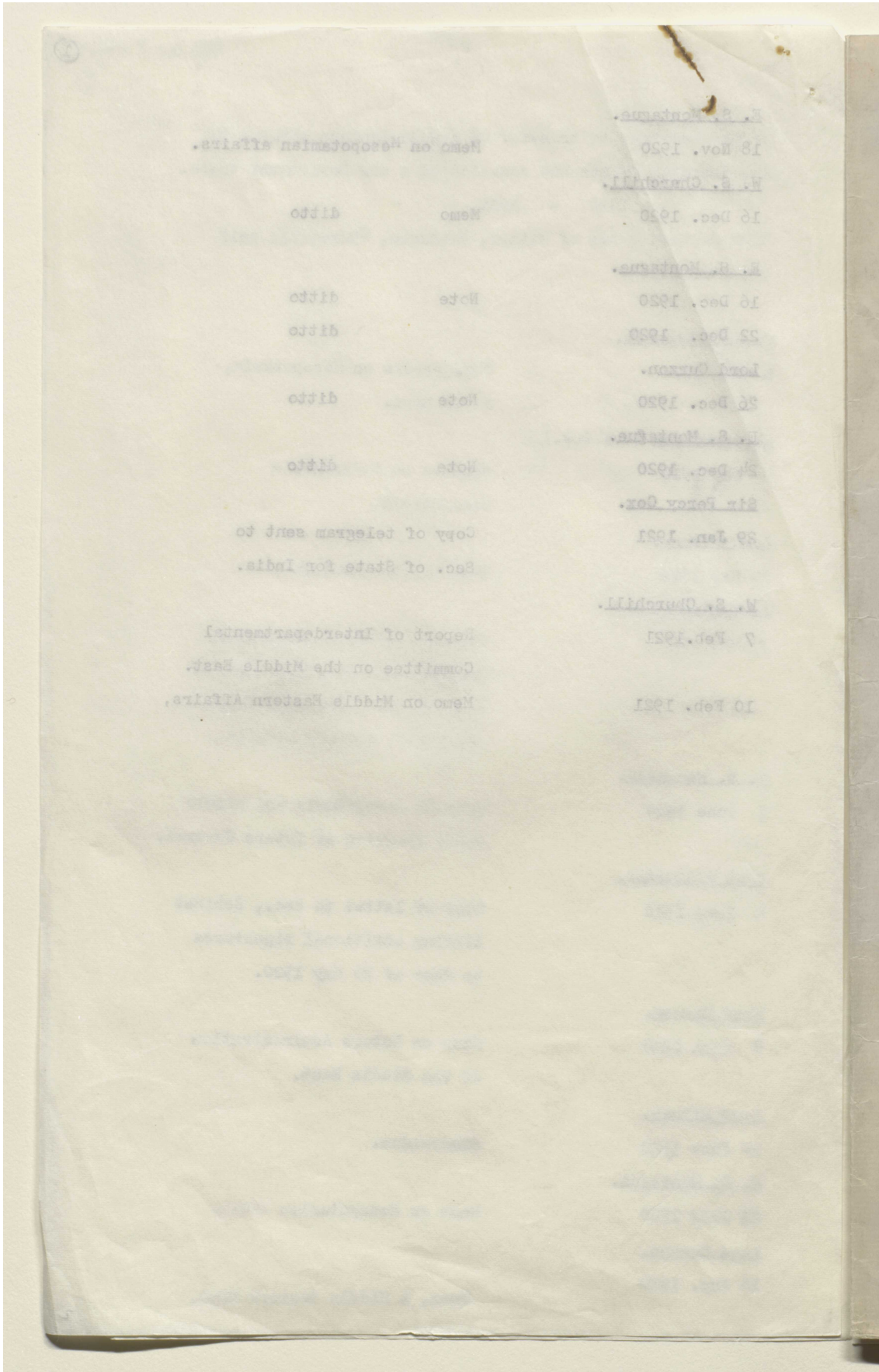
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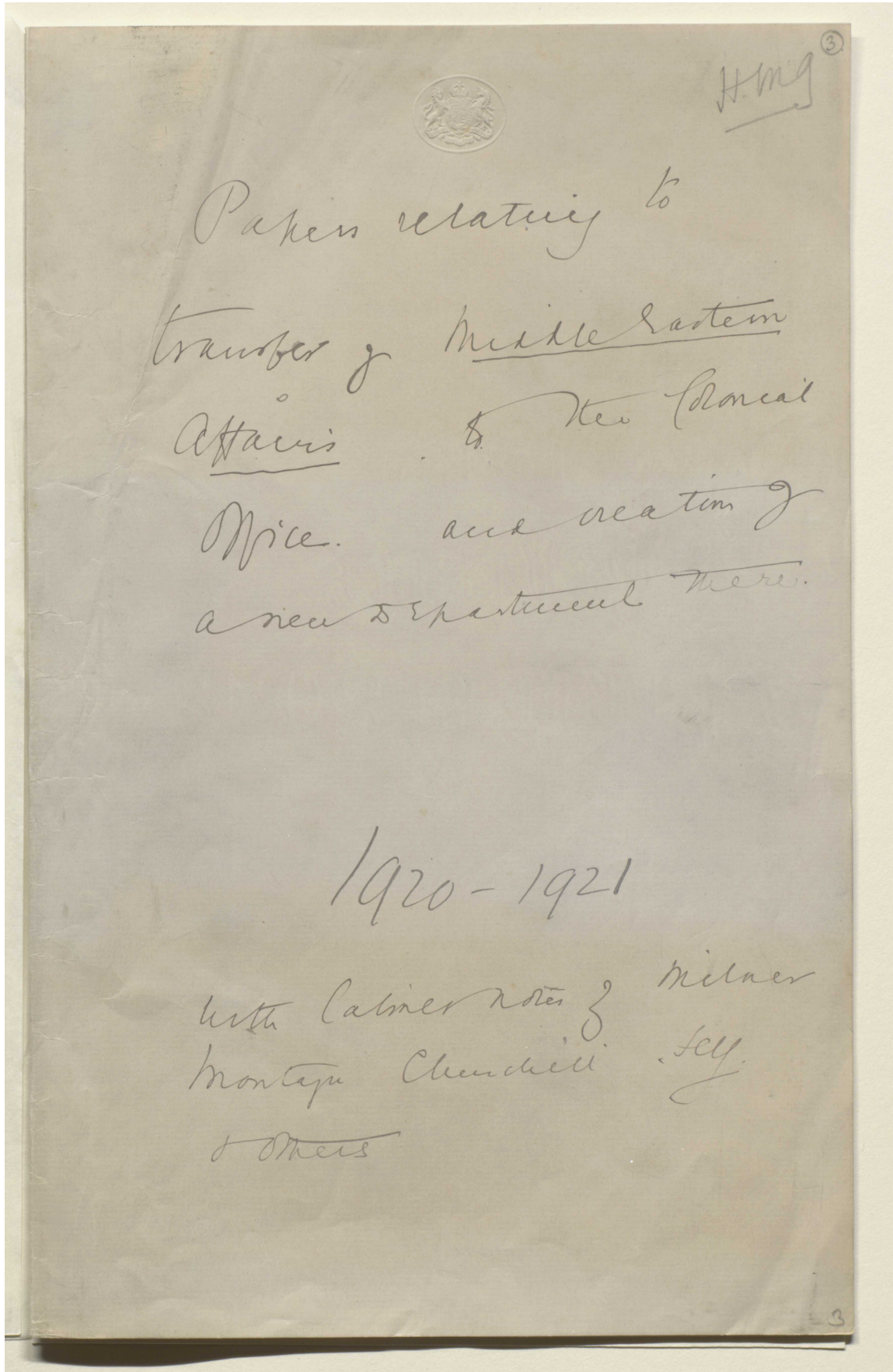
'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
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Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [2r] (3/136)

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|--|
| <u>E. S. Montague.</u> | | |
| 18 Nov. 1920 | | Memo on Mesopotamian affairs. |
| <u>W. S. Churchill.</u> | | |
| 16 Dec. 1920 | Memo | ditto |
| <u>E. S. Montague.</u> | | |
| 16 Dec. 1920 | Note | ditto |
| 22 Dec. 1920 | | ditto |
| <u>Lord Curzon.</u> | | |
| 26 Dec. 1920 | Note | ditto |
| <u>E. S. Montague.</u> | | |
| 24 Dec. 1920 | Note | ditto |
| <u>Sir Percy Cox.</u> | | |
| 29 Jan. 1921 | | Copy of telegram sent to Sec. of State for India. |
| <u>W. S. Churchill.</u> | | |
| 7 Feb. 1921 | | Report of Interdepartmental Committee on the Middle East. |
| 10 Feb. 1921 | | Memo on Middle Eastern Affairs, |

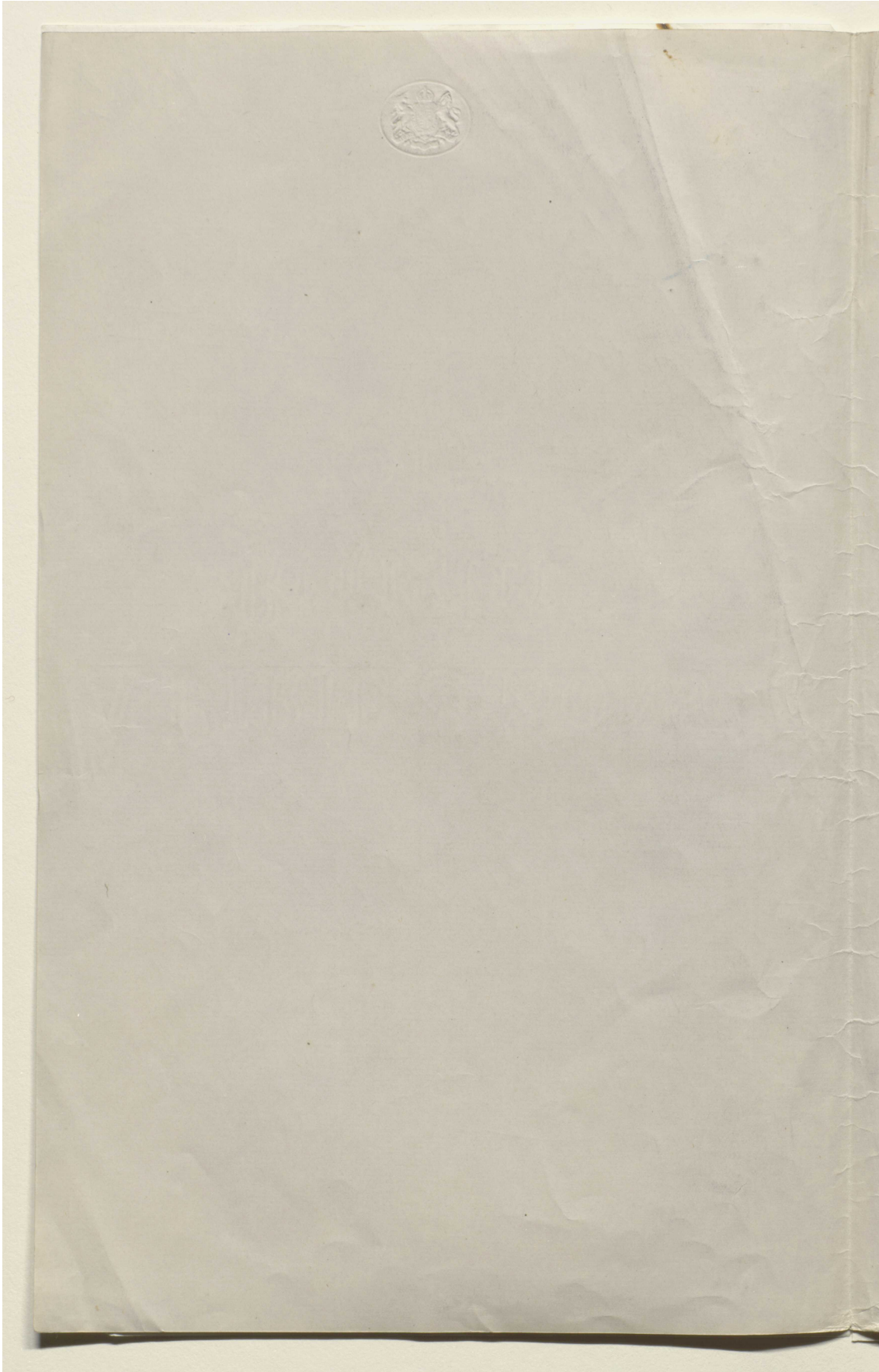
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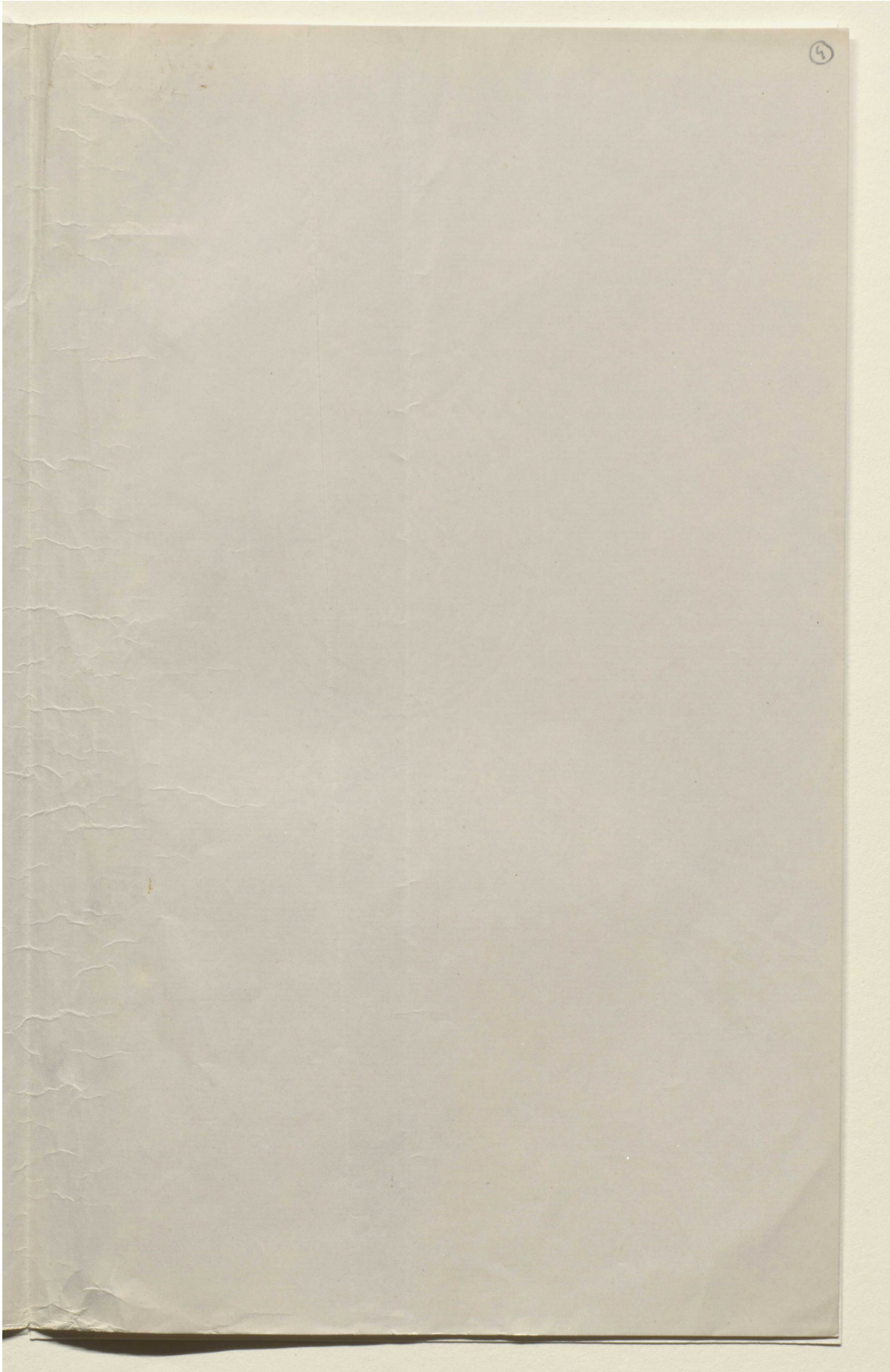
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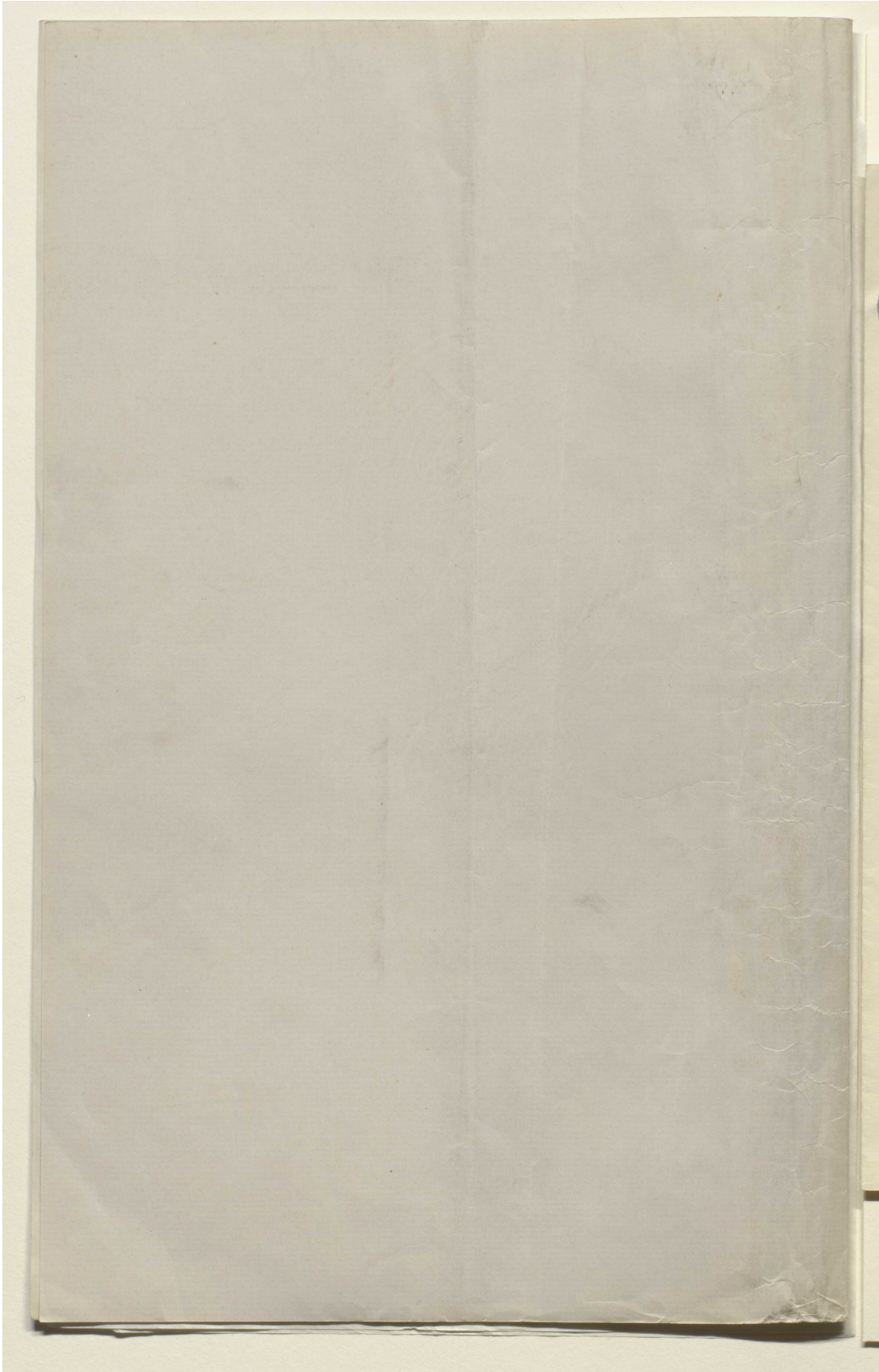
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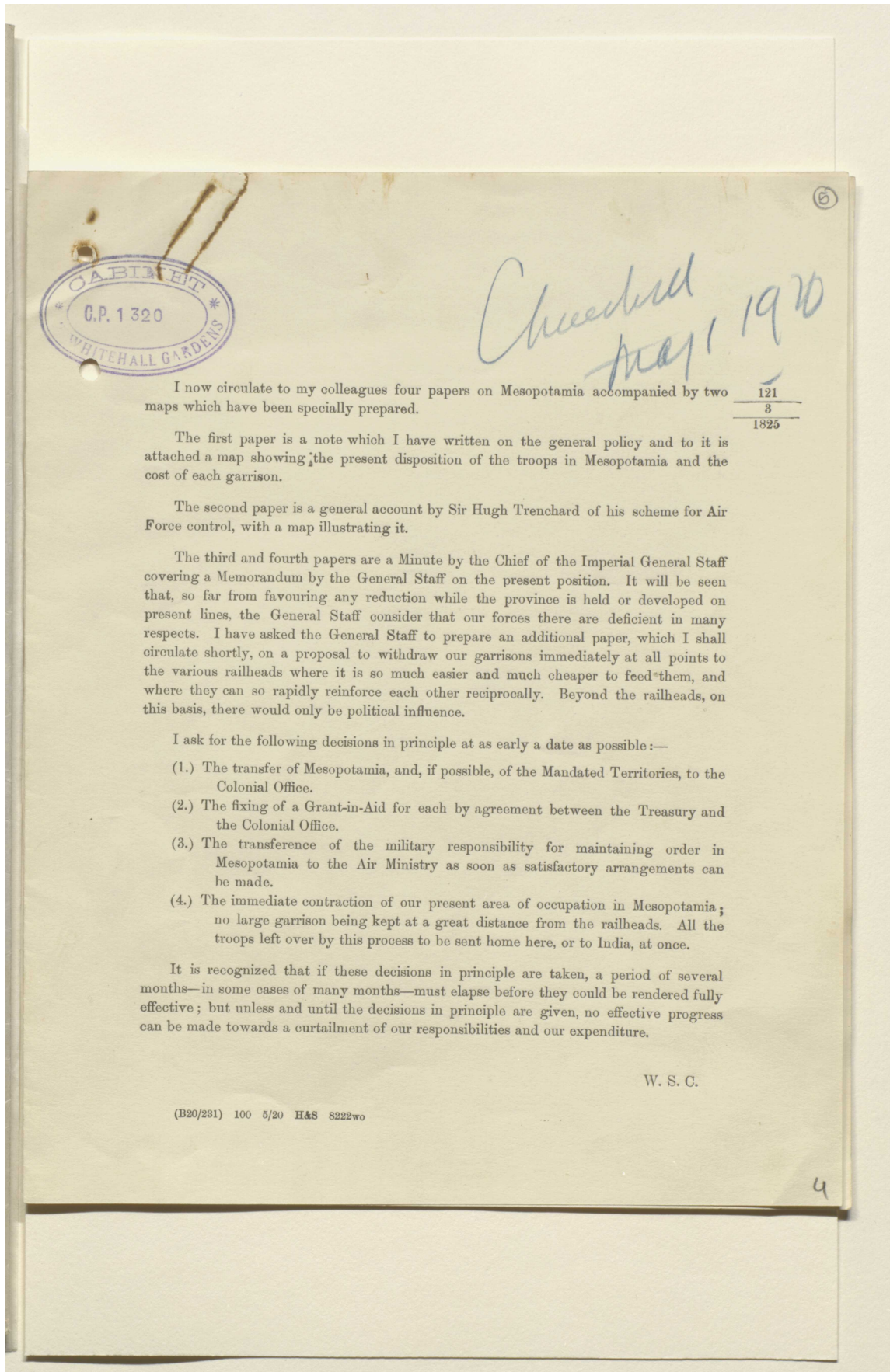
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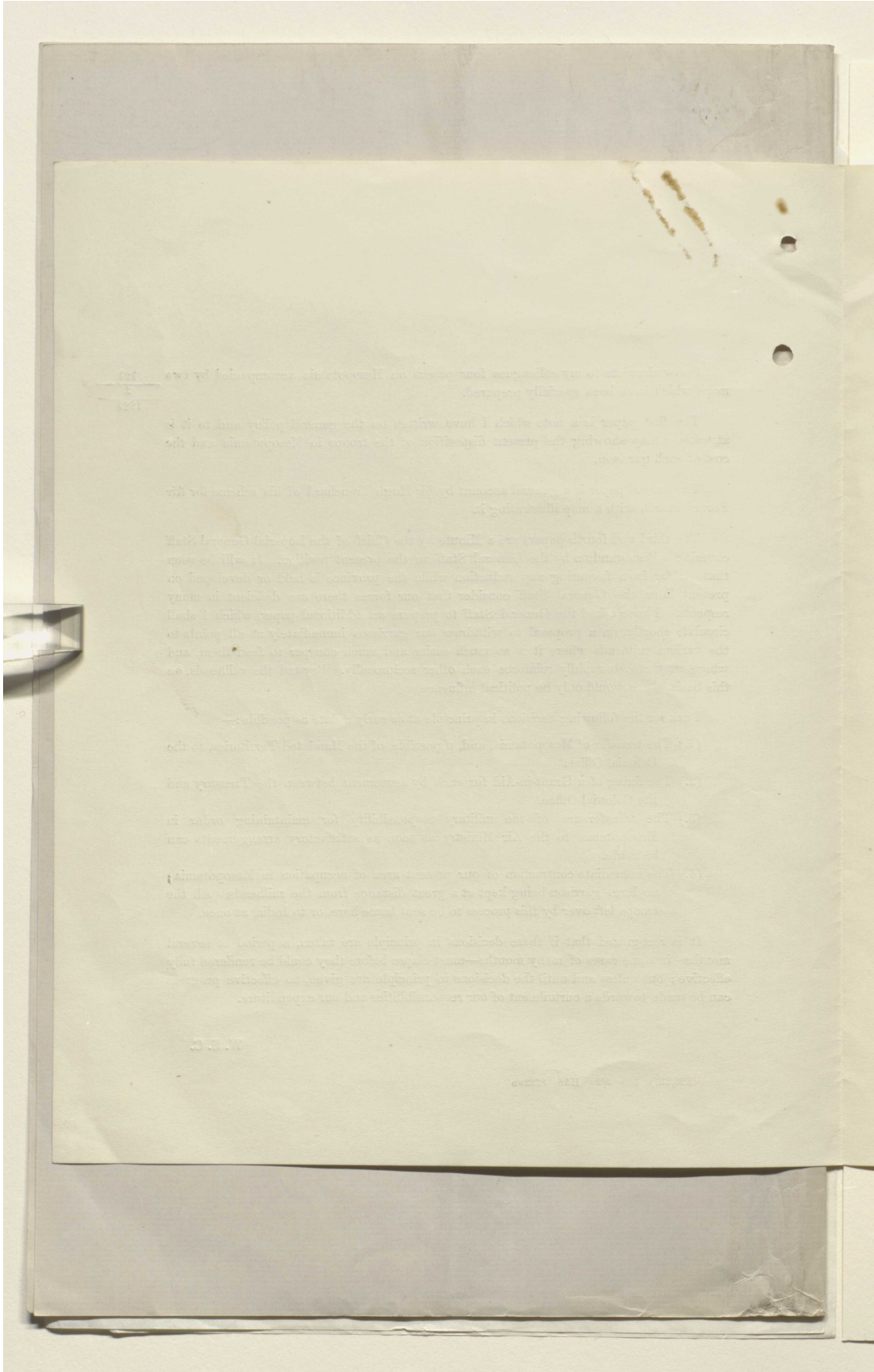
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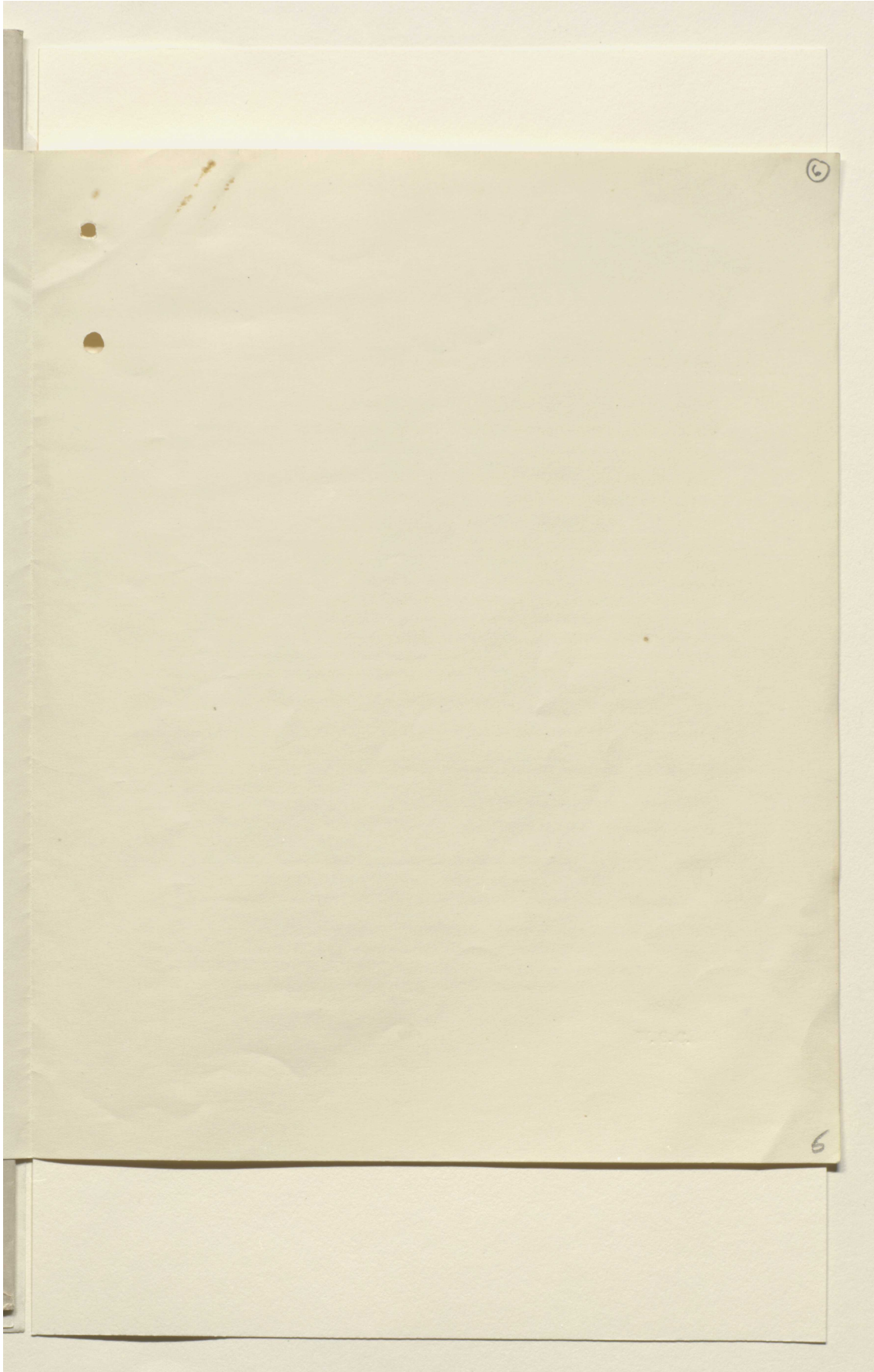
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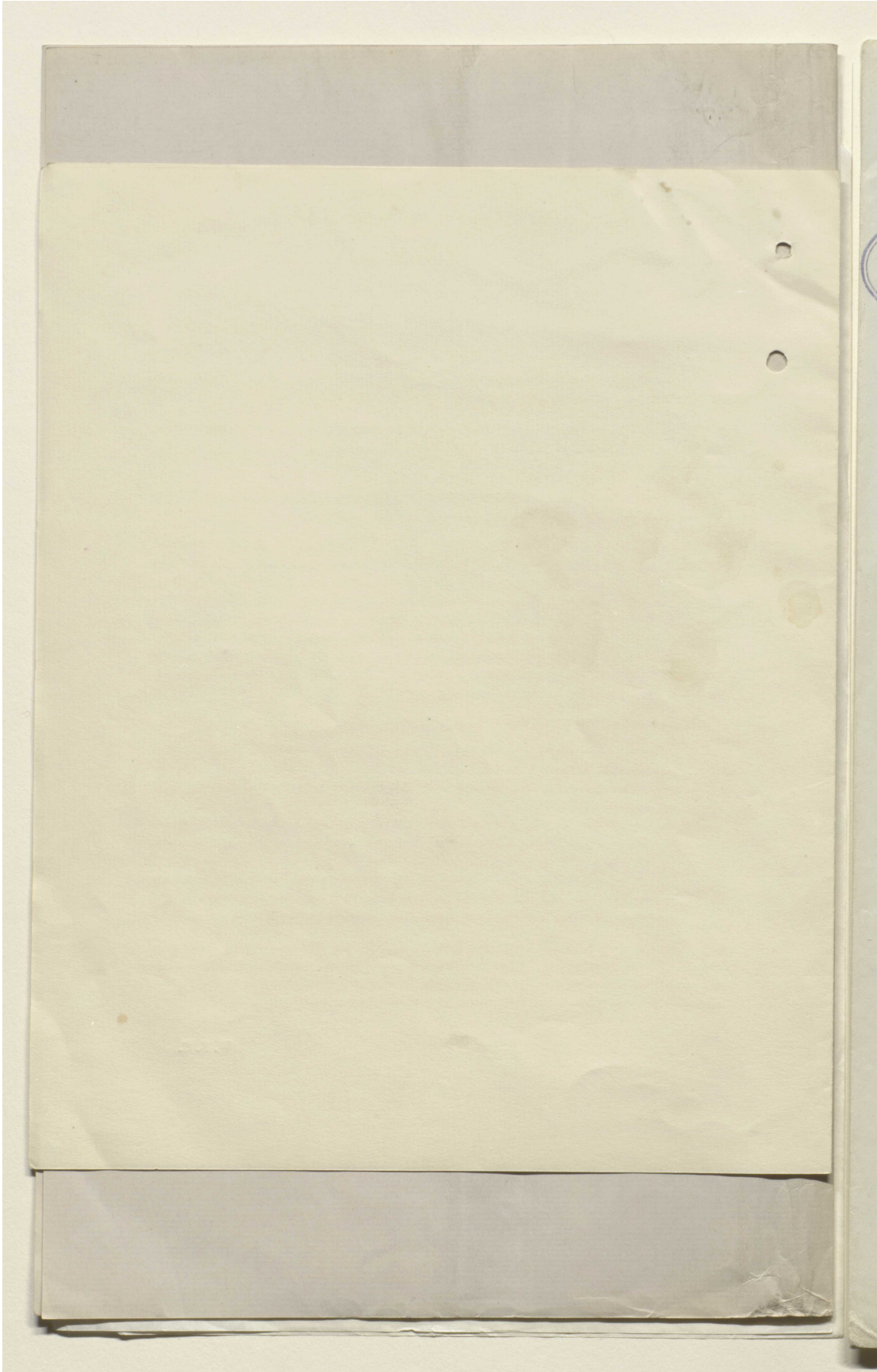
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SECRET.



THE CABINET.

MESOPOTAMIAN EXPENDITURE.

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1825

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.

I desire to draw the attention of my colleagues to the waste of money entailed by our present military and administrative policy in Mesopotamia, and to invite them to take certain general decisions of principle which will enable a prompt and drastic curtailment of expenditure to be effected. For this purpose I circulate (a) a map and table showing the present cost of our garrisons in Mesopotamia, and (b) a scheme which Sir Hugh Trenchard has prepared, in conjunction with the War Office, for the maintenance of order under the prime responsibility of the Royal Air Force.

It will be seen that at present we have an Anglo-Indian army of 60,000 men with an immense quantity of followers scattered in detachments over an enormous area at a cost of upwards of 18,000,000*l.* a year. The War Office is not responsible for this distribution of troops. The Eastern Committee of the Cabinet animates the political policy in Mesopotamia. The Foreign Office, rather than the India Office or the War Office, gives the directing impulse. The political officers under the civil administration push out into all sorts of remote districts on various pretexts—the survey of the pipe-line to the Mediterranean, the exploration of the Mosul district, the pacification of Kurdistan, the care of the Chaldean and Assyrian refugees, and the general reconstruction of the Turkish province. They expect the military authorities to provide ample force to maintain order in all the districts into which they have penetrated. This entails considerable garrisons at posts remote from Baghdad.

In addition to these, a force is maintained at Enzeli, costing 2,000,000*l.* a year, which has nothing to do with Mesopotamia, but is connected with some undertaking which the Foreign Office has given to Persia. Thus indented upon, the military authorities on the spot, supported by the General Staff at home, take what they conceive to be the appropriate military measures.

Each of these distant forces must be strong enough to resist every conceivable attack. All of them are supplied by long lines of communication, in many cases of communication by road, by Ford cars or pack animals. All along these lines of communication garrisons have to be established, each of which must be strong enough to resist the maximum potential force that could be brought to bear, and then from post to post along these lines there trickles at gigantic expense a stream of outward and inward-bound convoys.

The result of this vicious system is that a score of mud villages, sandwiched in between a swampy river and a blistering desert, inhabited by a few hundred half naked native families, usually starving, are now occupied, have been occupied for many months, and are likely to remain so occupied in the future unless the policy is changed, by Anglo-Indian garrisons on a scale which in India would maintain order in wealthy provinces of millions of people. To hold these worthless villages sums are being spent varying from 200,000*l.* to 1,000,000*l.* a year. Down in the desert near the scanty palm groves are established at the utmost cost and inconvenience the messes, regimental establishments, telegraph and signal stations, depôts, dumps and headquarters of regiments, squadrons, batteries and battalions of British and Indian troops. Nothing is worse for the troops than to be kept in these circumstances without permanent accommodation or proper concentration, with great numbers of their men being detached for every kind of subsidiary or quasi-military service, much ill-health, growing discontent, and absolutely no return that I can see proportionate to the ruinous expense.

How long is this state of affairs to continue? It will continue as long as the department calling the tune has no responsibility for paying the piper. So far as the War Office is concerned, I repudiate altogether responsibility for the policy out of which this condition of affairs has originated.

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In my opinion, we should start on the control and development of Mesopotamia from an entirely different point of view. We should hand the country over immediately to a Department of State which has a real knowledge and experience of the administration and development of these wild countries, which is accustomed to improvisations and makeshifts, which is accustomed to measure the territory it occupies by the amount of force at its disposal, and to measure the amount of the force at its disposal by the exiguous funds entrusted to it. The extreme dissatisfaction which the Foreign Office administration of the protectorates of East Africa, Uganda and Somaliland caused both in peace and war ten or twelve years ago led to their being placed under the Colonial Office, since which time, although development has been very slow because of want of money, it has been extraordinarily cheap and extremely successful. It is really marvellous how these enormous regions in East Africa have been held and are being developed without a single battalion of white troops. The whole of German East Africa, for example, has been taken over and is being administered without a single white unit being demanded from the War Office; yet German East Africa, as we know to our cost, contains large quantities of natives who were formidable fighters under the Germans. In Somaliland, again, a patient policy of waiting for opportunities, of knowing how and when to take appropriate action, and, above all, a frugal policy, has kept us out of any trouble or expense in this protectorate, and will in time secure its complete control and pacification. It is no reproach to the Foreign Office to say that they know nothing about administration. It is not their business. Moreover, as they have not got to get the estimates through, the financial aspect cannot be expected to weigh duly with them. The Foreign Office is the great Department of State the whole of whose experience and special aptitudes is devoted to the conduct of the relations of this country with foreign States, and to mix up with this the administration of provinces is to impair the discharge of both functions.

I hope, therefore, that Mesopotamia may be handed over immediately to the Colonial Office. Secondly, that a grant-in-aid may be fixed year by year after discussion between the Colonial Office and the Treasury. In my judgment, this grant-in-aid should not exceed, even in the early years, 5,000,000*l.* for military expenditure, and 2,000,000*l.* for civil expenditure, or 7,000,000*l.* in all. It should be possible to make substantial reductions upon this at an early date. Within this limit the Colonial Office should be the judge of the whole administrative policy. It will, for instance, be for them to decide whether it is better to occupy more distant districts and thus raise their military expenditure, or to develop the nearer more peaceful districts and so reduce the military charges. But anyhow, they should know that there is a fixed limit beyond which they are not entitled to draw upon the resources of this country, and that they must do the best they can within the bounds assigned to them. This may well mean that large areas of which we have become mandatory will not be occupied for many years, and that the reduction of the country to order will be partial and gradual. This is only what we did in the Sudan, where one British battalion is the maximum garrison that has been allowed all these years. It is exactly the policy we have pursued in the Nigerias. I have always regretted that more money has not been available for the commercial development of these teeming fertile lands in East and West Africa, which are capable of supplying the industries of this country with almost every conceivable tropical raw material they require in limitless abundance. I am profoundly disturbed to see colossal sums of money, which, invested in East or West Africa, would have produced a five-fold return in a few years, being poured out in sterile military occupation of comparatively barren regions in Mesopotamia.

The sole line of argument on which it is safe to proceed is, first, *to fix the amount that may be spent.* Secondly, to give the administering department the power of choosing the policy *within those limits.* And, thirdly, having chosen its policy, to indent upon the War Office or the Air Ministry for the military force required. Of this force the War Office or the Air Ministry must be the judge. We must be entitled to say, "To hold this district will require these troops and will cost you so much." We must also be entitled to say, "These forces must be so disposed as to be militarily safe and not liable to be overwhelmed or surrounded." As a result of such a consultation between the two departments concerned, it will often happen that political officers will be forbidden to go into large districts for several years to come because the troops are not available within the limits of the grant-in-aid, instead of as at present these officers pushing out wherever they will and drawing a blank cheque upon our resources in money and men.

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In the second place, I recommend to my colleagues that as soon as the administration of Mesopotamia is transferred to the Colonial Office I shall be given full authority to arrange with them the scale of the garrisons in accordance with the policy decided on and the scale of the grant-in-aid, and that subject to Cabinet approval of a detailed scheme I shall be entitled to transfer the military responsibility for sustaining the policy of the Colonial Office from the War Office to the Air Ministry, and to take the necessary steps to form the additional air forces required and generally to give directions which will result in the effective diminution *even during the current financial year* of the enormous forces and charges now involved.

The first advantage of aerial control in this kind of country is that it wipes out altogether the need for lines of communication. From a central position at Baghdad, which must be made secure, air forces can in a few hours reach almost any point in the area which it is reasonable for us to attempt to occupy in the first instance. A series of landing grounds at convenient points held by small sedentary garrisons capable of maintaining themselves in a fort or group of blockhouses for a few weeks should be created in the outlying stations. These can, if necessary, be fed or reinforced or relieved by aeroplanes from Baghdad at any time, and there will be no necessity to keep in being the long lines of communication or to keep the garrisons of these detached posts equipped with transport, and in that condition of mobility which necessitates the costly burden of transport animals which have to be fed.

Sir Hugh Trenchard has great experience not only of the air but in the development of these countries, having served for a number of years in command of the forces of the Nigerian Protectorate under the Colonial Office. I have not the slightest doubt that a thoroughly good arrangement can be made between the Air Ministry and the Colonial Office for the gradual taking over and development of Mesopotamia without the use of large forces; and I believe that economies more substantial even than those I have indicated here may be reached in the near future. The recent air campaign in Somaliland was arranged quite simply and easily by private consultations which took place between the Air Ministry and the Colonial Office under the direct authority of the Prime Minister. It is to this collaboration on a larger scale that I look as the sole practical means of rescuing Mesopotamia from the fate of being utterly crushed economically under the burden of its military charges, and of freeing the Government from the accusation to which they are now open of profuse and futile expenditure of the taxpayers' money.

In considering the future profit which may be drawn from the Mesopotamian oilfields, it is necessary always to bear in mind the capital charges which are accruing. Every year we go on at the present rate of expenditure adds 1,000,000*l.* a year at 5 per cent. to what Mesopotamia will ultimately have to produce in order to yield a profit. Even if the oilfields bear out our most sanguine hopes, we are burdening them to an intolerable extent with capital charges, and what would be a thoroughly good business for the British Empire, if developed gradually and thriftily is being daily deteriorated by the sterile charges which are mounting up.

W. S. C.

1st May, 1920.

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APPENDIX.

COST OF GARRISONS AT THE SEVERAL STATIONS IN MESOPOTAMIA AND NORTH-WEST PERSIA AS SHOWN ON MAP, DATED 7TH APRIL, 1920.

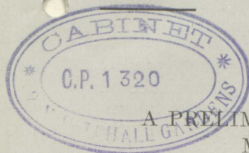
| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|-------------|-----------|
| 1. From Busra to Bagdad :— | | 3. On Bagdad—Shergat line :— | | £ |
| On railway line— | | Tekrit | | 1,224,220 |
| Busra | 516,000 | Baiji | | 1,167,940 |
| Nasrie | 284,250 | Shergat | | 306,310 |
| Samawa | 287,000 | 4. Beyond Shergat terminus :— | | |
| Diwanie | 106,850 | Mosul | 1,542,900 | |
| Hilla | 771,900 | Zakho | 238,300 | |
| Bagdad | 3,709,000 | Daoudie | 349,210 | |
| Not on railway line— | | Suwara | 225,400 | |
| Ahwaz | 156,500 | Akra | 173,160 | |
| Amara | 140,650 | Heras | 253,830 | |
| Kufa | 289,750 | Erbil | 144,970 | |
| On branch line from Bagdad— | | Al Tun Keupri | 21,950 | |
| Kut-el-Amara | 148,800 | Kirkuk | 1,196,150 | |
| 2. On Euphrates above Bagdad :— | | Chemchemal | 167,300 | |
| Ramadie | 10,630 | Bazian | 261,200 | |
| Hit | 527,050 | 5. On Bagdad—Quaritu line :— | | |
| Alus | 75,180 | Quaritu—Hamadan road | 961,120 | |
| Haditha | } 182,370 | Kermanshah | 420,380 | |
| Ana | | 6. Beyond Hamadan in North-West Persia :— | | |
| Nahiya | | Enzeli | } 2,058,800 | |
| Abu Kemal | Aesht | | | |
| | Manzil | | | |
| | | Kasvin | | |

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Printed for the Cabinet. March 1920.

SECRET.



A PRELIMINARY SCHEME FOR THE MILITARY CONTROL OF MESOPOTAMIA BY THE ROYAL AIR FORCE.

Memorandum with Covering Minute by the Chief of Air Staff.

Secretary of State,

WITH reference to your minute of the 29th February, and your statement in Parliament on the possibility of the Royal Air Force taking over the military control of Mesopotamia, the Air Staff have prepared the attached memorandum on the power of the air to carry out work of this description, and submit an outline of the scheme for assuming this responsibility.

With regard to the co-operation required from the Army, I have asked the C.I.G.S. if he will prepare a statement showing the number of fighting troops that will be required to carry out the rôle allotted to them; when this has been fully discussed and decided at a conference of the two staffs, the War Office will be asked to settle the nature and strength of the administrative services required for the combined fighting forces, and to prepare an estimate for the cost involved.

An estimate of the cost involved by the enlargement of the Air Force to carry out this scheme will be forwarded, together with the cost of the Army troops, as a supplement to this paper, as soon as it is compiled.

I am anxious to point out that an early decision must be arrived at if the Air Force is to assume responsibility for Mesopotamia by April, 1921. We have to put forth considerable efforts to render ourselves self-contained as regards repairs to aeroplanes and engines, necessitating considerable expansion of depots, &c., in that country. The enlistment and training of personnel for work in Mesopotamia must therefore be taken in hand at a very early date, and this will involve an increase in the size of our establishments at Home. Further, in order to render ourselves really mobile, we have to develop the design of the supply aeroplane for carrying stores to isolated posts and the infantry-carrying aeroplane for the transportation of considerable numbers of men.

I have forwarded this in order that you may be kept informed as to the lines on which I am working. I would like to discuss it with you after you have read it.

H. TRENCHARD,

Chief of Air Staff.

March 12, 1920.

On the Power of the Air Force and the Application of this Power to Hold and Police Mesopotamia.

1. Great as was the development of air power in the war on the western front, it was mainly concerned with aerial action against enemy aircraft and co-operation with other arms in actions in which land or sea forces were the predominating partner. In more distant theatres, however, such as Palestine, Mesopotamia, and East Africa, the war has proved that the air has capabilities of its own which can be usefully employed in operations against the enemy's ground forces, and this power has been shown by aircraft whose design has not proceeded on the lines most suitable for work of this nature. Incapable alone of defending a country against organised external attack, the Air Force may yet impose considerable delay on an enemy whose lines of advance are limited and lengthy, and has proved itself a powerful agent for the attack and dispersal of considerable bodies of ground troops.

2. If this air power be applied for the purposes of keeping order in a partially pacified area, the requirements of the garrison of such a country may be considered from an entirely novel point of view. If ground troops are entrusted with this

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responsibility, their lack of mobility necessitates their dispersal at widely scattered strategic points, entailing the establishment of long and expensive subsidiary communications. Moreover, in as much as this policy cannot be carried out universally owing to the prohibitive expense involved, disturbance in areas not garrisoned by troops necessitates the despatch of punitive columns: these columns have to be of considerable strength to overcome opposition and to guard their own lines of communication.

Operations have invariably to be limited in time, the objective gained as speedily as possible, and the column withdrawn to its base. Many years of experience on the North-Western Frontier of India shows that with the retirement of the column the punishment inflicted is speedily forgotten, and lasting results can often only be achieved by permanent military occupation over a period of years with coincident opening up of the country by railways and roads. The difficulties of military action are enhanced when the enemy is a nomadic tribe; his mobility is often greatly in excess of the regular forces opposed to him, and his independence of settled habitat removes a definite objective for the operations of the troops.

3. With the Air Power responsible for the maintenance of peace within the borders of a country many of these difficulties are removed. Only main lines of communication and a few aerial bases have to be guarded, and this is rendered easier by the comparative compactness of even powerful air forces. The "long arm" of the new weapon renders it ubiquitous, thus obviating the necessity of dispersal of force, and enabling the most distant and inaccessible districts to be reached without subsidiary lines of communication. The speed and range of aircraft makes it practicable to keep a whole country under more or less constant surveillance. Frequent friendly patrols, dropping leaflets containing suitable propaganda, disseminating correct news, and preventing the wilful misinterpretation of the orders of a political officer by intriguing headmen, may often prevent the seeds of unrest being sown by irresponsible agitators. It must be remembered that from the ground every inhabitant of a village is under the impression that the occupant of an aeroplane is actually looking at *him*, and the frequent, and perhaps daily, appearance of aircraft apparently overhead will do much towards establishing the impression that all their movements are being watched and reported.

4. Should unrest, however, develop, it is possible to obtain early information of hostile concentrations of marauding tribes. Within a few hours of receipt of such intelligence the Air Force can carry out, at slight risk and at a minimum expense, punitive operations which might take days and even weeks of preparation before any forward movement can be undertaken by ground troops. The capacity of the Air Force to deal a swift and unexpected blow affords the chance of stifling the outbreak in its early stages, before unrest has time to spread; should, however, such early action not achieve decisive results, it is within the power of the air to continue its offensive action day after day and week after week, without intermission, until success is assured.

5. The Air Staff are convinced that strong and continuous action of this nature must in time inevitably compel the submission of the most recalcitrant tribes without the use of punitive measures by ground troops, and they hold this opinion even in the light of recent events on the North-Western Frontier of India. With certain stubborn races time is essential to prove to them the futility of resistance to aerial attack by a people who possess no aircraft, but it is held that the dislocation of living conditions and the material destruction caused by heavy and persistent aerial action must infallibly achieve the desired result.

The following up of air attacks by ground troops is only playing into the hands of the tribesmen by substituting for a foe against whom their efforts can effect little, an enemy whom they can meet on comparatively favourable terms.

6. Although it is stated above that the Air Staff is opposed to the employment of ground troops on major punitive operations in supersession of or complementary to aerial attack, it will be of advantage to have light armoured car units to enable military forces to complete the work of aeroplanes and reap the fruits of their success. This has been amply demonstrated in Somaliland, where the pursuit of the Mullah by the Camel Corps, which covered 120 miles in two days, was most successful in rounding up the demoralised Dervish forces and stock. Aeroplanes may, by means of wireless, direct armoured cars to a point they could intercept and round up an enemy column, or, if roads do not exist, it is possible to use aircraft to transport bodies of infantry with machine-guns for a similar purpose. This type of aircraft can, and will, be developed to get a maximum power at a minimum of

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cost for operations in a country where roads are deficient or impossible to traverse at certain seasons.

7. These and other questions have not yet been fully explored, but Mesopotamia offers a good field for their exploitation. Weather conditions are more favourable for aerial operations than was the case on the western front during the great war, and much of the country is flat, and offers suitable landing grounds. Tribal jealousies prevent cohesion, and the most turbulent tribes are nomads or semi-nomads inhabiting country difficult of penetration by ground troops.

8. From the foregoing remarks it will be seen that the full employment of Air Power should enable great economy to be effected in European and other military personnel, and thus in turn enable a reduction to be made in the number of hospitals and amount of shipping required to evacuate sick and wounded from a tropical country.

9. The Air Staff have considered the question of policy with regard to the opening up of the country and the responsibilities this will entail upon the Air Service. A conference has been arranged with the Foreign Office to ascertain what is required from a civil point of view. In this connection it should be remembered that it is not immediately possible to have the country in a fit state to allow of political officers being stationed all over it; and that in no portion of the Empire taken over so recently as Mesopotamia have political officers been able to work without escorts for many years after the entrance of the British. In the interests of economy, and of life, it is essential that the opening up of the country should be commenced most carefully, and no political officers should be stationed in an area which is likely to rise and cause an expedition, but they should be taken by air to visit the various native chiefs as frequently as necessary, perhaps daily. The prestige of a political officer who is in a position to say "I will return to-morrow, or next week, with six aeroplanes, and if my orders are carried out I promise that no harm will be done to your village" will be far greater, and, what is more important, the effect will be more lasting than if he can only threaten them with a punitive expedition, which, under the most favourable conditions would take a considerable time to make its power felt. It will be more economical, and better, to open up the country slowly piece by piece as the natives become more and more educated. Gendarmerie should be enrolled slowly to begin with and increased as their trustworthiness is proved. In the opinion of the Air Staff the success of holding the country with a small force depends upon strict control of the rate at which the various districts are to be made safe for the free movement of political officers. To carry this out a very efficient intelligence service is required, and the policy of peaceful penetration by frequent visits by air to important districts should be adopted. It may take from ten to fifteen years before the whole of the country inside the borders is secure to Europeans moving about the country.

10. For the next few years the Air Council consider that it is absolutely essential that the control of the movements of political officers outside the occupied areas should be under the direction of the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

11. In conclusion of these general remarks, the Air Staff are satisfied that if the broad principles outlined are adopted, and the Air Officer Commanding is given full authority to carry them out, the country can be held on the lines laid down in the attached scheme.

*Air Staff,
March, 1920.*

Scheme for the Organisation of the Forces of the Crown in Mesopotamia.

Introduction.

1. The information on which this scheme is based is contained in Appendix (A), and is liable to revision after the closer examination on the spot, for which preparations are now in hand.

Rôle of the Armed Forces in the Country.

2. The duty of the Air Force, should the control of the country devolve upon it, will be the maintenance of internal order and the promotion of the gradual pacification of areas now in a chronic state of unrest. The duty of the military forces under these conditions will be essentially the safeguarding of aerial bases against likely local concentrations. The force considered necessary for these purposes is not

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considered in any way sufficient to guard Mesopotamia against external invasion. In the event of a serious invasion from without by the Turks, Russians, or Arabs, or by any combination of them, reinforcements would have to come from elsewhere.

General Principles in the Scheme.

3. In order to ensure the economy and efficiency possible in view of the radius of action of aircraft, all available aerial forces must be grouped into a few localities which possess good communications and possibilities for defence. These main stations will be supplemented as required by advanced aerodromes, and military forces will be employed to guard both main stations and advanced grounds under the conditions prescribed below.

Details of Air Force Stations, &c.

4. In view of its central position, the excellence of its communications, and the fact that it is the centre of administration of the country, Baghdad has been selected as the most favourable position for Air Headquarters, and with these headquarters will be grouped the greater portion of the strength of the Royal Air Force in Mesopotamia, together with the various aircraft depots essential to the maintenance of the squadrons in the country. This station will also be the headquarters of a group (see below).

It is proposed to divide the country into three main groups, Northern, Central and Southern, each under a Group Captain, answerable to the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

Northern Group (Shergat).

Group headquarters, with two squadrons two-seater reconnaissance (D.H.9A) and one squadron twin-engine three-seater bombers (D.H.10), will be divided between Shergat and Mosul. From either place a flight of moderate duration will enable the Kurdish Foot Hills to be reached, at which line our first responsibility may be presumed to end. The D.H.10 Squadron is selected for this district on account of its high performance: operating from advanced landing grounds it will be of great value, should it be necessary to extend our influence into the interior of the Kurdish mountain country. It is proposed to establish protected landing grounds at Erbil and Kirkouk with a view to controlling restless areas, which are at the same time of considerable commercial value.

Central Group (Baghdad).

Group headquarters with the following squadrons:--

- 1 corps reconnaissance (Bristol fighters).
- 1 single-seater fighter (Snipe).
- 1 twin-engine bomber (Vickers-Vimy).
- 1 lighter-than-air unit (two non-rigid airships).
- 2 passenger carriers.

The rôle of this group is the protection of Baghdad from incursions by tribes lying to the east or west, to safeguard the route to Persia up to the eastern boundary of Mesopotamia, and to form a central air reserve for the country. The fighter squadron, with long-range petrol tanks, will be employed chiefly on political communication work involving landing in confined spaces. It will also be available for such limited military co-operation as may be required.

The Snipe Squadron will be of value for controlling Baghdad and districts not requiring a long flight from the base.

The Vickers-Vimy Squadron will perform reconnaissance and bombing work, and will be able to undertake the transport of small bodies of troops to outlying districts pending the provision of passenger-carrying squadrons. It may also be used for transportation of spares and supplies.

The lighter-than-air unit will perform long distance reconnaissance work and the patrol of main communications.

The two passenger-carrying squadrons will be available as heavy bombers, but their primary functions will be the transportation of considerable numbers of troops, to secure landing grounds or strategic points in combined operations and their maintenance with supplies and ammunition by air. The power to transport and supply

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these troops should enable a considerable reduction in the total military forces in Mesopotamia to be effected.

All squadrons are available for reinforcing other districts when required.

It is proposed to establish advanced landing grounds at Kifri and Khanikin.

Southern Group (Hilla).

Group headquarters, with one squadron two-seater reconnaissance (D.H.9A) and one squadron twin-engine bombers (Vickers-Vimy).

The rôle of this group is the patrolling of the lines of communication between Basra and Baghdad. One Vickers-Vimy Squadron based on Shaiba will also operate over the country at the head of the Persian Gulf, including the oil-field district at Ahwaz.

The question of protected landing grounds in this district is at present deferred in view of its comparatively settled nature.

5. The total air forces in the country, therefore, would be :—

Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, headquarters,
3 group headquarters,
3 squadrons two-seater reconnaissance,
3 squadrons twin-engine bombers,
1 squadron corps reconnaissance,
1 squadron single-seater fighter,
2 squadrons passenger carriers,
1 lighter-than-air unit.

With the necessary repair depots and parks.

Total personnel (approximate) :—

350 officers,
3,100 men, of which about
800 may be natives.

Military Co-operation and Fighting Forces.

6. The military forces to be stationed in the country are required to fulfil the following functions :—

(a.) Protection of main aerial bases at—

Baghdad,
Shergat,
Mosul,
Hilla, and
Shaiba,

against likely local concentrations of tribesmen.

(b.) Protection of subsidiary landing grounds at—

Erbil,
Kirkouk,
Kifri,
Khanikin.

(c.) Provision of a small/mobile column of light armoured cars, and possibly Camel Corps, at each of the headquarters, Baghdad, Shergat and Hilla, capable of operating to secure any advanced landing grounds that it may be necessary to utilise, and possibly to co-operate to secure the fruits of the success of an aerial operation. Military troops will not be used as punitive forces.

The safeguarding of the lines of communication will be effected by aerial patrols.

The Air Staff will be satisfied with the minimum number of troops necessary to safeguard R.A.F. personnel, stores and establishments, and to ensure that aircraft, while on the ground, may be enabled to work unmolested.

All military garrisons should be self-contained and capable of withstanding any likely local attack for a period of one month : within this time it is considered that aerial operations will remove the danger and be able to effect the relief of the beleaguered force.

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It is hoped that the ultimate provision of passenger-carrying squadrons will enable the military garrisons of the country to be considerably reduced.

Until a further report is received from Mesopotamia the question of armed vessels co-operating on the rivers must be deferred.

Military Co-operation (Administrative Services).

7. Administrative and other services, such as supply, transport, railways, signals, and medical services for both Army and Air Force personnel should be carried out by the Army units.

Organisation and the Passing of Command.

8. It is essential that the areas of responsibility of local R.A.F., military, and political officers should be coincident.

Military officers within the Mesopotamia Command will be operationally responsible to the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief in a manner analogous to the relations which existed between the Air Force and the Army during the war, but this time in a reverse direction.

The time and manner of the passing of responsibility for Mesopotamia to the Royal Air Force is a matter requiring further detailed discussion, but, broadly speaking, it is advisable that the Army should continue to exercise command and gradually reduce the number of troops in the country as R.A.F. squadrons arrive, until the R.A.F. has organised a force of eight squadrons. At this period the responsibility might be transferred and the troops again reduced in accordance with the policy already outlined. When the R.A.F. attains its full strength a further reduction may be possible, and this will be carried out under Air Force responsibility by consultation between the Air Ministry and War Office after consideration of reports received from officers in command on the spot.

APPENDIX (A).

Conditions in Mesopotamia.

Three Divisions of Mesopotamia.

Mesopotamia is divided into three well-divided tracts:—

- (a.) The Plain—or area of cultivation in the neighbourhood of the rivers.
- (b.) The Desert of the West and South-West.
- (c.) The mountainous country on the North and East.

Each of these tracts has its peculiar properties from the aerial point of view, and is inhabited by peoples with well-marked characteristics.

The Plain.

2. The plain area is normally of great fertility, though neglect has converted some of it into desert and swamp; the latter is unfavourable for the work of aeroplanes, but it may be said that in general the country is open and of a nature to assist air operations. The population of this area is mainly urban or agricultural and their administration does not constitute a difficult problem. The great majority of the inhabitants have little or no political sense and care little who governs the country so long as they are prosperous. Their purview is limited to the affairs of their own tribe. They are quick to recognise the benefits of good administration, and are willing to pay for it if they get their money's worth. The large towns, however, constitute exceptions. In these there is an educated native who, under the former régime, had a certain share in the administration and of the proceeds accruing to the official class. This type of individual has been tried in the present administration, and has been found wanting in honesty and capability. Like the Babu class in India, he possesses a distinct leaning towards politics and intrigue, and he may be expected to exhibit Nationalist tendencies and sympathy with movements such as pan-Islamism, pan-Turanianism, &c. It is probable, as the country is developed and additional areas made possible for cultivation, that the

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tendency will be for elements of the nomadic and semi-nomadic population to settle down and take to agricultural pursuits.

The Desert.

3. The desert is favourable for the operations of aircraft, and in most places can be crossed by wheeled transport. The population is essentially Arab: nearly every man possesses arms. They have little in common with the Kurds, and are unlikely to combine with them. The Arabs are the weightiest element in the population of Mesopotamia. If they were united in pursuits, disposition, character, religion and interests, they would constitute a very formidable body. The cleavage, however, between Sunni and Shiah and between sedentary and nomad Arabs is very marked. The Bedouin, or nomad Arab, is the most likely to give trouble; he is used to a continual but fairly harmless warfare of raids, skirmishes and running fights. In conflict with regular troops he confines himself in general to guerilla methods; treacherous and unscrupulous, his attacks are seldom determined; he possesses very little staying power, and his loyalty to any cause which he thinks is lost soon wanes. The two principal Arab tribes are described below.

Bedouin Tribes.—The Anazeh, the largest group of Arab nomad tribes, occupies the triangle of the Syrian desert, which has its base about 30° latitude and its apex near Aleppo, about 36° latitude. On the east bank of the Euphrates the pasture lands north of Deiz-ez-Zor and along the Khabur are also Anazeh country. The Anazeh are not united under one head, but are divided into several large sections which maintain towards one another an attitude generally friendly, though it does not exclude marauding expeditions and private feuds among the smaller sheikhs. Their hereditary foes are the Shammar, and for the last 150 years the history of nomad Arabs has been dominated by the rivalry between these two groups. Their geographical position gives the Anazeh command over some of the main communications. Until 1911 the camel post from Damascus to Baghdad passed through their area, and the trade in sheep and camels between Mesopotamia and the west is dependent on their goodwill. The road down the Euphrates from Aleppo to Baghdad is also largely at their mercy. The united Anazeh forces would number about 9,000 men, if it were conceivable that they could ever be gathered together at the same time—an exceedingly improbable contingency.

The Shammar.—Early in the 19th century the Anazeh forced the Shammar northwards across the Euphrates and split the tribe into two parts, one part being in Jezireh and the other in Jebel Shammar. The same sub-tribes are found in either group, and though they do not offer united resistance to their common enemy, the Anazeh, they are always friendly with one another. Any small sheikh of the Jezireh may bring down his flocks to Shammar if he wishes. The Shammar of the Jezireh have been estimated at a maximum of 10,000 tents. They come down as far south as Baghdad and extend to the west as far as Deir-ez-Zor. For many years they paid no taxes, but in 1911 the Turks sent an expedition against them, and they submitted without resistance.

The Mountain Country.

4. The mountain country to the north and east of Mesopotamia is one of the most difficult in the world. The peaks rise to over 11,000 feet in jagged ridges, divided by deep valleys covered with scrub oak. The country is most inaccessible for anything but aircraft, and offers little prospect of probable development. The population is essentially Kurdish, of whom the nomad and semi-nomad sections give the most trouble. With the Kurds, though they are all Sunnis, tribal cohesion and general national feeling is even less marked than with the Arabs: blood feuds and inter-tribal enmities are strong obstacles to united action, and a general combination of Kurds is extremely improbable, though individual sections or tribes may give trouble. Different groups of tribes differ widely in character, but they are normally superior to the Arab in energy, enterprise and industry. They are better fighters than the Arabs, but soon recognise the futility of opposing real force. The Kurd will probably form the greatest element of unrest in Mesopotamia.

Population.

5. The following figures are merely a rough estimate of the population:—
Province of Mosul, 250,000.
Iraq, 1,511,000.

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The estimate of religions is as follows :—

Mosul Province—

218,000 Sunnis,
25,000 Christians,
5,500 Jews,
7,500 Yezidi.

Baghdad Province—

245,000 Sunnis,
420,000 Shiahs,
6,000 Christians,
50,000 Jews.

Basra Province—

218,000 Sunnis,
553,000 Shiahs,
5,000 Christians,
3,000 Jews.

Probably one-half of the Mahommedan population, Arab and Kurd, is either urban or agricultural, and thus does not constitute a difficult problem from an administrative point of view. Of the remaining Moslems, one-fifth are wholly nomadic and four-fifths semi-nomadic, *i.e.*, combining cultivation with the keeping of stock, necessitating more or less frequent shifts for grazing purposes. Practically all able-bodied Bedouin possess arms, and a large proportion of settled Arabs do too. The Kurds also possess a large number of rifles.

Communications.

6. (a.) Railways are shown in the map attached.

(b.) *Roads.*—The only permanent road is that from railhead (Shergat) to Mosul, a distance of 72 miles.

All other roads are unmetalled tracks, and although during the wet season, from November to May, the surface of the ground is soft and difficult for anything but light vehicles such as Ford cars, mechanical transport can travel about almost anywhere in the plains during the dry season.

(c.) *Rivers.*—As a general rule vessels of 3 feet draught can ascend the Tigris as far as Baghdad in the dry season and those up to 5 feet draught at other times. In May and June vessels of 6 feet to 7 feet draught might be able to reach Baghdad.

The up journey by steamer from Kurna to Baghdad takes about five days, and the down journey about four. A steamer with towing barges can convey some 400 tons of cargo in the wet season and some 280 tons in the dry. Baghdad may be taken as the upper limit of steam navigation on the Tigris.

With regard to the Euphrates, owing to the vast swamps in its lower course, the rapids that occur above Fellujeh and the constant changes in the stream, but scant facilities for steam navigation are afforded.

With regard to external communications, the desert to the west and south-west constitutes, owing to the lack of water, an effective barrier against the advance of strong organised forces from this direction. To the north and east the only lines of advance available to such forces are the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, and the road from Persia through Kermanshah, Kasr-i-Shirin and Khanikin.

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THE CABINET.

PALESTINE AND MESOPOTAMIA.

MINUTE BY THE CHIEF OF THE IMPERIAL GENERAL STAFF.

Secretary of State.

I put up a short note on our military position in Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Persia. I may say at once that it is very unsatisfactory.

Owing to the continued delay in presenting a Peace Treaty to Turkey, owing to the fact that when presented we are quite unable to enforce its terms, owing to the series of disasters which the French have suffered at the hands of Turks and Arabs in Cilicia—disasters which have obliged the French Government to reinforce that theatre up to 48 battalions (reinforcements which are not sufficient to avoid still further disasters), owing to our strained relations with Feisal and the very unsettled interior condition of both Palestine and Egypt, my own opinion is that it is very much more likely that we shall have to reinforce those theatres rather than weaken our garrisons.

Turning to Mesopotamia I find much the same condition of affairs.

Owing once more to our Turkish Treaty which, even at this date, contains no frontier between Turkey and Armenia; owing to our very ill-defined relations to the Kurds and Arabs; owing to our Foreign Office commitments in Persia; owing to the deplorable weakness in our own Administrative Services and the consequent depletion of our fighting units to such an extent that many of them exist only on paper; and finally, owing to the steady advance of Bolshevism to the south and the fall of Denikin, the Cossacks, the Caucasus and—I do not know what next—our position in Mesopotamia is none too secure even with the garrison we now have in that theatre.

It is true that if we had plenty of aeroplanes and air personnel; if our Administrative Services were fully manned by a competent personnel; if we had large numbers of armoured cars, tanks, mobile machine-gun units, all complete with trained personnel; if we had wireless stations, railways and roads; if we had well organized gas units; we could now and at once commence a progressive, even a rapid, reduction of our garrisons. But what is the story of all these mechanical services? We have struggled, and struggled hard, ever since the Armistice to fit out these services, and you know as well as I do with what poor results.

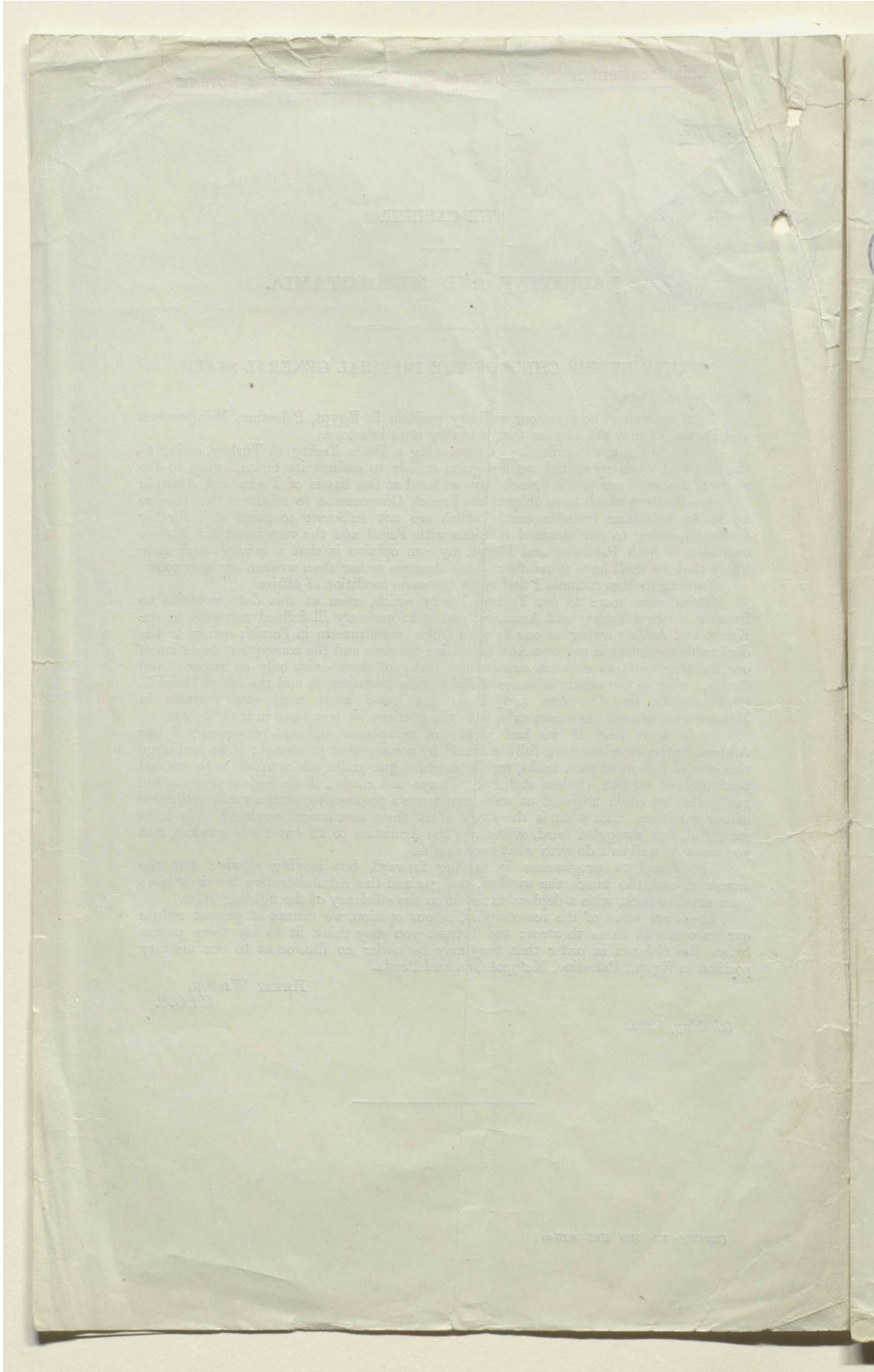
The aeroplane programme is moving forward, but moving slowly; but the armoured cars, the tanks, the wireless, the gas and the Administrative Services have gone steadily back, with a deplorable result on the efficiency of the fighting units.

These are some of the reasons why, in our opinion, we cannot at present reduce our garrisons in these theatres; and I trust you may think fit to lay these papers before the Cabinet, in order that they may be under no illusion as to our military position in Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Persia.

HENRY WILSON,
C.I.G.S.

6th May, 1920.

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THE CABINET.

POLICY REGARDING GARRISONS OF EGYPT AND PALESTINE, AND MESOPOTAMIA AND PERSIA.

NOTE BY THE GENERAL STAFF.

1. The General Staff desire to bring forward for consideration the situation in which the Army is placed at the present time owing to the conflicting claims of policy and economy. There is a real danger that our policy will outrun our military resources, and this applies more particularly to the two areas Egypt and Palestine, and Mesopotamia and Persia.

2. As regards Egypt and Palestine, Lord Milner, in consultation with Lord Allenby, made certain proposals for a reduction in the garrison, based on the essential condition that the frontiers of Palestine were not extended. By the terms of the mandate, however, we have been made responsible for Bania and Kuneitra, which are considerably beyond the areas hitherto policed by our troops. In addition, the recent pro-Zionist declaration is likely to increase our difficulties with the Arabs, and there are already indications that military action may be necessary, both to maintain the frontier and concurrently to preserve peace internally. On the 22nd April, 1920, in response to instructions to reduce to the "Milner" garrison, the responsible military officer gave his considered opinion (Appendix A) that the present garrison was the minimum which can cope with the task in hand. As will be seen from Appendix B, this garrison exceeds the "Milner" garrison by approximately two cavalry brigades and one infantry brigade. The General Staff are of opinion that the General Officer Commanding's estimate is justifiable, and that any premature reduction in the interests of economy will not only defeat its object, but may involve us in local disasters such as have occurred to the French in Cilicia.

3. As regards Mesopotamia and Persia, the terms of the mandate have increased rather than reduced our responsibilities, whilst the obligations to Persia, which have been entered into by the Foreign Office, place a great strain on the weakest link in the military chain, namely, the signals, transport and supply services. In order to complete these services it has been necessary to draw on the combatant arms to an extent which has deprived British units of most of their fighting efficiency. In a recent telegram (Appendix C) the local authorities have stated that the force, which on paper amounts to two infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade, has a fighting value not exceeding that of one division and one brigade. Apart from the difficulties of recruiting technical personnel an embargo, which was placed on the despatch of drafts on 23rd March, 1920,* deprived us of the opportunity for rectifying this deficiency before the trooping season closed, and little if anything, can now be done until the autumn. A further telegram, dated 4th May, from General Haldane (Appendix D) foreshadows the possibility of reductions being made in the autumn which would bring the total garrison down to one division, one cavalry brigade and some lines of communication units, but only on condition that no serious disturbances take place during the summer and that the requirements specified in Royal Air Force armoured cars and wireless personnel are fully met.

4. Under normal conditions we might have hoped that the newly constituted Regular Army would have acquired increased efficiency during the last 6 months. Unfortunately the abnormal strain which has been placed upon it in every theatre outside Great Britain has not unnaturally produced an exactly opposite effect. Combatant units have been depleted to make up for shortage in ancillary services; troops have been ill-housed and constantly on the move; guards have been excessive, with the result that training and musketry in the true sense of the word have been

* Minute by Secretary of State.

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impossible. In fact, the spring has been pulled out to its extreme limit and the metal is tired and is deteriorating. If garrisons are reduced prematurely, and drafts to the already depleted units are withheld, there can only be one result.

5. Whilst fully appreciating the necessity for economy, the General Staff would be failing in their duty if they did not protest most emphatically against any further strain being placed upon the Army, such as would be caused by a reduction in the strength of garrisons unaccompanied by a corresponding reduction in responsibilities. Unless the Government is prepared to face in Palestine and Mesopotamia a repetition of incidents such as have occurred in Cilicia, there are, for the moment, only two alternatives:—

- (a) To retain the existing garrisons whilst making every endeavour to complete units to establishment and to make no increase in responsibilities, or
- (b) To contract the areas for which we are responsible, and thereby allow of a gradual reduction in the garrisons.

6. It is a matter of urgent importance that a firm decision should be given at an early date on which future plans can be based. Owing to the prevailing uncertainty as to the future, troops are living in conditions of unnecessary discomfort, which is affecting their moral, and is bound to have an injurious effect on recruiting in the future. Further, it is impossible to make any arrangements for reliefs during the ensuing trooping season, whilst the organization and administration of the Army as a whole is being most seriously hampered for want of a firm basis on which to build.

HENRY WILSON,
G.C.S.

GENERAL STAFF,
THE WAR OFFICE, S.W. 1,
5th May, 1920.

APPENDIX A.

FROM GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, EGYPT, TO WAR OFFICE.

Despatched 1755, 22nd April, 1920.

Received 2130, 22nd April, 1920.

(No. E.A. 3070, cipher, 22nd April.)

Your No. 84569, M.O. 2, 19th April. Telegram quoted is from Lord Milner and reduction you now order was contingent on boundaries not being extended and situation remaining normal. Situation has lately altered and all my troops are engaged on police work to stop raid from Bedouin of the border and to keep the peace inside the country, moreover no settlement has been announced. It is absolutely essential that present establishment be maintained for some time to come. Many units are considerably below establishment and I consider for the task in hand the present garrison to be the minimum.

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APPENDIX B.

EGYPT AND PALESTINE.

| Garrison based on Milner proposal to which General Congreve objects. | Garrison as known on 30th April, 1920. |
|--|--|
| PALESTINE. | |
| 1 Divisional Headquarters. 1 British Cavalry Brigade. 2 Indian Infantry Brigades { 2 British Battalions. 6 Indian Battalions. 1 Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, and Royal Horse Artillery Brigade Headquarters. 2 Brigades, Royal Field Artillery (less 1 Battery). 1 Brigade, Mountain Artillery. 1 Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. 1 Armoured-Car Company. Ancillary Troops. | 6 Indian Cavalry Regiments. 2 British Cavalry Regiments. 1 Battery, Royal Horse Artillery. 2 Brigades, Royal Field Artillery (less 1 Battery). 1 Brigade, Mountain Artillery. 3 British Infantry Battalions. 10 Indian Infantry Battalions. 2 Indian Pioneer Battalions (1 due to leave). 1 Jewish Battalion. Ancillary Troops. |
| EGYPT. | |
| 1 Indian Division { 7 British Battalions. 1 British Division { 9 Indian Battalions. 1 Pioneer Battalion. 1 British Cavalry Regiment. 1 Indian Cavalry Regiment. 1 Battery, Royal Horse Artillery. 1 Battery, Royal Field Artillery. 2 Field Companies, Sappers and Miners. 1 Armoured-Car Company. Ancillary Troops. | 25 Indian Infantry Battalions (11 due to leave as reliefs now arrived). 6 British Infantry Battalions. 2 British Cavalry Regiments. 2 Indian Cavalry Regiments. 1 Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery (less 1 Battery). 1 Battery, Royal Field Artillery. 1 Brigade, Royal Garrison Artillery. Ancillary Troops. |

APPENDIX C.

FROM CIVIL COMMISSIONER, BAGHDAD, 13TH FEBRUARY, 1920. (REPEATED TO GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND TEHERAN.)

Priority A. Received 16th, 11.30 a.m.

(R.) No. 1975. Please see note by Secretary of State for War regarding situation in Mesopotamia, dated 12th November. General Staff memorandum involves two assumptions. Firstly, that we have got equivalent of two divisions in this country and, secondly, that it is easier to hold part of Mesopotamia than the whole.

As regards the first assumption. The actual position is that bulk of British units in this country are ineffective, whilst India can only maintain Indian units in this country at Indian establishment, and Gurkha battalions are dwindling. *The military value of the troops at present in this country does not exceed that of one division and one brigade on a war footing.*

Administrative services are being carried on with considerable difficulty, and continued presence in this country of numbers of Turkish prisoners of war, known incomplete state of railways, and absence of barrack and storage accommodation involves expenditure and maintenance of personnel on scale which would otherwise not be contemplated.

The Royal Air Force and Light Armoured Motor Batteries, upon which we rely considerably, are also gravely deficient in personnel.

On question of post-war garrison, please see my telegrams of 29th September and 21st October. I still adhere to views expressed therein.

As regards second assumption. It is my deliberate opinion we cannot withdraw to any appreciable extent from the area that we at present occupy without endangering our position from one end of Mesopotamia to the other.

The abandonment of Mosul, Arbil and Suleimaniyah Divisions would so unfavourably affect our position in Baghdad and Basrah vilayets as to render our position before long untenable without considerable reinforcements.

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'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
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These three vilayets form an indivisible whole. The Mosul vilayet has no natural economic connection with Turkey or Syria, and distrust and objections arising from our abandonment of Suleimaniyah, Arbil and Mosul Divisions, and inevitable anarchy resulting from removal of external control in these areas would have the gravest effect throughout the rest of Mesopotamia.

We cannot appreciably reduce our responsibilities in this country without leaving it altogether and incidentally without repudiating engagements to Persia.

Practical experience and theoretical consideration of the changes (? combine) alike to convince me that right solution for us, if we are to stay here at all, is to adopt armistice line without substantial alteration as our boundary, *vide* my telegram dated 2nd February, No. 1539. This brings Amadia within the federation; we should continue to administer it indirectly as at present and its inclusion would facilitate repatriation of refugees.

*General Officer Commanding-in-Chief has seen above and concurs in its terms.

APPENDIX D.

FROM GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING, MESOPOTAMIA, TO WAR OFFICE.

(No. X. 8629, cipher. 3rd May.)

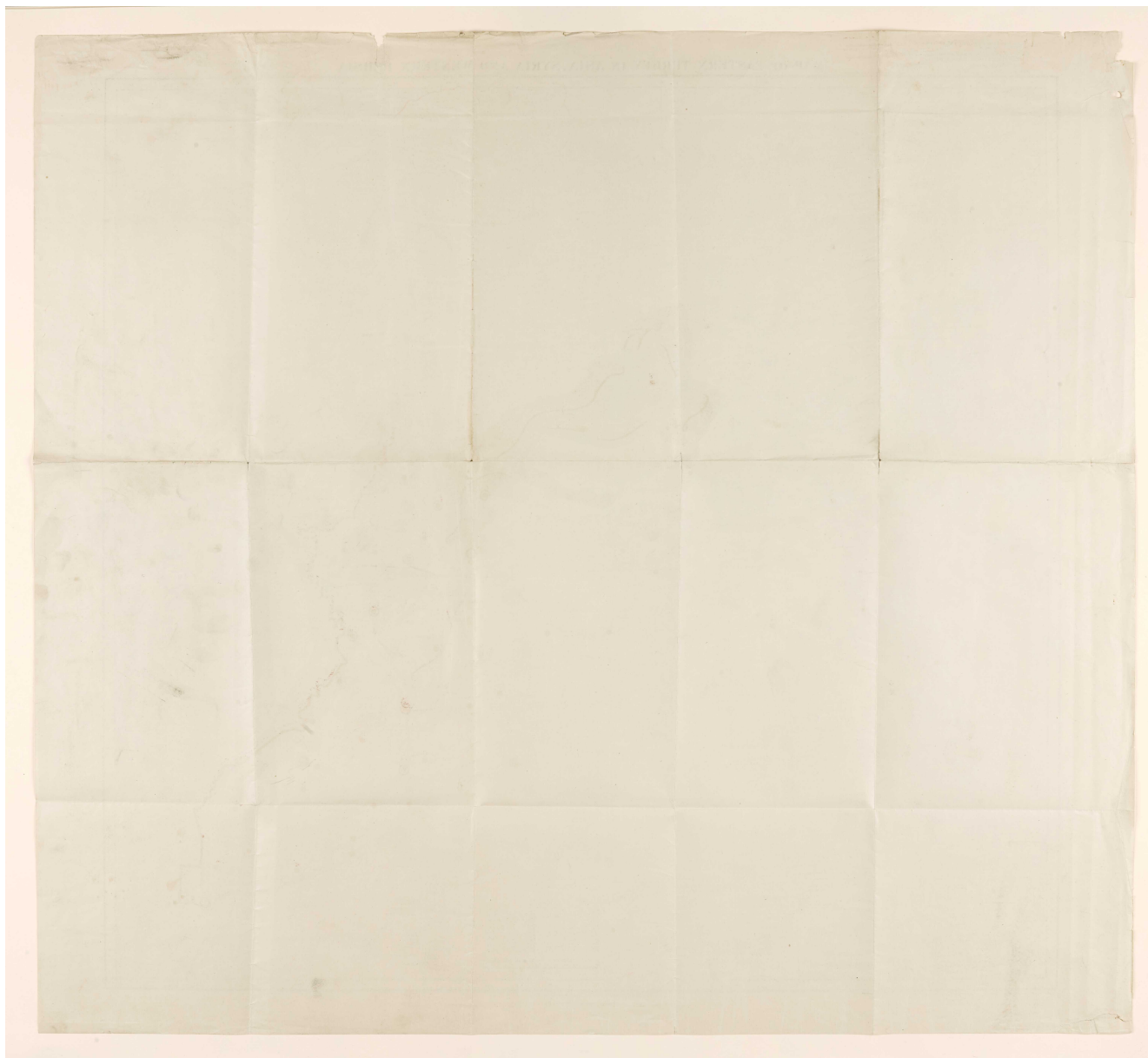
Despatched 1200, 3rd May, 1920.

Received 0915, 4th May, 1920.

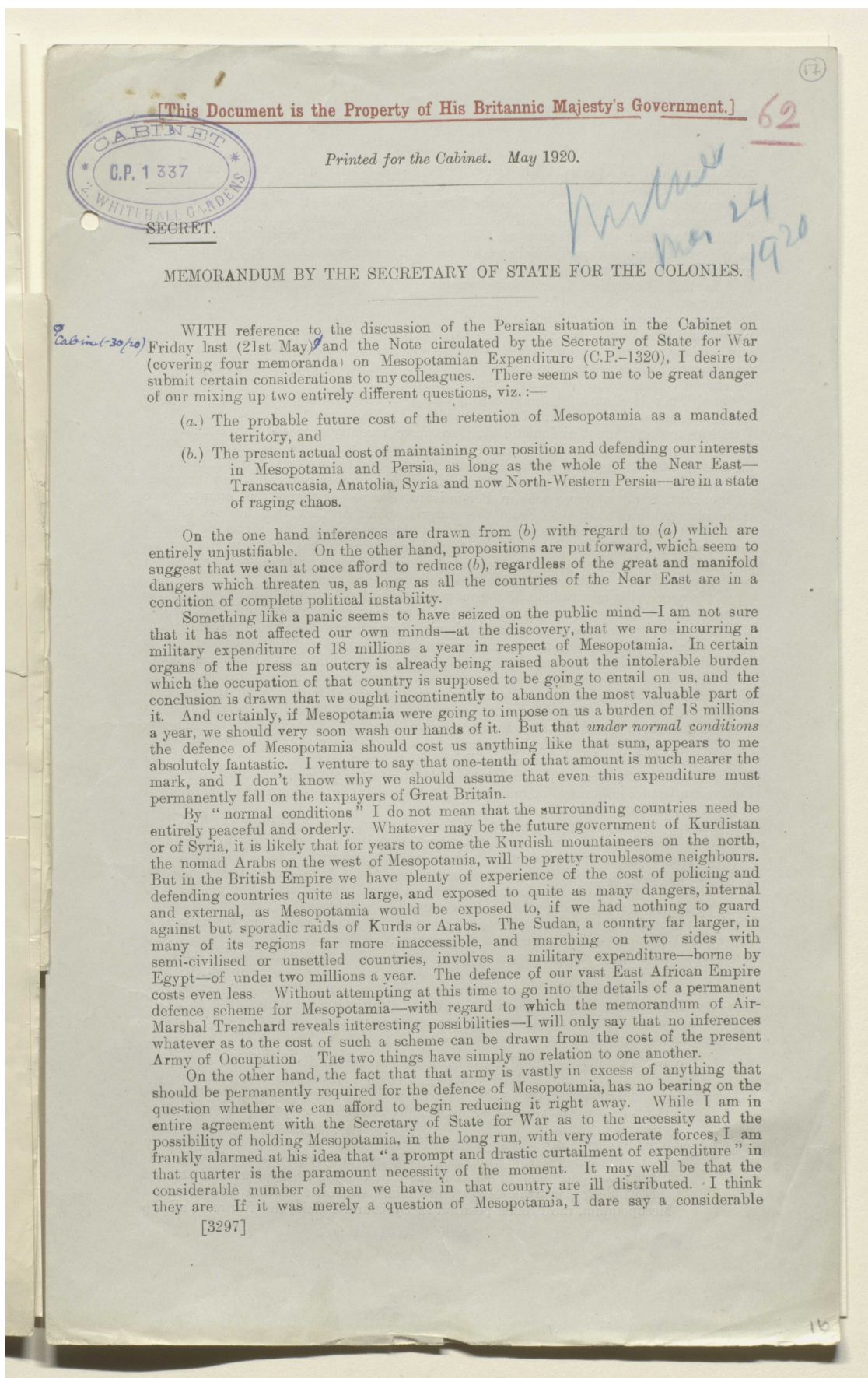
During the summer extensive reductions cannot be carried out, especially as probable publication of peace terms, and of our intentions regarding the future constitution of this country, may be followed by a time of doubt and difficulty. If, however, the summer passes without serious disturbances, if Royal Air Force in this country is increased to its full accepted establishment, with thoroughly effective mechanical personnel; if I may be given (?) Tanks and personnel to man an extra company of armoured cars and a thoroughly efficient system of wireless communication, and if units are kept up to full establishment, I hope it may be possible to propose definite reductions early in the autumn, pending time when locally raised forces become sufficiently efficient to take up some of the duties now performed by troops, to the forces foreshadowed by my predecessor in his No. X. 7538, and possibly for the further reduction of a mixed brigade, leaving one division, one cavalry brigade, with some lines of communication units, at Basra, as the total military garrison of Mesopotamia.

Should this condition be established, I must emphasize that I shall be in a position only to maintain internal security, and not to resist external aggression, nor to reinforce or assist Persia if invaded. I propose to telegraph further shortly after (?) again examining facts and figures.

'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [16v] (32/136)



'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [17r] (33/136)



'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [17v] (34/136)

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reduction could be effected right away. But I cannot urge too strongly, that at this critical juncture it is necessary to take a wider view. It really is essential to take account of the military position in the Near East as a whole, at any rate until some semblance of order is re-established in all these distracted countries. We may "deflate" too fast. This is just one of those cases, in which precipitate reduction, the rage for immediate saving, is likely to involve us in much greater and quite unnecessary expenditure in the long run.

In this connection I am quite unable to understand how we can afford to disinterest ourselves in what may happen in Persia. If we are ever to hold Mesopotamia with such moderate forces as the Secretary of State for War contemplates, and which are certainly all that we ought to require, we must have a stable and a friendly Persia on our flank. With a chaotic or, worse still, a hostile Persia our position in Mesopotamia would be untenable, or only tenable at such a cost, that we should certainly end by giving it up.

I will not dwell on the strong reasons which we have in any case for maintaining the arrangement between us and Persia, which at great pains and cost and with, as I venture to think, great diplomatic skill, we have recently succeeded in concluding. By all accounts Persia, under its present Government, has made in the past twelve months greater strides in the establishment of order and the revival of trade than she had done in many preceding years. It will be a great blow to our credit and influence in the East, if all we have done in Persia is to be wiped out, and that country once more plunged into anarchy. From the material point of view, too, the loss will be serious. Our economic interests in Persia are considerable, in one important respect almost vital. But for the moment I am mainly concerned with the reaction of events in Persia, which may or may not be regarded as directly concerning us, on our position in Mesopotamia, for which country we undoubtedly are responsible.

It is urged that an invasion of Mesopotamia from the Persian side is an improbable contingency. That may be so to-day, but the position would wear a different aspect if Persia were to become part of a Bolshevik Empire extending from Archangel to the Persian Gulf. It is not, however, so much a question of direct invasion. It is not only or mainly by the employment of military force that Bolshevism has swept over Siberia, over Turkestan, and is now sweeping over Transcaucasia, but by a combination of menace from without with propaganda stirring up all the internal elements of disorder. That is the danger which threatens Persia to-day, and that is the danger, which would threaten Mesopotamia to-morrow, if Persia were to be engulfed, as Siberia, as Turkestan, as Trans-Caucasia have already been, by the Bolshevist wave. Is it not self-evident that under such conditions the peaceful development of Mesopotamia under British influence would be impossible? We might indeed, though I don't believe we would, hold on to it, but we could only hold it with a large army maintained at a deterrent cost.

The question is, what can be done to keep this danger at a distance? The best solution, if it is a possible one, would be peace—a real peace—with Russia. I do not, of course, mean peace at any price. On the contrary, I regard it as a condition *sine qua non* that Russia should desist from making mischief, whether by direct invasion or by stirring up internal disorders, not only in India and those parts of South-Western Asia, which we actually occupy, but in Persia and Afghanistan as well. And personally I am quite convinced that she has so much to gain by getting rid of our hostility, that she would be prepared to give such an undertaking. It may be said that she would not keep it. But in that case, *i.e.*, if she is resolved to go on attacking us, we have got to fight her, whether we like it or not, and we should surely be in a much stronger moral position to do so if she had made peace with us and broken it. My own belief, however, is that she would keep it, at any rate for a time, and even the gain of a certain amount of time would be of immense advantage to us under present circumstances. And that for two reasons—

1. We do not know in the least what will happen in Russia in the immediate future. It may well be that, if she is let alone, internal problems will engage all her energies, or a government may emerge, which will be less dangerous to the world than are her present rulers with their programme of universal revolution.
2. We ourselves urgently require some little time in which to turn round and try to stabilize the position in all South-Western Asia, where everything is still "at a loose end," not to mention the repercussion of the unsettled state of this whole region upon Egypt and India. Our own position in Persia and Mesopotamia, the French position in Syria and Cilicia, the future of all the

'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [18r] (35/136)

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rest of Turkey in Asia are still quite indeterminate, and the settlement of all these problems will be intolerably complicated by the continuance of Bolshevik interference.

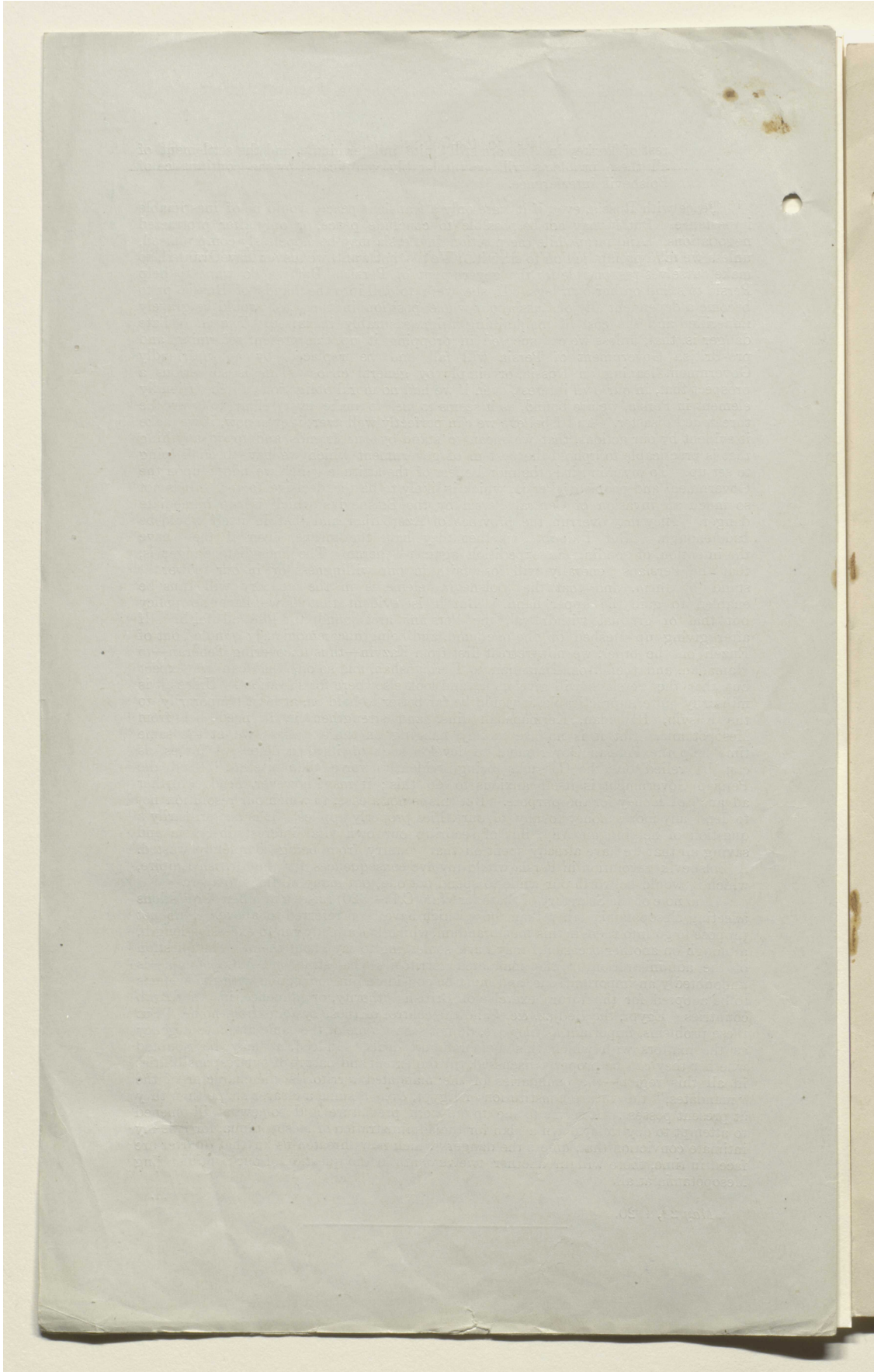
Peace with Russia, even if it were only a transient peace, would be of inestimable importance. But it may not be possible to conclude peace, or only after protracted negotiations. And meanwhile the position in Persia may be hopelessly compromised, unless we take prompt action to save it. We do not want, we never have wanted, to make ourselves responsible for the government of Persia. But we do want to help Persia to stand on her own legs. If she were to fall into the hands of Russia, or to become a dependent ally of Russia, our whole position in the East would be gravely imperilled and the cost of maintaining it immeasurably increased. The immediate danger is, that, unless we can succeed in propping it up, the present reforming and pro-British Government of Persia will fall and be replaced by an unfriendly Government leaning on Russia, or simply by general chaos. This is so serious a prospect that, in our own interest, even if we had no moral obligations to the friendly element in Persia, we are bound, as it seems to me, to make every effort to avert the threatened disaster. And I believe we can perfectly well avert it even now, if we make it evident by our actions, that we mean to stand by our friends and to do anything that is practicable to uphold the system of government which we have been helping to set up. To my mind it is the moral effect of the attitude which we adopt upon the Government and people of Persia, which is likely to be the decisive factor. It is not so much an invasion of Central Persia by the Bolsheviks which is the immediate danger. They may overrun the province of Azerbaijan, and that in itself would be bad enough. But I doubt, whether they have the means, even if they have the intention, of sending an expedition against Teheran. The immediate danger is, that the Persians generally will lose faith in our willingness or in our power stand by them, and that the Bolshevik elements in the country will thus be enabled to gain the upper hand. But it is evident that if we have no policy but that of gradual withdrawal, the Persians are bound to lose all faith. If after giving up Meshed on the one hand, and being unceremoniously bundled out of Enzeli on the other, we now retreat first from Kazvin—thus uncovering Teheran—to Hamadan, and then from Hamadan to Kermanshah, and so on, what can we expect but that the Persians will give us up and look elsewhere for salvation? Unless it is militarily quite impracticable, it would be far better to hold on, at least temporarily, to the Kasvin, Hamadan, Kermanshah line, and strengthen it, if need be, from Mesopotamia. But it is no use merely hanging on there, unless we at the same time help the Persian Government to develop such of its own defensive forces as can be relied on—the Cossacks being evidently worse than useless. And the Persian Government is itself anxious to do this; it may, however, need a further advance of money for the purpose. But this is not a case, to which our resolution not to lend any more money to any of our Allies properly applies. It is not primarily a question of helping an Ally, but of securing our own vital interests in Persia and saving all that we have already spent on that country from being completely wasted. A Bolshevik revolution in Persia would involve consequences for the British Empire, which it would be worth our while to spend not one, but many millions to avert.

The note of the Secretary of State for War (C.P.-1320) raises a number of questions affecting Mesopotamia other than those which have been referred to above. I do not propose to go into them in this memorandum, which has already run to excessive length, although on another occasion I may have something to say about them. The question of the administration of the mandated territories—Palestine and Mesopotamia—is undoubtedly an important one, and must be considered in connection with the systems to be adopted for the future exercise of British authority, or influence, in other Arab countries—Egypt, the Hedjaz, &c.—and the control of those systems from home. But these problems, important as they are, do not seem to me of the same absolute urgency as the matters with which this memorandum deals. Indeed, it may be doubted whether they can be properly discussed, till the extent and nature of our responsibilities in all this region—the boundaries of the mandated territories, the character of the "mandates," the future constitution of Egypt, &c.—assume a clearer shape than they at present possess. It seems to me to be both premature and somewhat ill-omened to attempt to-day to lay down a plan for the administration of Mesopotamia, for it is my intimate conviction that, unless the dangers which now threaten us in that quarter are faced in time, there will in another twelvemonth be no question of our administering Mesopotamia at all.

May 24, 1920.

M.

**'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner,
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'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner,
Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [19r] (37/136)

(THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT)

SECRET.

CABINET.

C.P.1372.

PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW DEPARTMENT FOR
MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS.

Copy of letter from Lord Winterton to Secretary, Cabinet.

4 Wilton Street,
Grosvenor Place
S.W. 1.

26th May 1920.

Sir,

I beg to enclose a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister
and to request you, as Secretary of the Cabinet, to hand it to
him.

The following have signed the memorandum:-

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lord Islington | Major R.Glyn, M.P. |
| Lord Lemington | Major Ormsby-Gore, M.P. |
| Sir David Yule | Mr. Hogarth |
| Maj. Gen. Sir John Davidson, M.P. | Mr. Philby |
| Mr. Lawrence | Mr. Arnold Toynbee |
| The Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas, M.P. | Mr. Lionel Curtis |
| | Lord Winterton. |

and the actual signatures are enclosed herewith; in addition,
several Members of Parliament and others have consented to sign,
but, owing to the holidays, their signatures have not yet been
obtained: I thought, however, it would be only courteous to
acquaint the Prime Minister with the fact that a memorandum had
been prepared, and that a number of signatures had already been
obtained, and I propose to send you within a week a further list
of signatories.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

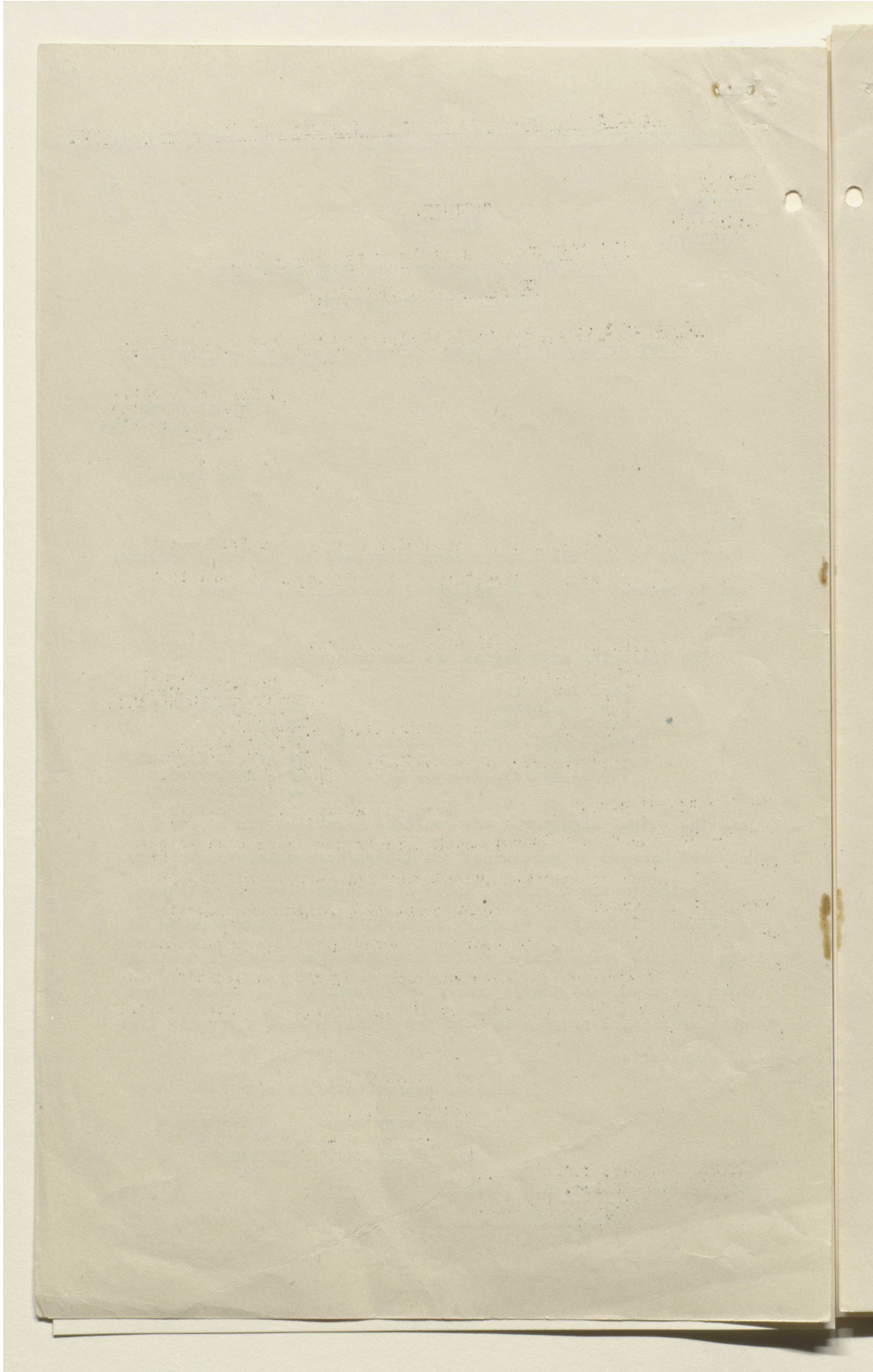
Yours very truly,

(Signed) WINTERTON.

Sir Maurice Hankey, G.C.B. etc.,
Cabinet Office,
2 Whitehall Gardens,
S.W. (1)

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**'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner,
Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [19v] (38/136)**



'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner,
Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [20r] (39/136)

CREATION OF A NEW DEPARTMENT FOR
MIDDLE EASTERN
ADMINISTRATION.

Dear Prime Minister,

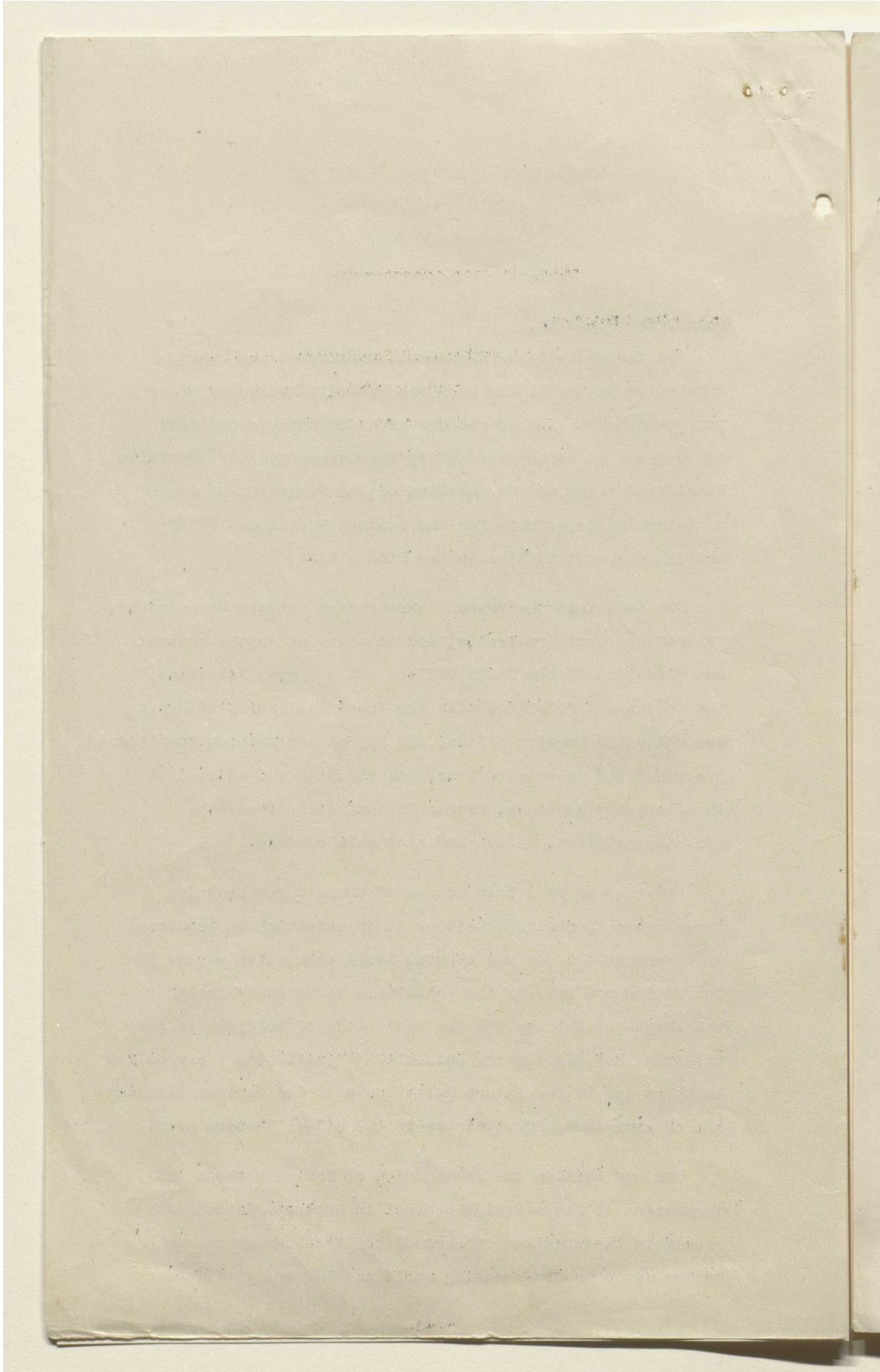
We the undersigned members of Parliament and others interested in the Middle East respectfully ask you whether you would be willing to receive us at any time convenient to yourself in order that we may lay before you our carefully considered views on the question of the formation of a new ministry and department for the control and direction of British responsibilities in the Middle East.

We feel that the present arrangement whereby Mesopotamia, Central and Southern Arabia, and Aden are under the control and direction of the India Office, while Egypt, Palestine, the Soudan and relations with the Sherifial family of Mecca are under the Foreign Office, and Cyprus and British Somaliland are under the Colonial Office, has resulted and will, if it is allowed to continue, result in conflicts of policy, misunderstandings, delays and avoidable expense.

Further we feel that no one of these three existing departments is qualified either in organisation or personnel to discharge the new and onerous tasks with which we are confronted not only by the assumption of Trusteeship under the League of Nations for the new states of Mesopotamia and Palestine but also by the necessity of initiating a new policy in Egypt and in our future relations with the various independent or semi-independent States in the Middle Eastern Area.

In our opinion the application of Indian Methods and imposition of India Office control in Mesopotamia can only result in the creation of serious political embarrassment in the whole Arabic-speaking world and in the establishment

**'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner,
Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [20v] (40/136)**



'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [21r] (41/136)

(21)

of a system so expensive in men and money that sooner or later the British Parliament will become restive. Further, to the India Office, Arabia and Mesopotamia with their comparatively small population, will seem to be an almost insignificant "side show" when compared with the gigantic task with which it is confronted in the Indian Empire itself.

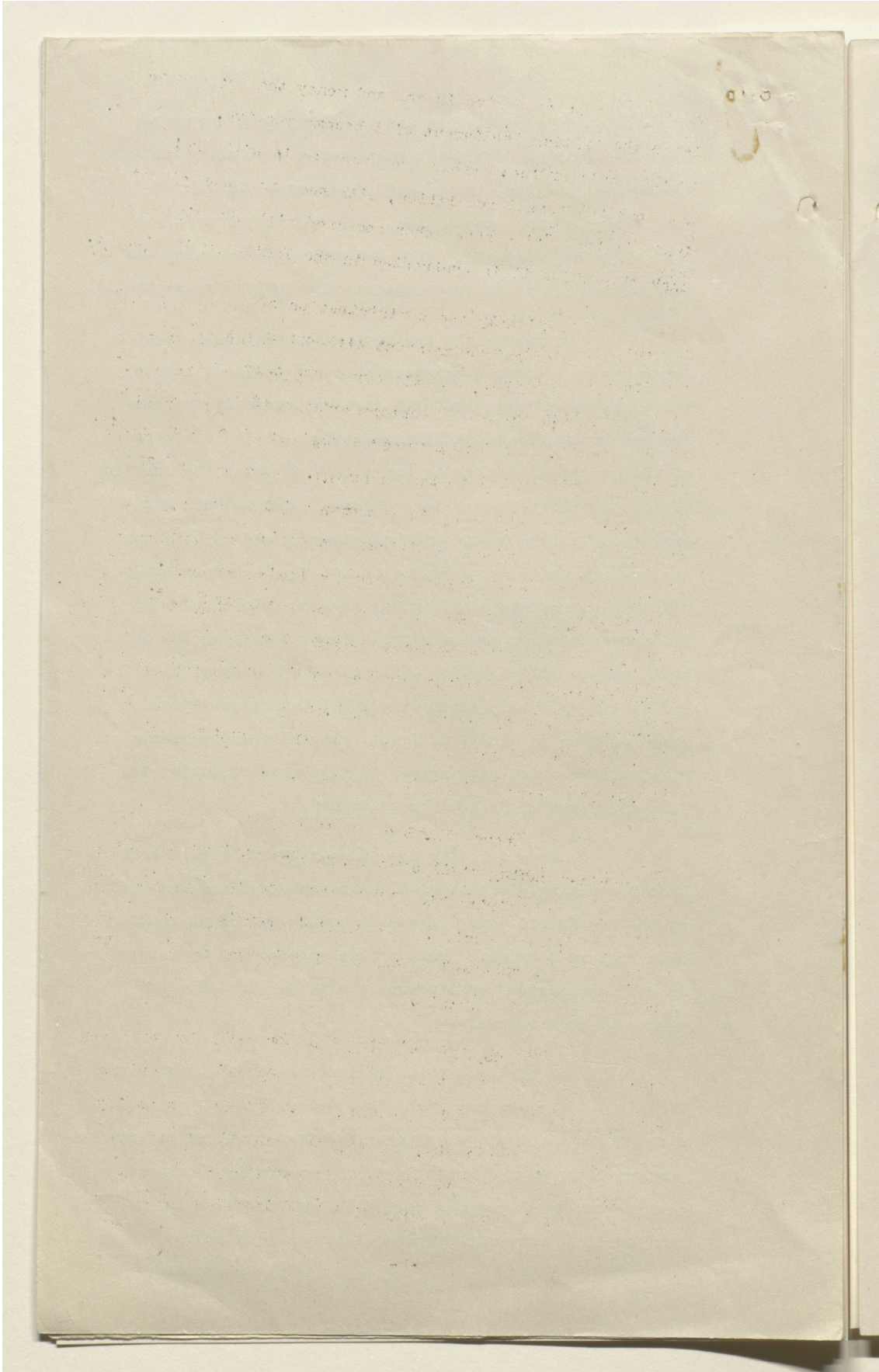
Similarly the administration of Middle Eastern Countries on a basis consistent with our declarations to the Arabs and others, and with our acceptance of the conditions implied in the mandatory article of the covenant of the League of Nations is not a task of which the Foreign Office is well fitted to take charge. The methods and traditions of diplomacy which necessarily and rightly are dominant in the Foreign Office do not fit in harmoniously with the supervision and control of administration. In this connection we cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that, had an office better equipped than the Foreign Office for dealing with administrative and internal political problems been in charge of Egypt, many of the lamentable difficulties which have arisen in that country during the last six years might have been avoided.

Above all, the new task before us requires an Arabic-speaking civil service, self-contained and inspired by the new spirit which is now so much required in dealing with Eastern peoples. Unless this service has a "father" as well as "master" of its own it will be difficult to create or to maintain.

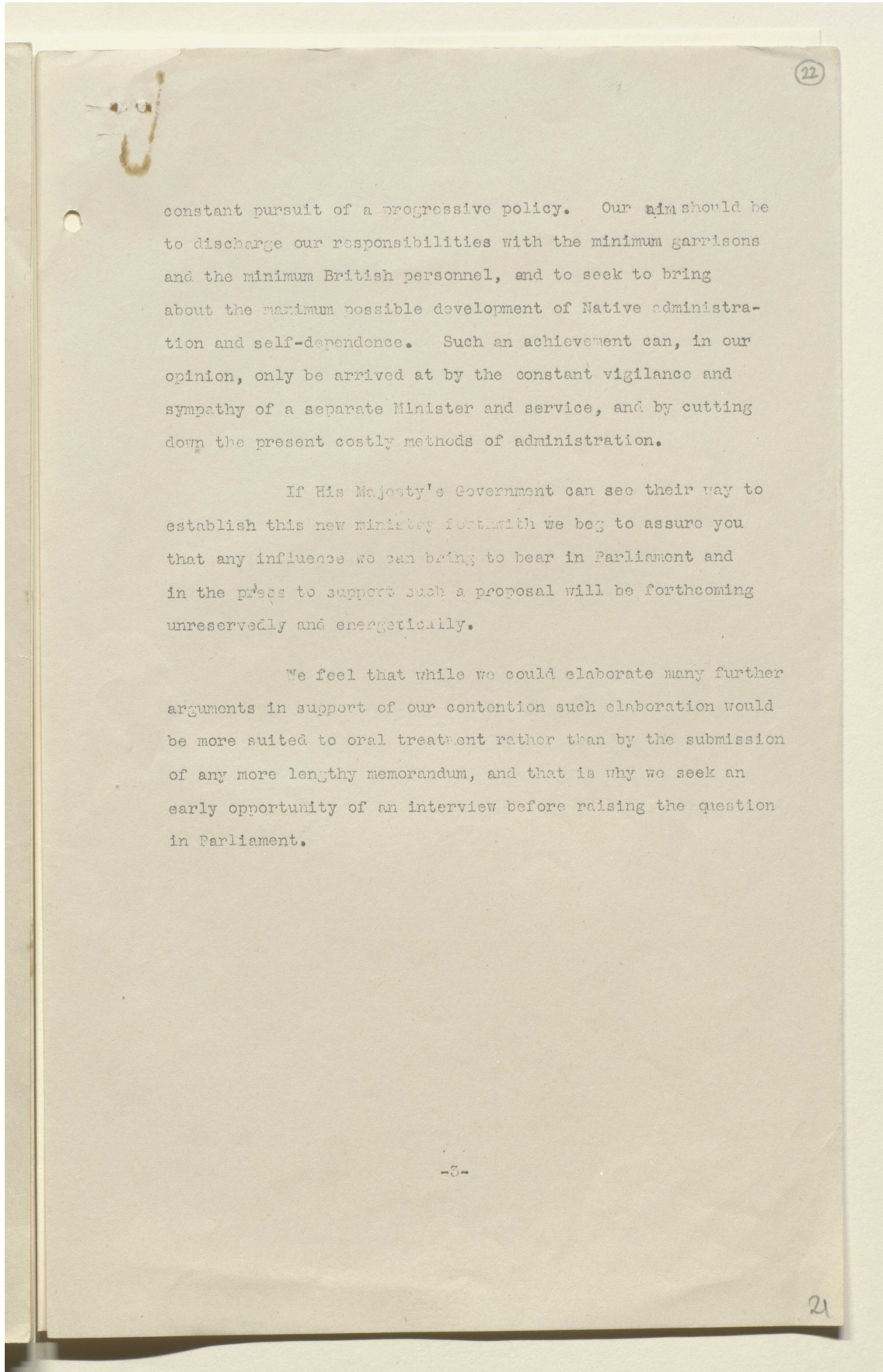
So far from thinking that the creation of a new Ministry and Department would involve any further serious charge upon the British taxpayer, we feel that, as policy governs expenditure, the only way to ensure that our new commitments in the Middle East will not involve a large and possibly increasing financial burden lies in the

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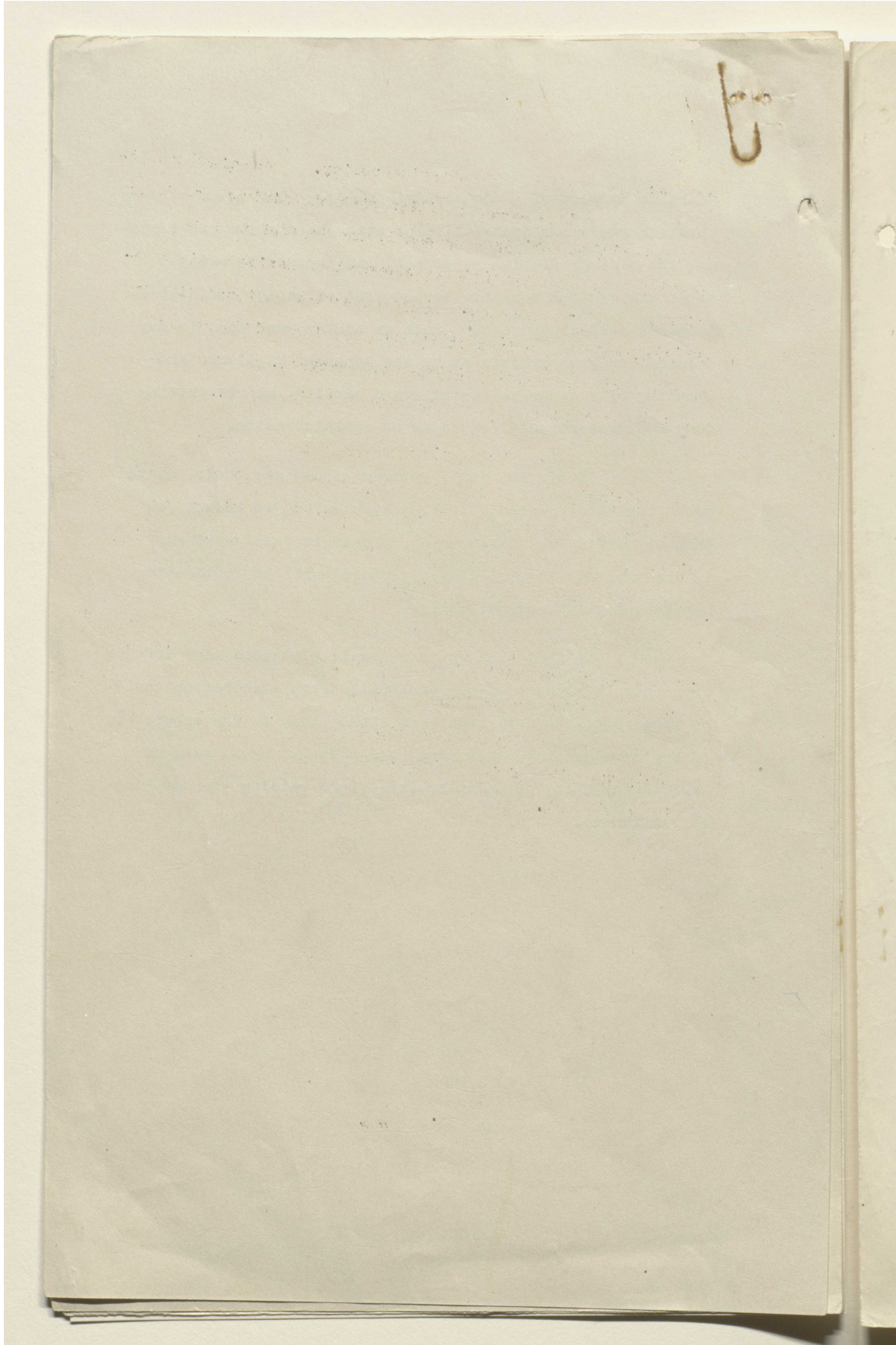
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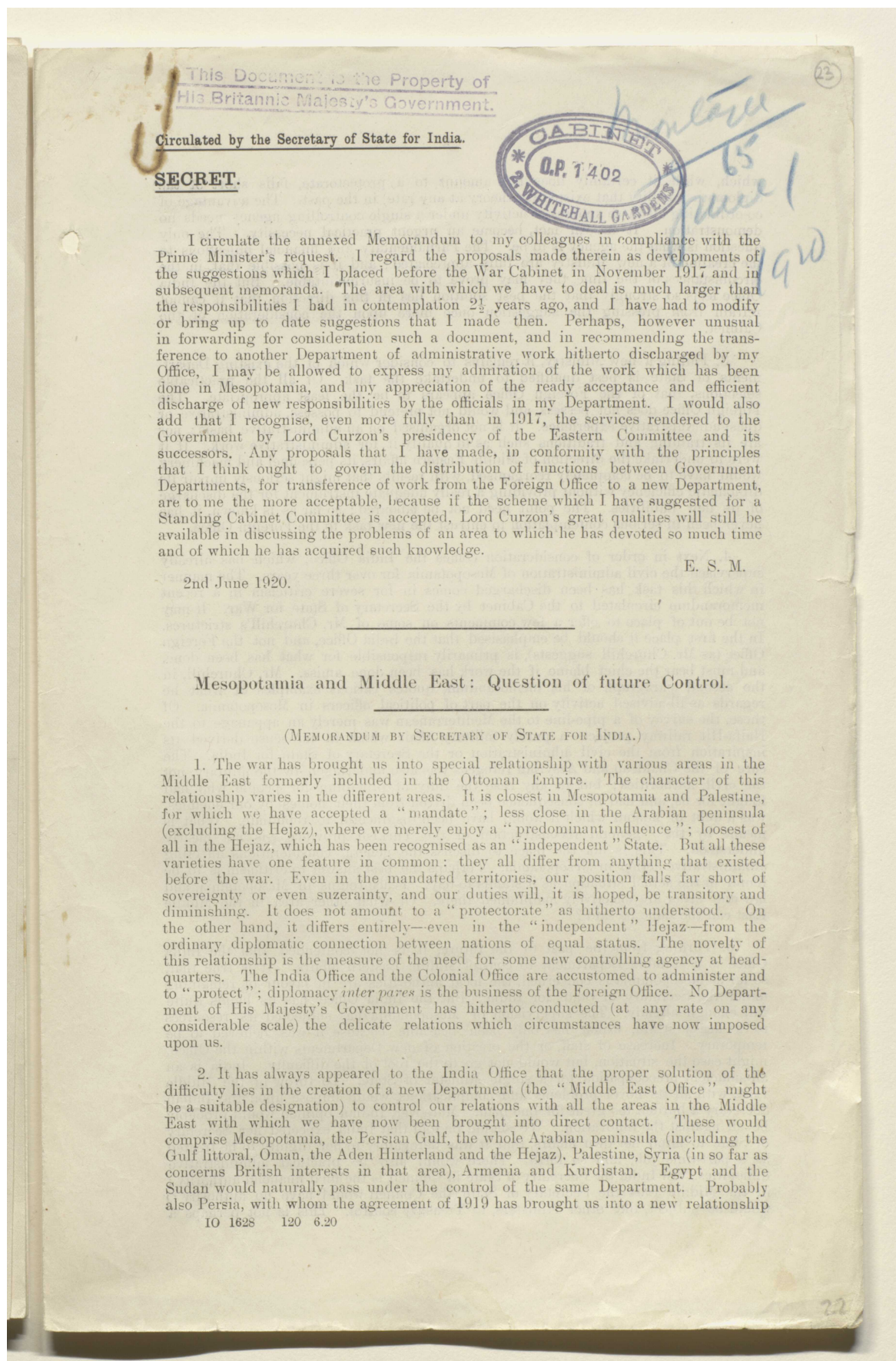
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'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [23r] (45/136)



'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [23v] (46/136)

2

which, while it certainly does not amount to a protectorate, falls short of the diplomatic equality that existed (in theory at any rate) in the past. The advantage of co-ordinating all these spheres of activity under a single controlling agency needs no demonstration. It has, in fact, become an urgent practical necessity. The only question is what the agency is to be. The Parliamentary and financial objections to the creation of a new Ministry are fully appreciated; and it is possible that, in the circumstances of the time, they may prove to be insurmountable. But the India Office feels so strongly that the best solution lies in this direction, that it cannot refrain from pressing the suggestion once more upon the consideration of the Cabinet.

3. Failing a new Ministry, it remains to consider which of the existing Departments of State is best qualified to undertake the task. Of all the practicable selections, that of the Foreign Office appears to be the least appropriate. The Foreign Office does not possess, and would not pretend to possess, administrative or quasi-administrative experience. It is not organised on an administrative basis; nor are its training and traditions such as to qualify it for administrative work. If it were to undertake the direction of Middle Eastern affairs, its personnel and machinery would have to be completely reorganised, with results that might seriously impair its diplomatic efficiency without providing a really adequate instrument for the discharge of its new liabilities. The point need not be laboured; so far as is known, it has never been in serious contemplation to entrust the new task to the Foreign Office.

4. Next in order of consideration comes the India Office, which has already supervised the civil administration of Mesopotamia for over three years. The manner in which this task has been discharged comes in for severe criticism in a recent memorandum circulated to the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for War. It may not be out of place to offer a few comments on some of Mr. Churchill's strictures. In the first place it should be emphasised that the India Office, and not the Foreign Office (as Mr. Churchill suggests), is primarily responsible for what has been done, and must bear the chief blame if the work has been done amiss. Mr. Churchill, in the second paragraph of his memorandum, quotes various examples of what he regards as ill-advised activity on the part of political officers in Mesopotamia. Of these, the survey of a pipe-line to the Mediterranean was merely an appanage to the Haifa-Hit railway project—a purely military affair which in no sense derived its inspiration from the civil administration or the Secretary of State for India. The care of the Chaldean and Assyrian refugees was also undertaken by the military, not the civil, authorities; but in any case the duty of providing for people who had fought for us, and had in consequence been driven from their homes by our enemies, was a debt of honour which it would have been disgraceful to repudiate. What is meant by the "general reconstruction of the Turkish province" is not clearly understood. This is not the place to discuss the general considerations affecting administrative action in Mesopotamia. Perhaps the best answer to criticism is to be found in the actual situation as it stands to-day. Peace reigns in Mesopotamia, and law and order are effectively maintained there. Of what other area in the Middle East can the same be said?

5. Turning from the past to the future, it is not contended that the India Office is a suitable Department to control Middle Eastern affairs. It is true that, so far as Mesopotamia is concerned, the local authorities are in favour of remaining under the Secretary of State for India. But the India Office has its hands quite full enough already. The supervision of Mesopotamia has subjected its resources to a heavy strain, which has only been bearable because it was believed to be temporary. Increase of staff, or the creation of new Departments within the Office, might ease the situation, but would not go to the root of the difficulty. India is an all-sufficient preoccupation for a single Minister of State. To throw in the Middle East, with all its novel problems and complications, would impose upon the Indian Secretary a burden too great for one man. Moreover, Indian opinion would probably be all against the innovation. We should be told that India expected her Secretary of State to mind her own affairs, that it was derogatory to her dignity to be treated as a part-time job, and so forth. There would also be practical administrative difficulties. In India the Secretary of State in Council is the final financial authority; in the Middle East the Secretary of State (the Council would have no authority?) would be subject, like other Ministers, to Treasury control. This is not perhaps a

'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [24r] (47/136)

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necessarily fatal objection; but the duplication of the Secretary of State's personality and functions would be a serious practical inconvenience. On every ground the India Office is of opinion that, in the best interests of the public service, the task should not devolve upon itself.

6. There remains the Colonial Office. It is clear that this Department, in its present form and under its present designation, is not qualified to deal with areas which cannot by any stretch of imagination be described as "Colonies," and which would undoubtedly take strong exception to such a description. It is, moreover, very desirable that nothing should be done to encourage the belief that a mandate is merely annexation in disguise. It is understood, however, that there is already some question of transferring from the Colonial Office the conduct of relations with the Dominions. If this transfer were accomplished, the amount of business left to the Colonial Office would presumably fall far short of its capacity. It is suggested that the vacuum might be filled with the Middle East, and that a renamed and reorganised Department, occupying the present Colonial Office building, might combine the function of administering the Crown Colonies with that of supervising the areas dealt with in this memorandum. The Secretary of State for India would be prepared on his part to accept transfer of Ceylon, which is becoming every day more closely connected, racially and economically, with the Indian peninsula. A point for consideration is the difficulty that may arise if the Foreign Office continue to control Persian affairs while the reconstituted Colonial Office deals with Mesopotamia. This difficulty might be met to some extent by the maintenance, in some permanent form, of the present inter-departmental Committee on Eastern Affairs; but the case of Persia, with which the Colonial Office would not perhaps be very well qualified to deal, affords an additional argument in favour of a new Department. In any case it need hardly be said that the Colonial Office would require a new staff recruited from those with special knowledge of, or service connected with, the Middle East.

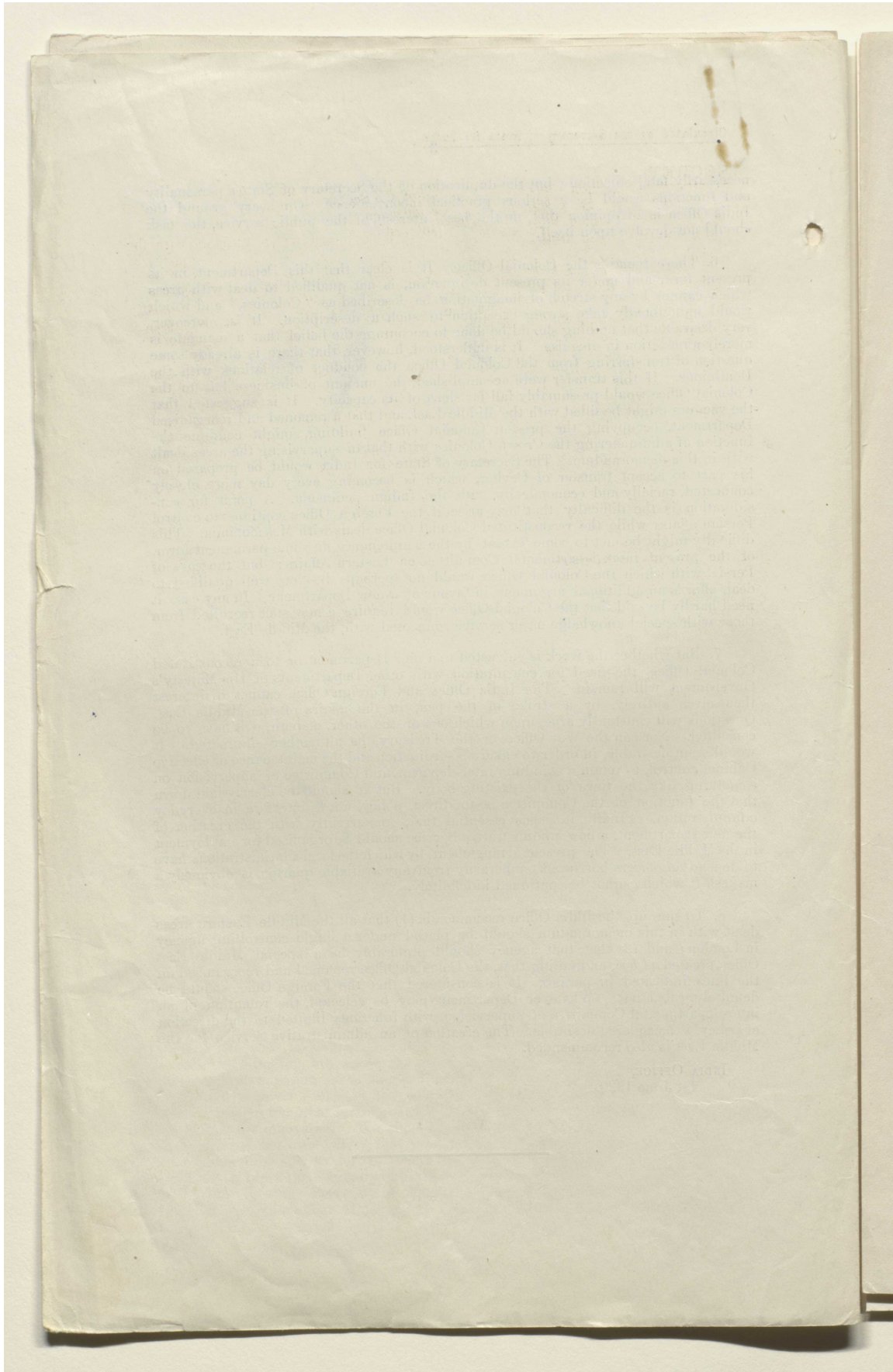
7. But whether the work is entrusted to a new Department or to a reconstituted Colonial Office, the need for consultation with other Departments of His Majesty's Government will remain. The India Office and Foreign Office cannot disinterest themselves entirely, by a stroke of the pen, in the affairs of the Middle East. Questions will constantly arise upon which one or the other, or both, will have to be consulted. Nor can the War Office, or the Treasury, be altogether eliminated. It would seem desirable, in order to ensure co-ordination and the maintenance of effective Cabinet control, to retain a standing inter-departmental Committee of supervision on something like the lines of the existing body. But it should be clearly laid down that the function of the Committee is to direct policy, not to interfere in everyday administration. Finally, it seems essential that, concurrently with the creation of the new Department, a new administrative Service should be organised for employment in the Middle East. The present arrangement, by which the local administrations have to depend on officers borrowed temporarily from any available quarter, is obviously a makeshift which cannot be continued indefinitely.

8. To sum up, the India Office recommends (1) that all the Middle Eastern areas dealt with in this memorandum should be placed under a single controlling agency in London; and (2) that that agency should preferably be a special Middle East Office, created *ad hoc*, and, failing that, the Colonial Office renamed and reorganised on the lines indicated in para. 6. It is considered that the Foreign Office should be definitely ruled out. Whatever Department may be selected, the retention of an inter-departmental Committee of supervision, with functions limited to the direction of policy, is considered desirable. The creation of an administrative Service for the Middle East is also recommended.

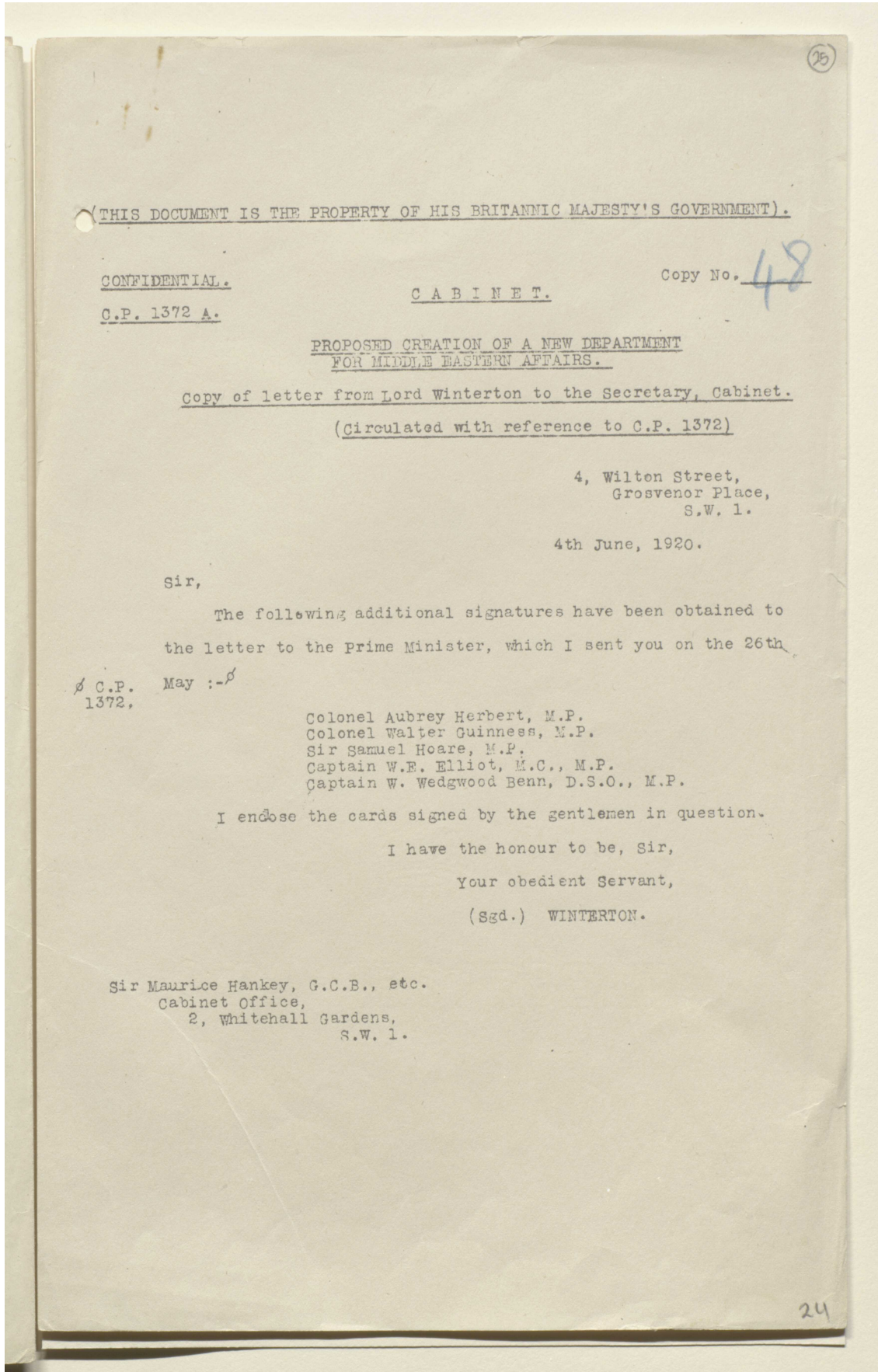
INDIA OFFICE,
1st June 1920.

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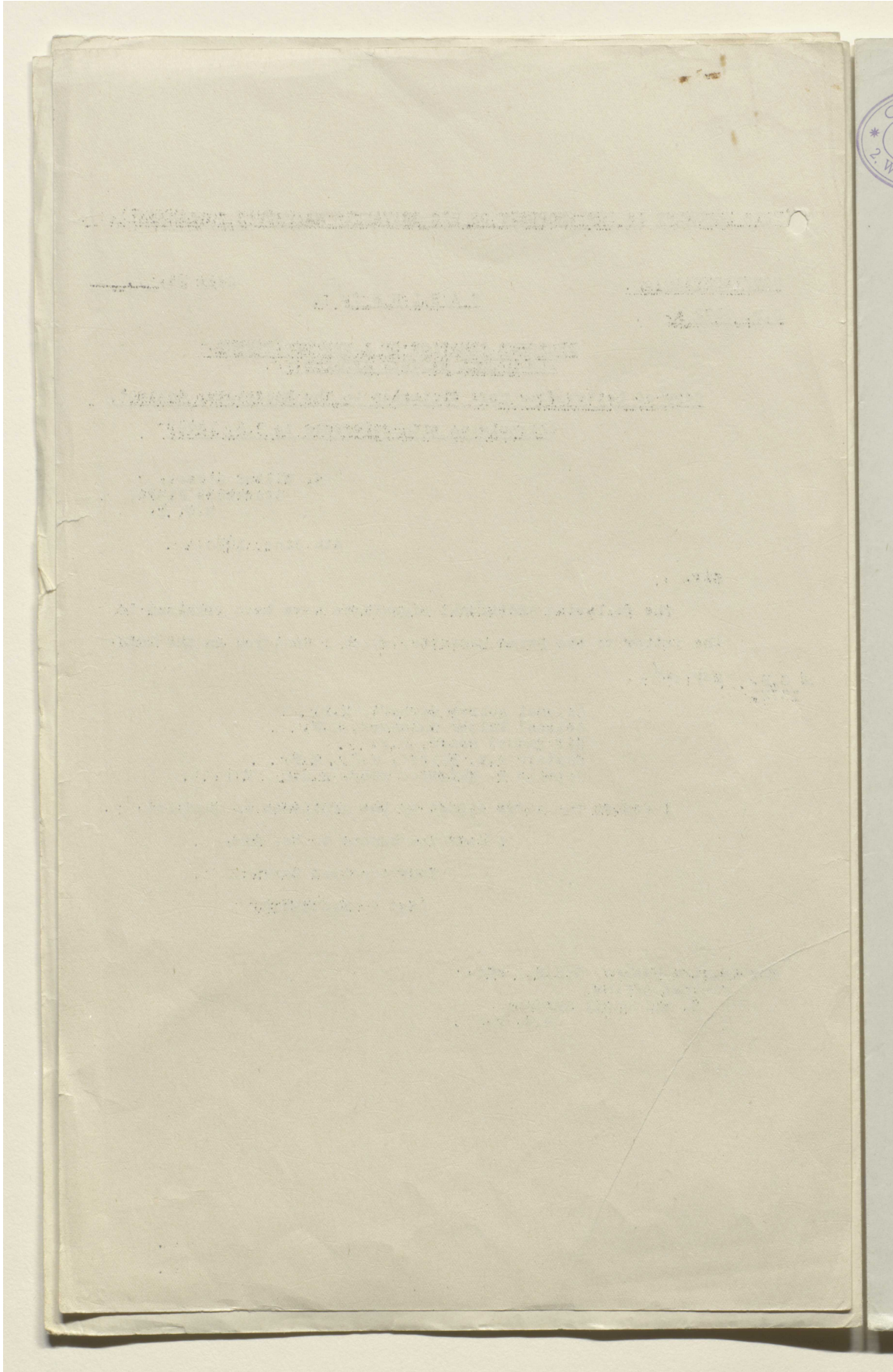
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Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [24v] (48/136)**



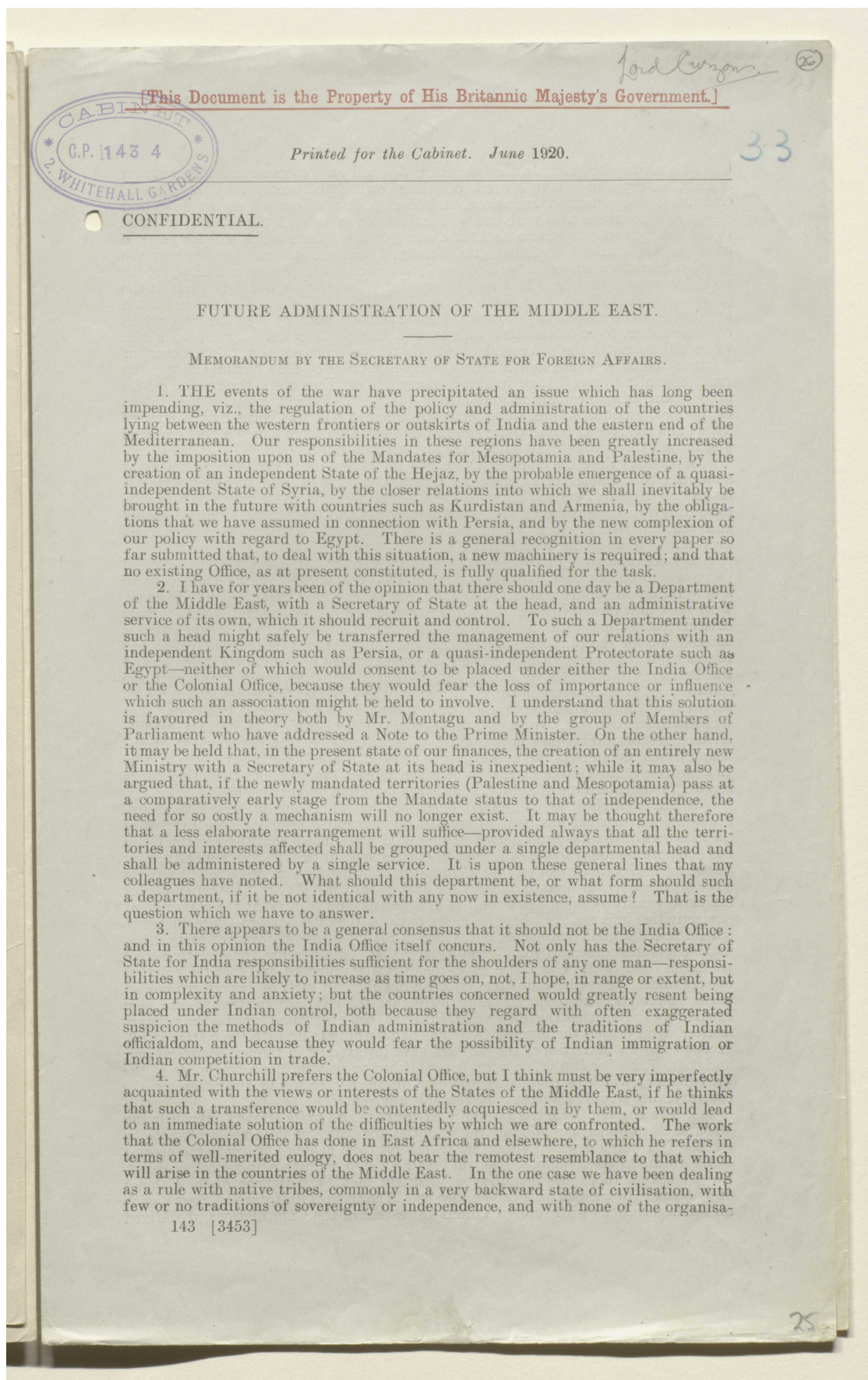
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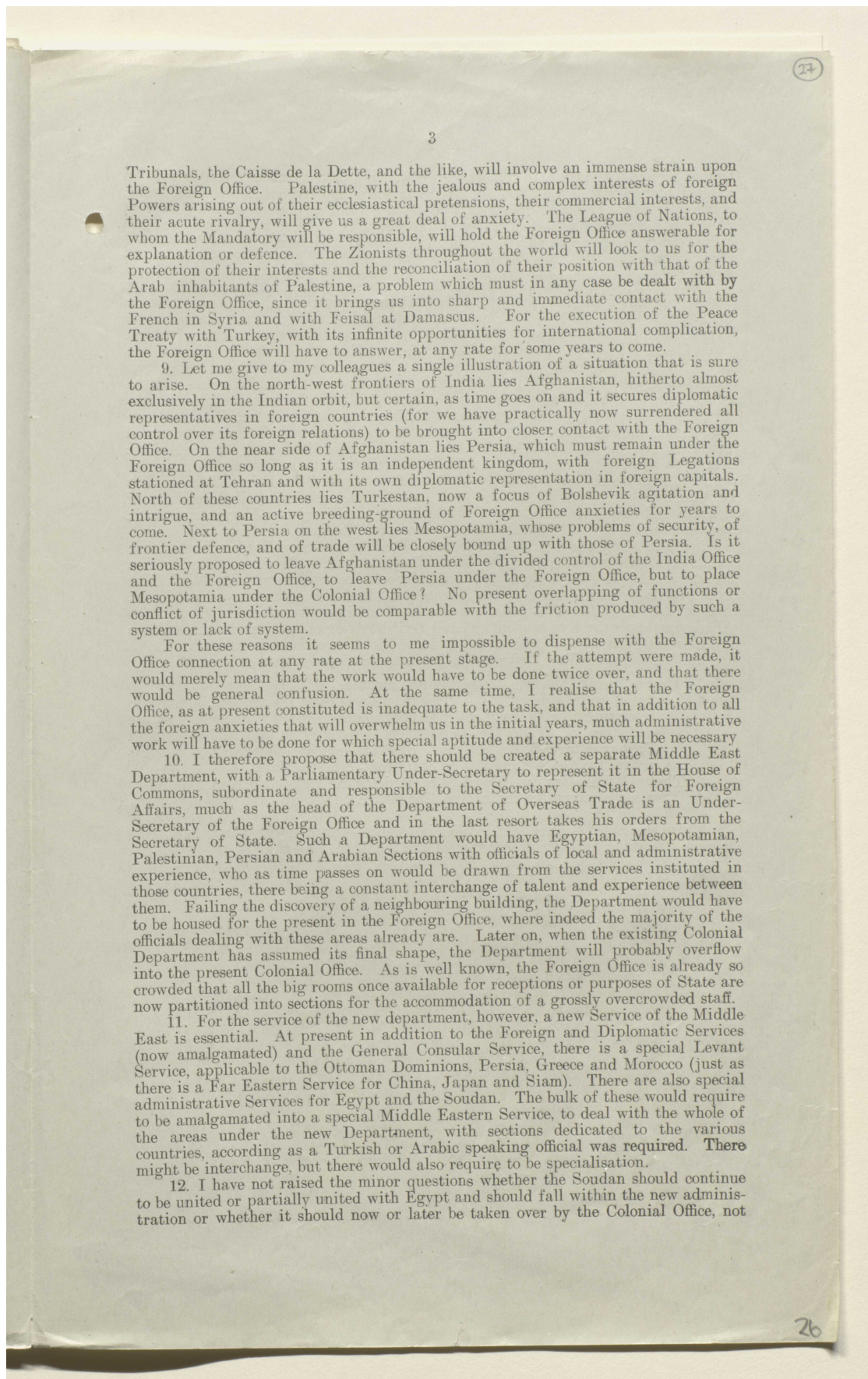
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15. The advice which I give to the Cabinet therefore is this:—

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These recommendations do not differ in essence (except in one particular) from those in the India Office memorandum of the 1st June. (C.P. 1402)

Foreign Office, June 8, 1920.

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Printed for the Cabinet. June 1920.

CONFIDENTIAL

FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

1. THE events of the war have precipitated an issue which has long been impending, viz., the regulation of the policy and administration of the countries lying between the western frontiers or outskirts of India and the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Our responsibilities in these regions have been greatly increased by the imposition upon us of the Mandates for Mesopotamia and Palestine, by the creation of an independent State of the Hejaz, by the probable emergence of a quasi-independent State of Syria, by the closer relations into which we shall inevitably be brought in the future with countries such as Kurdistan and Armenia, by the obligations that we have assumed in connection with Persia, and by the new complexion of our policy with regard to Egypt. There is a general recognition in every paper so far submitted that, to deal with this situation, a new machinery is required; and that no existing Office, as at present constituted, is fully qualified for the task.

2. I have for years been of the opinion that there should one day be a Department of the Middle East, with a Secretary of State at the head, and an administrative service of its own, which it should recruit and control. To such a Department under such a head might safely be transferred the management of our relations with an independent Kingdom such as Persia, or a quasi-independent Protectorate such as Egypt—neither of which would consent to be placed under either the India Office or the Colonial Office, because they would fear the loss of importance or influence which such an association might be held to involve. I understand that this solution is favoured in theory both by Mr. Montagu and by the group of Members of Parliament who have addressed a Note to the Prime Minister. On the other hand, it may be held that, in the present state of our finances, the creation of an entirely new Ministry with a Secretary of State at its head is inexpedient; while it may also be argued that, if the newly mandated territories (Palestine and Mesopotamia) pass at a comparatively early stage from the Mandate status to that of independence, the need for so costly a mechanism will no longer exist. It may be thought therefore that a less elaborate rearrangement will suffice—provided always that all the territories and interests affected shall be grouped under a single departmental head and shall be administered by a single service. It is upon these general lines that my colleagues have noted. What should this department be, or what form should such a department, if it be not identical with any now in existence, assume? That is the question which we have to answer.

3. There appears to be a general consensus that it should not be the India Office: and in this opinion the India Office itself concurs. Not only has the Secretary of State for India responsibilities sufficient for the shoulders of any one man—responsibilities which are likely to increase as time goes on, not, I hope, in range or extent, but in complexity and anxiety; but the countries concerned would greatly resent being placed under Indian control, both because they regard with often exaggerated suspicion the methods of Indian administration and the traditions of Indian officialdom, and because they would fear the possibility of Indian immigration or Indian competition in trade.

4. Mr. Churchill prefers the Colonial Office, but I think must be very imperfectly acquainted with the views or interests of the States of the Middle East, if he thinks that such a transference would be contentedly acquiesced in by them, or would lead to an immediate solution of the difficulties by which we are confronted. The work that the Colonial Office has done in East Africa and elsewhere, to which he refers in terms of well-merited eulogy, does not bear the remotest resemblance to that which will arise in the countries of the Middle East. In the one case we have been dealing as a rule with native tribes, commonly in a very backward state of civilisation, with few or no traditions of sovereignty or independence, and with none of the organisa-

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Tribunals, the Caisse de la Dette, and the like, will involve an immense strain upon the Foreign Office. Palestine, with the jealous and complex interests of foreign Powers arising out of their ecclesiastical pretensions, their commercial interests, and their acute rivalry, will give us a great deal of anxiety. The League of Nations, to whom the Mandatory will be responsible, will hold the Foreign Office answerable for explanation or defence. The Zionists throughout the world will look to us for the protection of their interests and the reconciliation of their position with that of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, a problem which must in any case be dealt with by the Foreign Office, since it brings us into sharp and immediate contact with the French in Syria and with Feisal at Damascus. For the execution of the Peace Treaty with Turkey, with its infinite opportunities for international complication, the Foreign Office will have to answer, at any rate for some years to come.

9. Let me give to my colleagues a single illustration of a situation that is sure to arise. On the north-west frontiers of India lies Afghanistan, hitherto almost exclusively in the Indian orbit, but certain, as time goes on and it secures diplomatic representatives in foreign countries (for we have practically now surrendered all control over its foreign relations) to be brought into closer contact with the Foreign Office. On the near side of Afghanistan lies Persia, which must remain under the Foreign Office so long as it is an independent kingdom, with foreign Legations stationed at Tehran and with its own diplomatic representation in foreign capitals. North of these countries lies Turkestan, now a focus of Bolshevik agitation and intrigue, and an active breeding-ground of Foreign Office anxieties for years to come. Next to Persia on the west lies Mesopotamia, whose problems of security, of frontier defence, and of trade will be closely bound up with those of Persia. Is it seriously proposed to leave Afghanistan under the divided control of the India Office and the Foreign Office, to leave Persia under the Foreign Office, but to place Mesopotamia under the Colonial Office? No present overlapping of functions or conflict of jurisdiction would be comparable with the friction produced by such a system or lack of system.

For these reasons it seems to me impossible to dispense with the Foreign Office connection at any rate at the present stage. If the attempt were made, it would merely mean that the work would have to be done twice over, and that there would be general confusion. At the same time, I realise that the Foreign Office, as at present constituted is inadequate to the task, and that in addition to all the foreign anxieties that will overwhelm us in the initial years, much administrative work will have to be done for which special aptitude and experience will be necessary.

10. I therefore propose that there should be created a separate Middle East Department, with a Parliamentary Under-Secretary to represent it in the House of Commons, subordinate and responsible to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, much as the head of the Department of Overseas Trade is an Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office and in the last resort takes his orders from the Secretary of State. Such a Department would have Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Palestinian, Persian and Arabian Sections with officials of local and administrative experience, who as time passes on would be drawn from the services instituted in those countries, there being a constant interchange of talent and experience between them. Failing the discovery of a neighbouring building, the Department would have to be housed for the present in the Foreign Office, where indeed the majority of the officials dealing with these areas already are. Later on, when the existing Colonial Department has assumed its final shape, the Department will probably overflow into the present Colonial Office. As is well known, the Foreign Office is already so crowded that all the big rooms once available for receptions or purposes of State are now partitioned into sections for the accommodation of a grossly overcrowded staff.

11. For the service of the new department, however, a new Service of the Middle East is essential. At present in addition to the Foreign and Diplomatic Services (now amalgamated) and the General Consular Service, there is a special Levant Service, applicable to the Ottoman Dominions, Persia, Greece and Morocco (just as there is a Far Eastern Service for China, Japan and Siam). There are also special administrative Services for Egypt and the Soudan. The bulk of these would require to be amalgamated into a special Middle Eastern Service, to deal with the whole of the areas under the new Department, with sections dedicated to the various countries, according as a Turkish or Arabic speaking official was required. There might be interchange, but there would also require to be specialisation.

12. I have not raised the minor questions whether the Soudan should continue to be united or partially united with Egypt and should fall within the new administration or whether it should now or later be taken over by the Colonial Office, not

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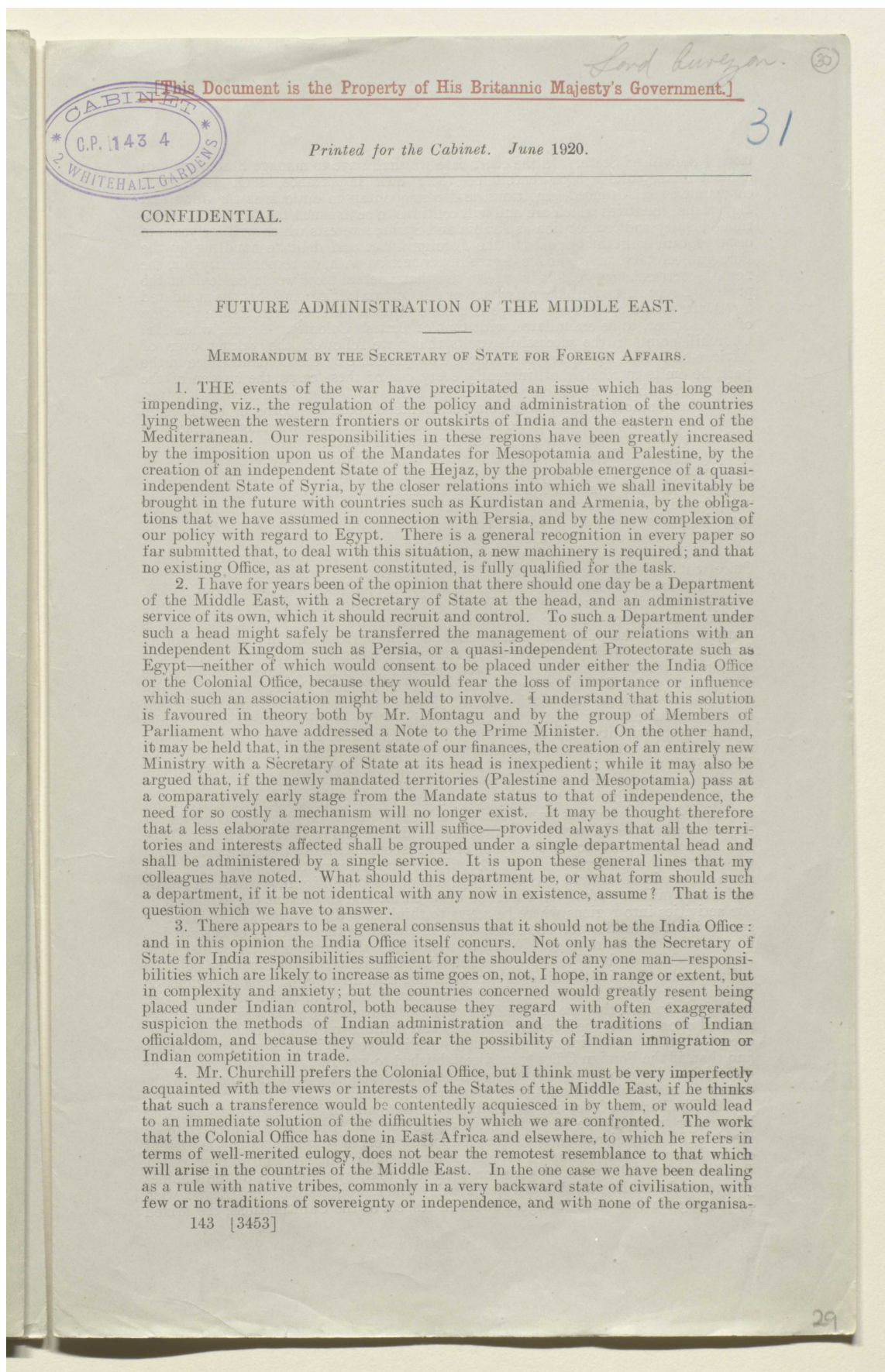
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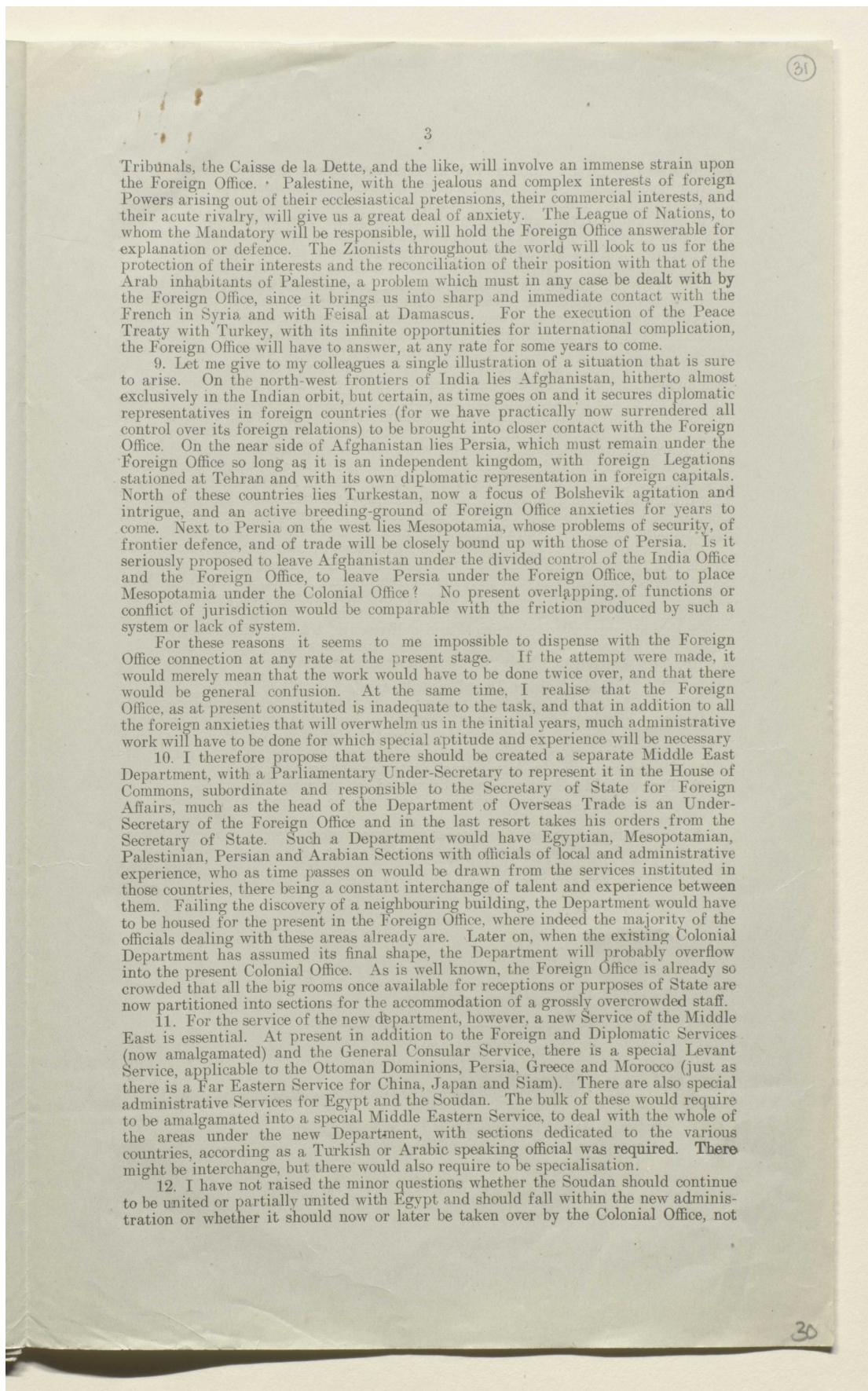
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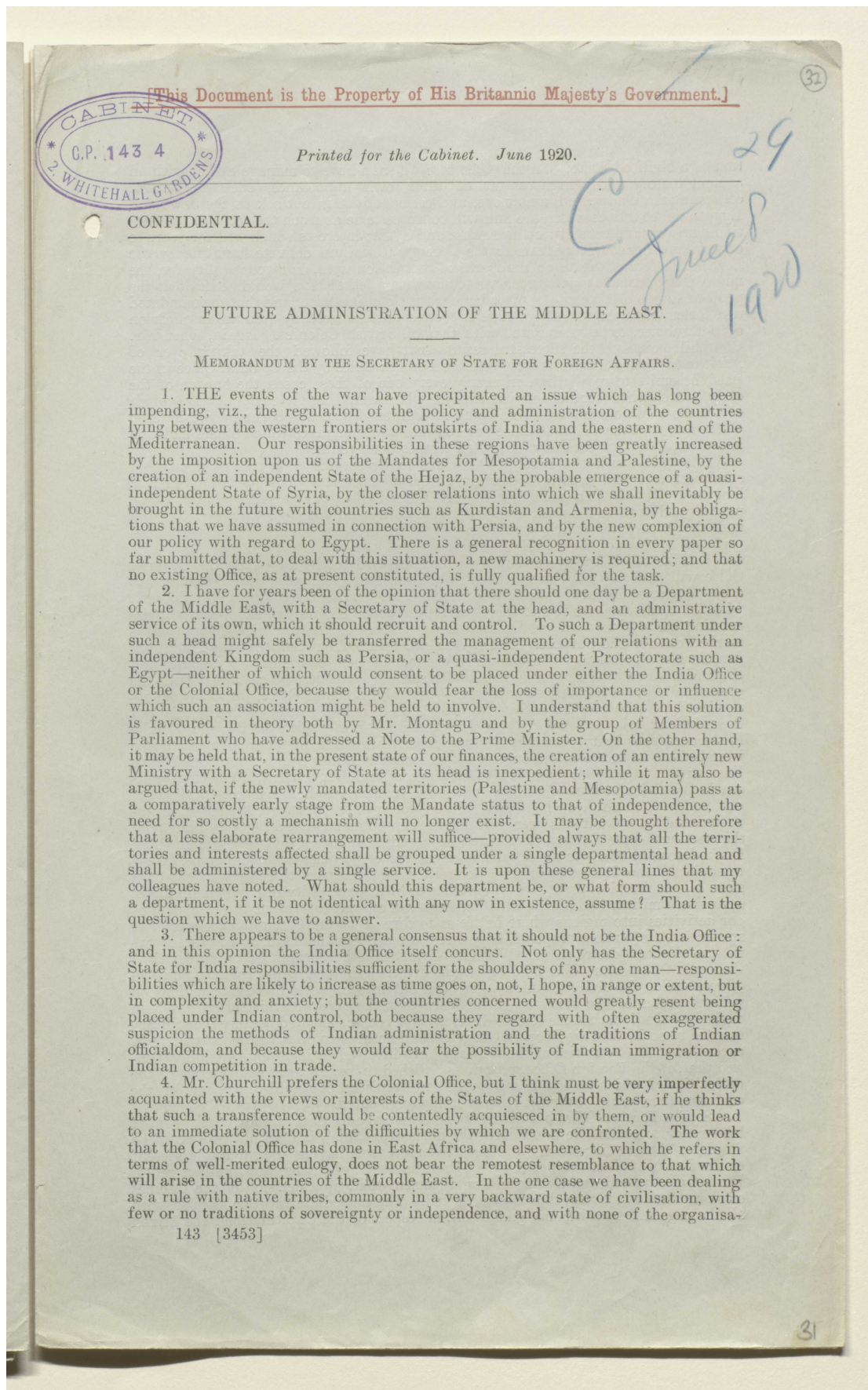
1. That a Middle Eastern Department be created.
2. That if it be considered inexpedient or premature at the present juncture to constitute this Department a Ministry, and to place it under a separate Secretary of State, the Department be placed provisionally under a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, responsible to and taking his orders from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
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These recommendations do not differ in essence (except in one particular) from those in the India Office memorandum of the 1st June. (C.P. 1402)

Foreign Office, June 8, 1920.

C. OF K.

'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [32r] (63/136)



'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [32v] (64/136)

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tion of a civilised State. In the other case we shall have to manage States with an ancient history and a high conceit of their own importance, such as Persia; communities as advanced, ambitious, and cosmopolitan in outlook as the Jews and Egyptians; countries which are and will continue to be as much the focus of international rivalry and competition as Arabia and Syria; interests which will for years to come require constant appeals to the Foreign Office and delicate handling by the Foreign Secretary, whatever his degree of connection with, or responsibility for, the new Department may be. It is safe to say that a lethal blow would be dealt at the pride of Egypt if it were to be placed under the Colonial Office; and that the mandated territories would utter a cry of rage if their condition were, by even the implication of a misnomer, to be assimilated with that of British Colonies. Again, when Mr. Churchill points to the successful results that have followed the taking over of African and other Protectorates from the Foreign Office by the Colonial Office in the past, he omits to recall that, in nearly every one of these cases, the burden of the early years, when acquisition was taking place and foreign complications, often of the most anxious nature, were being straightened out, was borne by the Foreign Office, and that the Colonial Office entered into an inheritance which others had won and nursed through an early and often tempestuous youth.

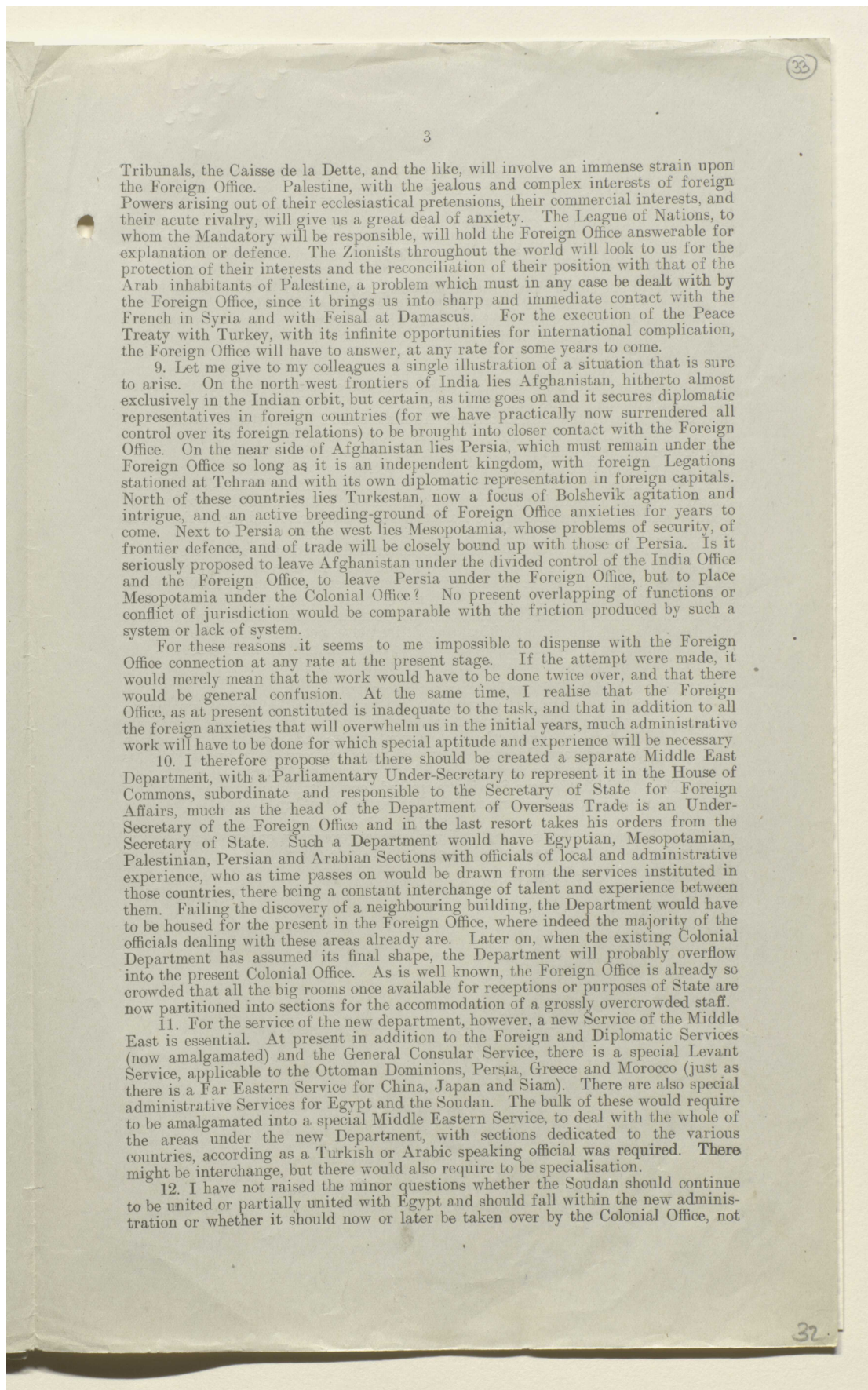
5. Again, while the Foreign Office has in its service a very large number of administrators and experts possessing Oriental experience, and speaking Oriental languages (Arabic, Persian, Turkish), the Colonial Office is necessarily almost wholly unequipped in these respects, and could only slowly and laboriously acquire the staff and the experience which would enable it to grapple satisfactorily with such problems as those of the Middle East.

6. Like others of my colleagues, I look forward to the day when the Colonial Office will probably part with its control of the great self-governing Dominions to a new Imperial Department of State; and I have long held that the Privy Council, with its traditions, its name, the titular precedence of its official head, and its existing connection with the Dominions, in respect of the Judicial Committee, is marked out for the purpose. But it does not follow from this that the remaining functions of the Colonial Office, namely, the management of the Crown Colonies and the British Protectorates in Africa and elsewhere, will best be combined with the control of a great Eastern sphere, with which the Colonial Office, its staff and its services have hitherto had nothing to do. Indeed, it is a matter of knowledge that the administration of Cyprus by the Colonial Office—which is its sole Middle Eastern responsibility—has not resulted in anything like that development of the island which its interests and opportunities demand. The Department of the Middle East will have, to a large extent, to be a specialised Department, attracting to its service a particular type of ability, knowledge, training, and experience.

7. Mr. Churchill, as has been pointed out by Mr. Montagu, seems to be unacquainted with what has been passing in Mesopotamia. Had he been present at the meetings of the Eastern Committee, he would have known that the Foreign Office has had nothing to say to the expansion of our responsibilities in those regions, except in so far as the Chairman of that Committee, who happens to be myself, has on a score of occasions laboured to contract the area of responsibility into which an almost exclusively military administration has dragged us, and to prevent the extension of our activities into regions where he seems to think that the Foreign Office wishes to spread itself of malice prepense, but where in reality in the majority of cases it has not the slightest desire to go. When he says that "the Foreign Office, rather than the India Office or the War Office, gives the directing influence, and that the political officers under the civil administration push out into all sorts of remote regions on various pretexts," he seems to be unaware that the civil administration has been exclusively Indian, that the remote districts have been penetrated because the military insisted upon it, that the Foreign Office has had nothing to do with the matter at all, except when the activities of the military have involved us in foreign complications, and that, if the Foreign Office were disestablished to-morrow, not a single one of the difficulties of which he complains would be diminished or would disappear; on the contrary, they would be almost immeasurably augmented.

8. The Foreign Office has assuredly no desire to add to its already overwhelming labours, or to undertake administrative duties for which it does not profess to be fitted. If I were dispensed altogether to-morrow from having any say to the present or the future of these regions, I should breathe a sigh of intense and jubilant relief. But let not my colleagues imagine for a moment that, by a decision of the Cabinet or by a stroke of the pen, this can be effected. The immediate future of Egypt, with all the negotiations with foreign Powers in respect of the Capitulations, the Mixed

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Tribunals, the Caisse de la Dette, and the like, will involve an immense strain upon the Foreign Office. Palestine, with the jealous and complex interests of foreign Powers arising out of their ecclesiastical pretensions, their commercial interests, and their acute rivalry, will give us a great deal of anxiety. The League of Nations, to whom the Mandatory will be responsible, will hold the Foreign Office answerable for explanation or defence. The Zionists throughout the world will look to us for the protection of their interests and the reconciliation of their position with that of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, a problem which must in any case be dealt with by the Foreign Office, since it brings us into sharp and immediate contact with the French in Syria and with Feisal at Damascus. For the execution of the Peace Treaty with Turkey, with its infinite opportunities for international complication, the Foreign Office will have to answer, at any rate for some years to come.

9. Let me give to my colleagues a single illustration of a situation that is sure to arise. On the north-west frontiers of India lies Afghanistan, hitherto almost exclusively in the Indian orbit, but certain, as time goes on and it secures diplomatic representatives in foreign countries (for we have practically now surrendered all control over its foreign relations) to be brought into closer contact with the Foreign Office. On the near side of Afghanistan lies Persia, which must remain under the Foreign Office so long as it is an independent kingdom, with foreign Legations stationed at Tehran and with its own diplomatic representation in foreign capitals. North of these countries lies Turkestan, now a focus of Bolshevik agitation and intrigue, and an active breeding-ground of Foreign Office anxieties for years to come. Next to Persia on the west lies Mesopotamia, whose problems of security, of frontier defence, and of trade will be closely bound up with those of Persia. Is it seriously proposed to leave Afghanistan under the divided control of the India Office and the Foreign Office, to leave Persia under the Foreign Office, but to place Mesopotamia under the Colonial Office? No present overlapping of functions or conflict of jurisdiction would be comparable with the friction produced by such a system or lack of system.

For these reasons it seems to me impossible to dispense with the Foreign Office connection at any rate at the present stage. If the attempt were made, it would merely mean that the work would have to be done twice over, and that there would be general confusion. At the same time, I realise that the Foreign Office, as at present constituted is inadequate to the task, and that in addition to all the foreign anxieties that will overwhelm us in the initial years, much administrative work will have to be done for which special aptitude and experience will be necessary.

10. I therefore propose that there should be created a separate Middle East Department, with a Parliamentary Under-Secretary to represent it in the House of Commons, subordinate and responsible to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, much as the head of the Department of Overseas Trade is an Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office and in the last resort takes his orders from the Secretary of State. Such a Department would have Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Palestinian, Persian and Arabian Sections with officials of local and administrative experience, who as time passes on would be drawn from the services instituted in those countries, there being a constant interchange of talent and experience between them. Failing the discovery of a neighbouring building, the Department would have to be housed for the present in the Foreign Office, where indeed the majority of the officials dealing with these areas already are. Later on, when the existing Colonial Department has assumed its final shape, the Department will probably overflow into the present Colonial Office. As is well known, the Foreign Office is already so crowded that all the big rooms once available for receptions or purposes of State are now partitioned into sections for the accommodation of a grossly overcrowded staff.

11. For the service of the new department, however, a new Service of the Middle East is essential. At present in addition to the Foreign and Diplomatic Services (now amalgamated) and the General Consular Service, there is a special Levant Service, applicable to the Ottoman Dominions, Persia, Greece and Morocco (just as there is a Far Eastern Service for China, Japan and Siam). There are also special administrative Services for Egypt and the Soudan. The bulk of these would require to be amalgamated into a special Middle Eastern Service, to deal with the whole of the areas under the new Department, with sections dedicated to the various countries, according as a Turkish or Arabic speaking official was required. There might be interchange, but there would also require to be specialisation.

12. I have not raised the minor questions whether the Soudan should continue to be united or partially united with Egypt and should fall within the new administration or whether it should now or later be taken over by the Colonial Office, not

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feeling sure how far its problems will in the future have an Egyptian or a Central African orientation. Nor have I discussed whether Cyprus should be added—as I think it probably ought to be—to the new Department. Lord Milner will give us much more authoritative advice upon both questions. Nor have I at this stage attempted to draw a line of division between the spheres of the Ottoman Kingdom of the future and the Middle East, not being at all sure in what shape the former will survive.

13. With one suggestion, however, that has been made, I concur. I think that it will be necessary to have an Eastern Committee, or something like it, to co-ordinate the interests and work of the various Departments that will for many years to come be concerned in the administration of the Middle East. They are the Foreign Office, India Office, War Office, Admiralty, Air Force, and Treasury. I doubt if the Cabinet is at all fully aware what the activities of this Committee in its various forms have been during the last three and a-half years, or of the extent to which it has relieved the Cabinet of the labours and responsibilities of Middle Eastern politics. In the successive garbs of the Mesopotamian Administration Committee, Persian Committee, Middle East Committee, Eastern Committee, and Inter-Departmental Conference on the Middle East, this body, over whose deliberations I have had the honour to preside throughout, has held 120 meetings, with an average duration of over two hours each, since January 1917, and the general condition of the Middle East during that period, in spite of some startling vicissitudes, until the collapse of Denikin and the appearance of the Bolsheviks as a militarist and aggressive force, has furnished a not unfavourable comment upon its labours.

14. But to render it a really effective instrument of co-ordination, responsible Heads or Representatives of Departments should attend. The Foreign and Indian Secretaries should always be, as they have hitherto been, members. The War Office should be represented, if not by the Secretary of State, at any rate by the C.I.G.S. or D.M.I. or D.M.O. The functions of the Committee, by whatever name it be called, should continue to be political and deliberative, not administrative; and the superior authority of the Cabinet should in no circumstances be impugned.

15. The advice which I give to the Cabinet therefore is this :—

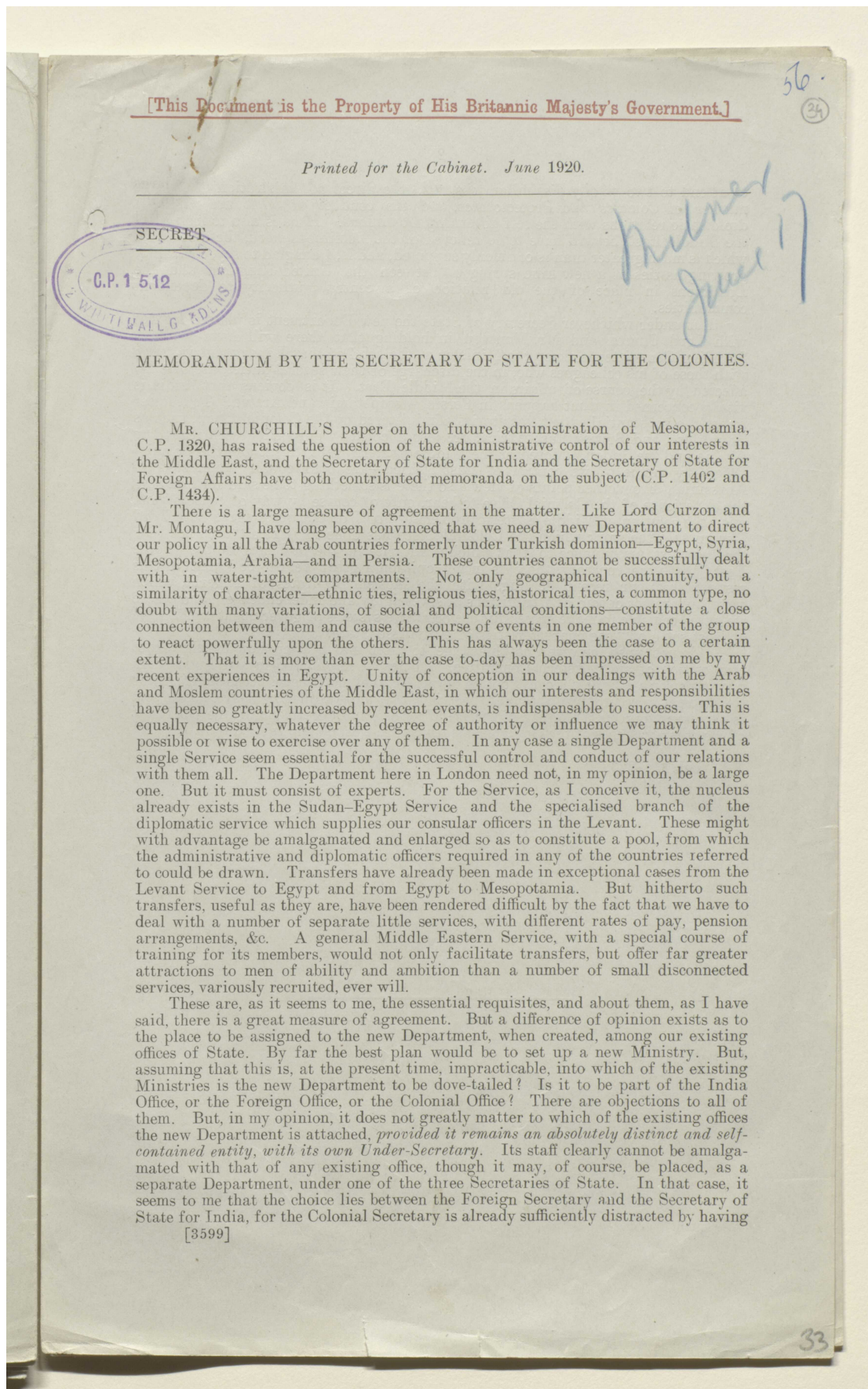
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Foreign Office, June 8, 1920.

C. OF K.

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2

to attend to two wholly dissimilar jobs, viz., the direct administration of a large number of Colonies and Protectorates, and the conduct of what are virtually diplomatic relations with the self-governing Dominions. If he is also to look after the Middle East, he will have to be relieved of the Dominions work, the amount of which is much greater than is commonly supposed, and is, I am glad to say, constantly growing as ties of a new kind spring up between the United Kingdom and the Dominions in place of the old relation of a central authority to dependent communities.

But under whichever Secretary of State the new Department is placed, I agree with Lord Curzon and Mr. Montagu in holding that there will have to be a Standing Committee, to keep the Minister at the head of that Department in touch with those of his colleagues who, in the discharge of their several duties, are directly affected by the course of affairs in the Middle East. It is obvious that India is vitally concerned in what happens in Persia, Mesopotamia and Arabia. To a lesser but still a substantial extent, territories administered by the Colonial Office, such as Somaliland and British East Africa, are also affected by our policy with regard to Arabia and the Sudan. Moreover the Middle Eastern Department and the Colonial Office—by virtue of its control of East Africa—are both equally interested in Abyssinia. From other points of view also there is something to be said for bringing the experience of the Colonial Office to bear, only of course by way of consultation, upon the solution of Middle Eastern problems. For I do not quite agree with Lord Curzon that the work which the Colonial Office has done in Africa "does not bear the remotest resemblance to that which will arise in the problems of the Middle East." On the contrary, there is in my opinion a great deal to be learnt in this respect from our recent dealings with the Moslem Emirates of Nigeria, which certainly are not devoid of "traditions of sovereignty and independence", and where we have been able to make successful use of native systems of government which have at least some of "the characteristics of a civilised State."

I do not wish, however, at this stage to enter into a discussion of the exact composition of an "Eastern Committee." I fear I might find myself involved in proposals for a complete reconstruction of our Cabinet machinery. It is sufficient for the moment to record my adhesion to the view, that a co-ordinating body of some sort is necessary to keep the policy of the Middle Eastern Department in line with that of the other branches of the Government which are most closely related to it.

M.

June 17, 1920.

'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [35r] (69/136)

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Printed for the Cabinet. June 1920.

SECRET.

Milner
June 17
1920

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

MR. CHURCHILL'S paper on the future administration of Mesopotamia, C.P. 1320, has raised the question of the administrative control of our interests in the Middle East, and the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs have both contributed memoranda on the subject (C.P. 1402 and C.P. 1434).

There is a large measure of agreement in the matter. Like Lord Curzon and Mr. Montagu, I have long been convinced that we need a new Department to direct our policy in all the Arab countries formerly under Turkish dominion—Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia—and in Persia. These countries cannot be successfully dealt with in water-tight compartments. Not only geographical continuity, but a similarity of character—ethnic ties, religious ties, historical ties, a common type, no doubt with many variations, of social and political conditions—constitute a close connection between them and cause the course of events in one member of the group to react powerfully upon the others. This has always been the case to a certain extent. That it is more than ever the case to-day has been impressed on me by my recent experiences in Egypt. Unity of conception in our dealings with the Arab and Moslem countries of the Middle East, in which our interests and responsibilities have been so greatly increased by recent events, is indispensable to success. This is equally necessary, whatever the degree of authority or influence we may think it possible or wise to exercise over any of them. In any case a single Department and a single Service seem essential for the successful control and conduct of our relations with them all. The Department here in London need not, in my opinion, be a large one. But it must consist of experts. For the Service, as I conceive it, the nucleus already exists in the Sudan-Egypt Service and the specialised branch of the diplomatic service which supplies our consular officers in the Levant. These might with advantage be amalgamated and enlarged so as to constitute a pool, from which the administrative and diplomatic officers required in any of the countries referred to could be drawn. Transfers have already been made in exceptional cases from the Levant Service to Egypt and from Egypt to Mesopotamia. But hitherto such transfers, useful as they are, have been rendered difficult by the fact that we have to deal with a number of separate little services, with different rates of pay, pension arrangements, &c. A general Middle Eastern Service, with a special course of training for its members, would not only facilitate transfers, but offer far greater attractions to men of ability and ambition than a number of small disconnected services, variously recruited, ever will.

These are, as it seems to me, the essential requisites, and about them, as I have said, there is a great measure of agreement. But a difference of opinion exists as to the place to be assigned to the new Department, when created, among our existing offices of State. By far the best plan would be to set up a new Ministry. But, assuming that this is, at the present time, impracticable, into which of the existing Ministries is the new Department to be dove-tailed? Is it to be part of the India Office, or the Foreign Office, or the Colonial Office? There are objections to all of them. But, in my opinion, it does not greatly matter to which of the existing offices the new Department is attached, *provided it remains an absolutely distinct and self-contained entity, with its own Under-Secretary*. Its staff clearly cannot be amalgamated with that of any existing office, though it may, of course, be placed, as a separate Department, under one of the three Secretaries of State. In that case, it seems to me that the choice lies between the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for India, for the Colonial Secretary is already sufficiently distracted by having

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2

to attend to two wholly dissimilar jobs, viz., the direct administration of a large number of Colonies and Protectorates, and the conduct of what are virtually diplomatic relations with the self-governing Dominions. If he is also to look after the Middle East, he will have to be relieved of the Dominions work, the amount of which is much greater than is commonly supposed, and is, I am glad to say, constantly growing as ties of a new kind spring up between the United Kingdom and the Dominions in place of the old relation of a central authority to dependent communities.

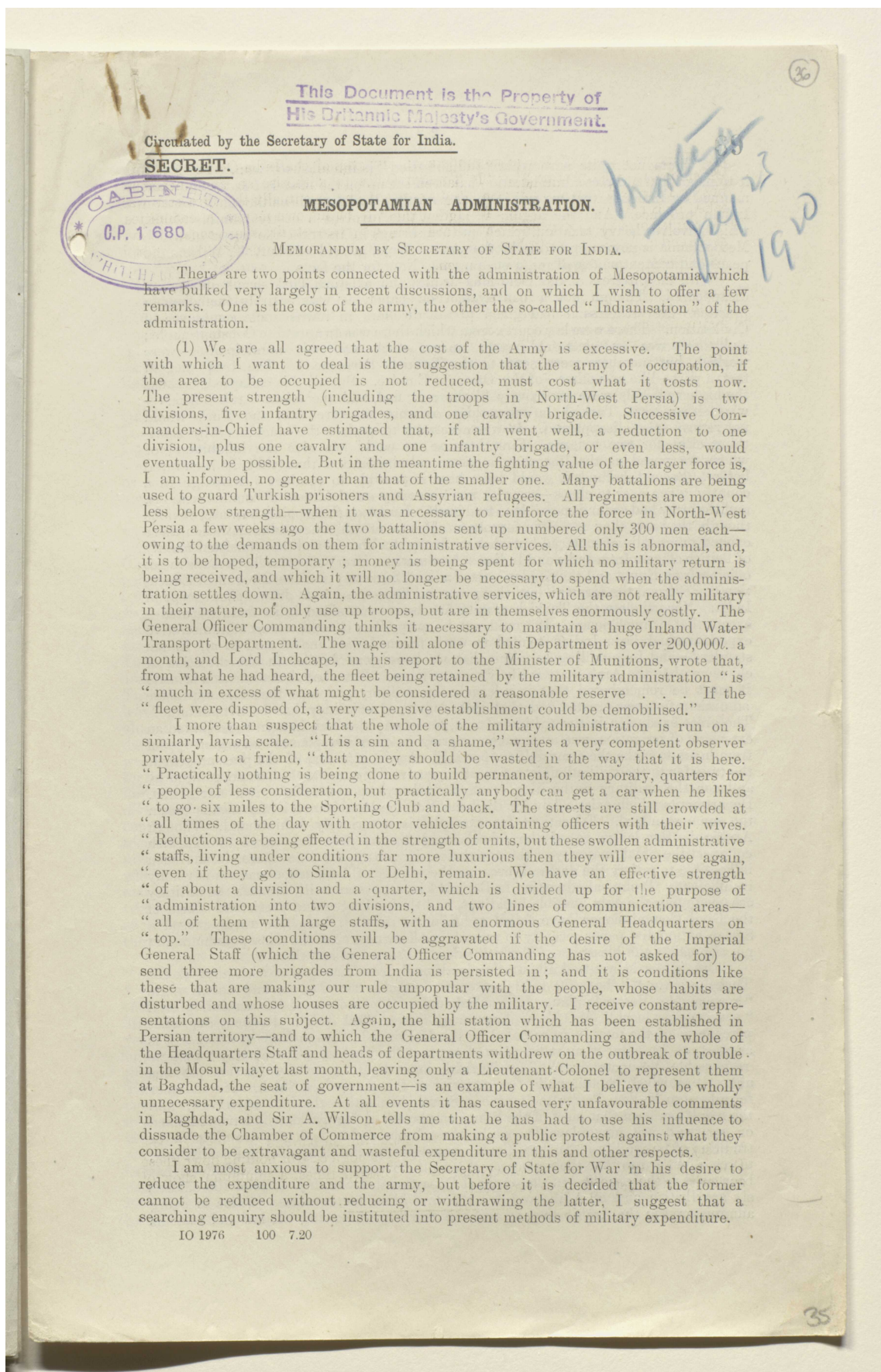
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2

(2) I am not quite sure what "Indianisation" is intended to mean. But I take it to mean that a direct administration has been set up on the model of India, and even manned by Indians—that we are, in fact, governing Mesopotamia as though it were an Indian province. And the argument is that this involves a costly administration, which involves heavy taxation, which in turn brings in its train the unrest of which Mesopotamia is now supposed to be the scene. *Ergo*, get rid of Sir A. T. Wilson and peace and contentment will reign once more. Now for the facts.

With the progress of our victorious armies the existing Turkish administration disappeared. Though not a bad system on paper, it was entirely inefficient in practice. Nevertheless it had given to the dwellers in towns some semblance of Civilisation. There were law courts, from which there was an appeal to Constantinople; and there was an electoral system under which not only municipalites were worked, but members were sent to the Turkish Parliament. The Iraq was, in fact, a part—like any other—of the Ottoman Empire. But all this collapsed, because the higher officials were exclusively Turks and fled, and the minor Arab officials—who either were Turkish in sympathies or were not sure that the Turk would not return—also disappeared. It was necessary to replace the machinery by something else—for two reasons. First, because we could not give the inhabitants, of whom we posed as the liberators, a worse administration than they had endured before. Second, because it would have been impossible to conduct a campaign in a country given over to chaos—security was necessary on the lines of communications, and the army had as far as possible to feed itself. I mention these points because, obvious though they are, they are often forgotten. But to create a new administration there existed practically no material but what we brought with us—and that consisted mainly of British officers from India and Indian subordinates. Every effort has been made to get officials from Egypt and the Soudan—the Judicial Secretary and the Director of Education come from the former: but there was no large reserve to draw upon, except in India. Nevertheless the Turkish system has been maintained in its main features—except that of inefficiency. It would not be surprising if men, whose administrative experience had been Indian tended to work to an Indian model and to an Indian standard—and I am willing to admit that we have gone further in the direction of efficiency than the Arab State is likely to want to go. But when that admission is made it must be remembered that it is largely for military purposes that this expensive administration was created and that this degree of efficiency has been maintained. The great expansion in the cultivated area, for example, which in turn necessitated an extension of irrigation, was undertaken at army expense in response to an urgent appeal from home to make the army self-supporting. Again, a feature of the present year is the transfer to the civil administration of expensive departments hitherto organised by and for the military authorities, such as railways, ports, docks, river navigation. Departments which exist solely for the benefit of the inhabitants by no means attain the same standard. Education, for example, is notoriously behindhand. Though Arabic is the language of the schools, and for the first time since the Turkish conquest the Shiah majority of the population is getting its due share, it has been impossible to satisfy the demand, because the supply of Arab schoolmasters is wholly insufficient. Technical education in Baghdad is at a standstill because the military are occupying the only possible buildings, and the prolonged and persistent efforts of the Civil Commissioner have failed to dislodge them. Facts like these caused a Syrian nationalist paper recently to remark in all earnest that the Mesopotamians did not appreciate the blessings of Turkish rule until they had lost them.

But, it is said, your administration is absurdly costly compared with that of the Turks because "it has 450 British executive officers running it, and not a single responsible Mesopotamian. In Turkish days 70 per cent. of the executive civil service was local" (Mr. T. E. Lawrence, *Times*, 23rd July). I cannot say what percentage of the total is represented by the 450 British, though I doubt whether it is as much as 30. But it must be pointed out that the Turks did not employ "a single responsible Mesopotamian." The Turkish subordinate executive service too was almost exclusively Sunni, while the majority of the people are Shiah. It was easier for a foreign Moslem Power to impose a Sunni domination than for ourselves; and the result has been that most of the Sunni employees of the Turks who have remained or returned, are unemployable, while the Shiahs, who had no training in or tradition of public life in Turkish times, are not yet generally capable, or are unwilling, to come forward to take their places. Where the material has been available it has been used to the utmost. In the Judicial Department, for example, out of 100 officials six are British and 82 Arab, and for the first time for centuries justice is being administered in the Arabic tongue, and the courts are following the law and customs

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with which the people are familiar. In this connection it may be noted that Mr. Lawrence's statement that the administration generally is conducted in English is untrue. There is hardly a British officer on the executive staff who is not qualified in colloquial Arabic.

The revenue of Mesopotamia was collected last year at a cost of 16 per cent.—not excessive, seeing that in India, after three quarters of a century of settled government, the cost was 13 per cent. No figures are available for a comparison with Turkish times, but it is clear that the Turkish system must have been exceedingly costly. No less than six different departments, with separate establishments, independently collected revenue and remitted it to Constantinople. Moreover, almost all branches of revenue were farmed—a system which is notoriously uneconomical to the State and burdensome to the taxpayer. It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that until the last two years before the war there was a deficit in the Mesopotamian budget.

At all events, it is said, the Turks took much less out of the people than you are taking; the Turkish revenue was 2½ millions, and you are taking six. No figures of Turkish revenue are available here, and I am unable to trace the 2½ millions to any higher authority than the *Daily Mail*. The revenue budgeted for in the current year is about 4½ millions (at 2s. to the rupee). Of this sum 2½ millions are furnished by customs, the rates being the same as under the Turks, and all other heads of revenue combine to make a little over two millions.

In 1919-20 the corresponding figures (at the same rate of exchange) were:—Total revenue 4,142,000l., customs 2,202,000l., remaining heads 1,940,000l. The land revenue in 1919-20 yielded 1,508,000l., for 1920-21 the estimate is 1,581,000l. Mr. Ormsby Gore, in his admirable speech in the House of Commons debate, sought to make the point that the revenue had jumped from a little over 1,000,000l. in 1918-19 to 5,000,000l. in 1919-20; but he had failed to notice that his figures for 1918-19 were for Baghdad only, while those for 1919-20 were for Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. Can it reasonably be said that a taxation revenue of 2,000,000l. is excessive for the whole of Mesopotamia? We are told that it is larger than the Turks' revenue, and that is probably true—but the explanation is simple. *First*, the area under cultivation is now some 15 per cent. or 20 per cent. greater than it was in Turkish times. *Second*, the price of grain is something like 300 per cent. higher than it was before the war. In point of fact, the Turkish land revenue assessments have almost everywhere been reduced. In the Hillah division, for example, the Turkish demand was as much as 60 per cent. of the gross produce on some classes of land: we have reduced it to 30 per cent. or even 25 per cent., with a rebate of 3 per cent. for prompt payment. It is true that in certain areas taxation and control are being imposed on tribes which have never submitted to either. Over the Shamiyeh division, for example, where the recent trouble has been, the Turks had exercised no control for 10 years before the war. But our rate of taxation has always been tempered to the degree of control exercised, and it is noteworthy that the Muntafiks division—from which in the early days no revenue whatever was collected, and on which a demand was made only last year—has not joined in the recent outbreak, and that in the Amarah division such confidence and contentment prevail that the tribesmen have voluntarily surrendered 24,000 rifles. The Arab likes taxation as little as anyone else, but there is no evidence that excessive taxation is one of the contributory causes of the present unrest.

I grant your administration, says Mr. Lawrence: "We had to set up a war-time administration. We had no choice; but that was two years ago, and we have not yet changed to peace conditions. Indeed, there are yet no signs of change." For that, at least, I admit no responsibility either for myself or for Sir Arnold Wilson. Mr. Lawrence perhaps forgets that juridically the position is the same as it was two years ago. Mesopotamia is still Turkish territory, and as such is still administered, under international law, by the army of occupation. It is only two months ago that the mandate was granted to us. Technically, therefore, our attitude has been correct. That it has been in the highest degree inexpedient no one can doubt. More than once since 1917 the Civil Commissioner had pressed for the despatch of a Commission to examine political conditions on the spot; and for at least a year past it has been perfectly evident that it was essential to make a move in fulfilment of the pledges given by His Majesty's Government. In November last year the India Office put forward a draft sketch of an Arab Government, and urged that an immediate announcement should be made. Though Lord Curzon in his telegram to Sir P. Cox of 14th November agreed—"We are strongly of opinion that something must be said without delay"—it was not until 4th May this year that a formula was arrived

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4

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In conclusion, since Sir A. Wilson's administration has suddenly become the object of hostile—and in my opinion wholly unmerited—criticism, I will quote from a telegram which I sent to him as recently as 7th June, with Lord Curzon's concurrence:—"His Majesty's Government take this opportunity of conveying to you their most cordial and grateful acknowledgments of the high ability and unflagging zeal with which during the past 2½ years you have devoted yourself with such markedly successful results to your difficult and laborious task." *Nemo repente fit deterrimus!*

E. S. M.

23rd July 1920.

P.S.—I append the latest telegram from Sir A. Wilson:—

From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 21st July 1920.

(Received 22nd, 8 a.m.)

Clear the line.

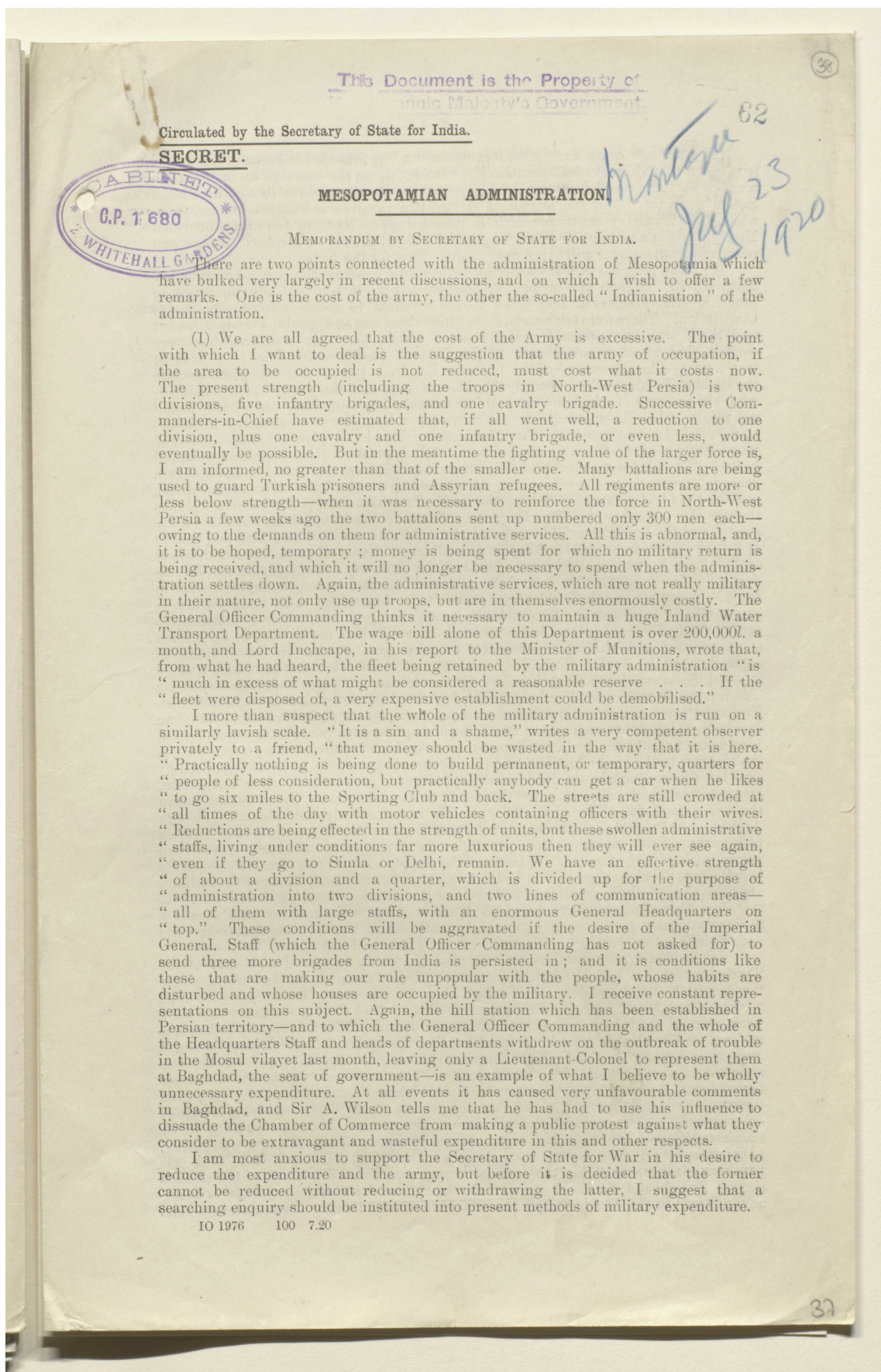
(R.) S785. General Officer Commanding-in-Chief's telegram of the 15th July, X. 958, was written after personal discussion with me as statement of military position had my general concurrence.

I am hopeful, however, that our success at Rumaitha will restore situation sufficiently to enable us, with assistance of brigade from India already promised, to deal effectively with Shamiyah, from which trouble at Rumaitha was undoubtedly fomented originally, and to maintain our present position in this country. Rising is still quite local in character, isolated political officers on edge of district affected at Afek Qilat, Sikar, Shattra, where no troops have ever yet been seen, are maintaining their authority and collecting revenue as usual. Latest reports are that rising in Shamiyah Division lacks unanimity and fighting in that area up to date is reported to be largely inter-tribal.

Political situation reports from other districts satisfactory, but Hillah reports indication of some nervousness among tribes at delay in taking action against rebels in Shamiyah.

Military position in the event of a spread of the disaffection to other areas would, however, be as described by Gen. Haldane. My only doubt is whether evacuation of Mosul would not raise such a storm as to compel us to withdraw still further (see my telegram No. 1975 of 13th February). Abandonment of Mosul involves abandonment also of Arbil and Sulaimaniyah, for last two named Divisions are absolutely quiet they would not I fear long remain so were we to abandon Mosul. We now have no garrison at Arbil. Garrison of Sulaimaniyah Division consists of about 600 rifles and 2 guns at (?) some 30 miles west of Sulaimaniyah on borders of Division. His Majesty's Government will realise from this that it is not a case of holding down these Divisions by armed force but providing, as in Turkish times, a minimum show of authority in support of the Government.

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(2) I am not quite sure what "Indianisation" is intended to mean. But I take it to mean that a direct administration has been set up on the model of India, and even manned by Indians—that we are, in fact, governing Mesopotamia as though it were an Indian province. And the argument is that this involves a costly administration, which involves heavy taxation, which in turn brings in its train the unrest of which Mesopotamia is now supposed to be the scene. *Ergo*, get rid of Sir A. T. Wilson and peace and contentment will reign once more. Now for the facts.

With the progress of our victorious armies the existing Turkish administration disappeared. Though not a bad system on paper, it was entirely inefficient in practice. Nevertheless it had given to the dwellers in towns some semblance of Civilisation. There were law courts, from which there was an appeal to Constantinople; and there was an electoral system under which not only municipalites were worked, but members were sent to the Turkish Parliament. The Iraq was, in fact, a part—like any other—of the Ottoman Empire. But all this collapsed, because the higher officials were exclusively Turks and fled, and the minor Arab officials—who either were Turkish in sympathies or were not sure that the Turk would not return—also disappeared. It was necessary to replace the machinery by something else—for two reasons. First, because we could not give the inhabitants, of whom we posed as the liberators, a worse administration than they had endured before. Second, because it would have been impossible to conduct a campaign in a country given over to chaos—security was necessary on the lines of communications, and the army had as far as possible to feed itself. I mention these points because, obvious though they are, they are often forgotten. But to create a new administration there existed practically no material but what we brought with us—and that consisted mainly of British officers from India and Indian subordinates. Every effort has been made to get officials from Egypt and the Soudan—the Judicial Secretary and the Director of Education come from the former: but there was no large reserve to draw upon, except in India. Nevertheless the Turkish system has been maintained in its main features—except that of inefficiency. It would not be surprising if men, whose administrative experience had been Indian tended to work to an Indian model and to an Indian standard—and I am willing to admit that we have gone further in the direction of efficiency than the Arab State is likely to want to go. But when that admission is made it must be remembered that it is largely for military purposes that this expensive administration was created and that this degree of efficiency has been maintained. The great expansion in the cultivated area, for example, which in turn necessitated an extension of irrigation, was undertaken at army expense in response to an urgent appeal from home to make the army self-supporting. Again, a feature of the present year is the transfer to the civil administration of expensive departments hitherto organised by and for the military authorities, such as railways, ports, docks, river navigation. Departments which exist solely for the benefit of the inhabitants by no means attain the same standard. Education, for example, is notoriously behindhand. Though Arabic is the language of the schools, and for the first time since the Turkish conquest the Shiah majority of the population is getting its due share, it has been impossible to satisfy the demand, because the supply of Arab schoolmasters is wholly insufficient. Technical education in Baghdad is at a standstill because the military are occupying the only possible buildings, and the prolonged and persistent efforts of the Civil Commissioner have failed to dislodge them. Facts like these caused a Syrian nationalist paper recently to remark in all earnest that the Mesopotamians did not appreciate the blessings of Turkish rule until they had lost them.

But, it is said, your administration is absurdly costly compared with that of the Turks because "it has 450 British executive officers running it, and not a single responsible Mesopotamian. In Turkish days 70 per cent. of the executive civil "service was local" (Mr. T. E. Lawrence, *Times*, 23rd July). I cannot say what percentage of the total is represented by the 450 British, though I doubt whether it is as much as 30. But it must be pointed out that the Turks did not employ "a single responsible Mesopotamian." The Turkish subordinate executive service too was almost exclusively Sunni, while the majority of the people are Shiah. It was easier for a foreign Moslem Power to impose a Sunni domination than for ourselves; and the result has been that most of the Sunni employees of the Turks who have remained or returned, are unemployable, while the Shiahs, who had no training in or tradition of public life in Turkish times, are not yet generally capable, or are unwilling, to come forward to take their places. Where the material has been available it has been used to the utmost. In the Judicial Department, for example, out of 100 officials six are British and 82 Arab, and for the first time for centuries justice is being administered in the Arabic tongue, and the courts are following the law and customs

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with which the people are familiar. In this connection it may be noted that Mr. Lawrence's statement that the administration generally is conducted in English, is untrue. There is hardly a British officer on the executive staff who is not qualified in colloquial Arabic.

The revenue of Mesopotamia was collected last year at a cost of 16 per cent.—not excessive, seeing that in India, after three quarters of a century of settled government, the cost was 13 per cent. No figures are available for a comparison with Turkish times, but it is clear that the Turkish system must have been exceedingly costly. No less than six different departments, with separate establishments, independently collected revenue and remitted it to Constantinople. Moreover, almost all branches of revenue were farmed—a system which is notoriously uneconomical to the State and burdensome to the taxpayer. It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that until the last two years before the war there was a deficit in the Mesopotamian budget.

At all events, it is said, the Turks took much less out of the people than you are taking; the Turkish revenue was 2½ millions, and you are taking six. No figures of Turkish revenue are available here, and I am unable to trace the 2½ millions to any higher authority than the *Daily Mail*. The revenue budgeted for in the current year is about 4¼ millions (at 2s. to the rupee). Of this sum 2½ millions are furnished by customs, the rates being the same as under the Turks, and all other heads of revenue combine to make a little over two millions.

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P.S.—I append the latest telegram from Sir A. Wilson:—

From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 21st July 1920.

(Received 22nd, 8 a.m.)

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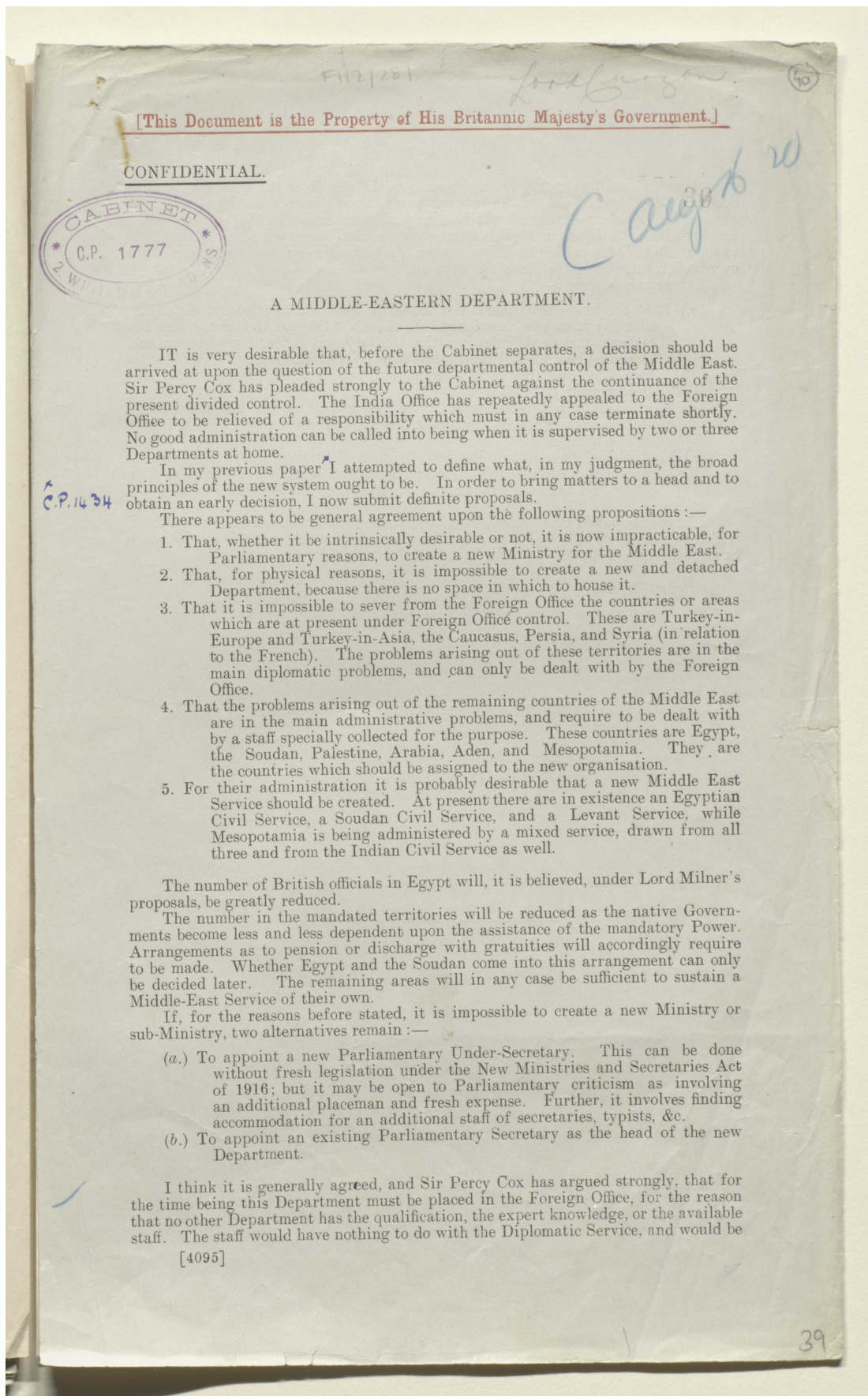
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**'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
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2

drawn provisionally from the countries concerned, later from the new Middle-East Service. The Department would be much in the same position as the Department of Overseas Trade, the head of which is an Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, although he has a separate organisation. We can find space for this establishment in the Foreign Office (which I believe no other Department can) by a reduction of the over-swollen number of the News Department.

I therefore propose:—

- (a.) That the new Department be created as from the 1st October next. On that day it may be mentioned that the Arab Bureau at Cairo, which has hitherto managed Palestine, the Hedjaz, and Aden, comes to an end. Palestine has already been taken over by Sir H. Samuel. The Hedjaz and Aden will revert to London, and will fall naturally to the new Department.
- (b.) That if a new Under-Secretary be not appointed to the Department Mr. Harmsworth, who has time at his disposal for the work, be invited to assume charge.
- (c.) That he be given a non-Foreign Office staff, drawn from the countries concerned. I am in a position to recommend as the head of this staff an officer who has an almost unique experience of the Middle East.

If these proposals are accepted I believe that the new organisation can be started without difficulty or delay. When it has been tested for a few years, it can either be expanded into something larger, or be modified, in the light of experience.

C. OF K.

August 16, 1920.

'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [41r] (81/136)

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CONFIDENTIAL.



41

A MIDDLE-EASTERN DEPARTMENT.

IT is very desirable that, before the Cabinet separates, a decision should be arrived at upon the question of the future departmental control of the Middle East. Sir Percy Cox has pleaded strongly to the Cabinet against the continuance of the present divided control. The India Office has repeatedly appealed to the Foreign Office to be relieved of a responsibility which must in any case terminate shortly. No good administration can be called into being when it is supervised by two or three Departments at home.

In my previous paper* I attempted to define what, in my judgment, the broad principles of the new system ought to be. In order to bring matters to a head and to obtain an early decision, I now submit definite proposals.

* C.P. 1434

There appears to be general agreement upon the following propositions:—

1. That, whether it be intrinsically desirable or not, it is now impracticable, for Parliamentary reasons, to create a new Ministry for the Middle East.
2. That, for physical reasons, it is impossible to create a new and detached Department, because there is no space in which to house it.
3. That it is impossible to sever from the Foreign Office the countries or areas which are at present under Foreign Office control. These are Turkey-in-Europe and Turkey-in-Asia, the Caucasus, Persia, and Syria (in relation to the French). The problems arising out of these territories are in the main diplomatic problems, and can only be dealt with by the Foreign Office.
4. That the problems arising out of the remaining countries of the Middle East are in the main administrative problems, and require to be dealt with by a staff specially collected for the purpose. These countries are Egypt, the Soudan, Palestine, Arabia, Aden, and Mesopotamia. They are the countries which should be assigned to the new organisation.
5. For their administration it is probably desirable that a new Middle East Service should be created. At present there are in existence an Egyptian Civil Service, a Soudan Civil Service, and a Levant Service, while Mesopotamia is being administered by a mixed service, drawn from all three and from the Indian Civil Service as well.

The number of British officials in Egypt will, it is believed, under Lord Milner's proposals, be greatly reduced.

The number in the mandated territories will be reduced as the native Governments become less and less dependent upon the assistance of the mandatory Power. Arrangements as to pension or discharge with gratuities will accordingly require to be made. Whether Egypt and the Soudan come into this arrangement can only be decided later. The remaining areas will in any case be sufficient to sustain a Middle-East Service of their own.

If, for the reasons before stated, it is impossible to create a new Ministry or sub-Ministry, two alternatives remain:—

- (a.) To appoint a new Parliamentary Under-Secretary. This can be done without fresh legislation under the New Ministries and Secretaries Act of 1916; but it may be open to Parliamentary criticism as involving an additional placeman and fresh expense. Further, it involves finding accommodation for an additional staff of secretaries, typists, &c.
- (b.) To appoint an existing Parliamentary Secretary as the head of the new Department.

I think it is generally agreed, and Sir Percy Cox has argued strongly, that for the time being this Department must be placed in the Foreign Office, for the reason that no other Department has the qualification, the expert knowledge, or the available staff. The staff would have nothing to do with the Diplomatic Service, and would be

[4095]

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2

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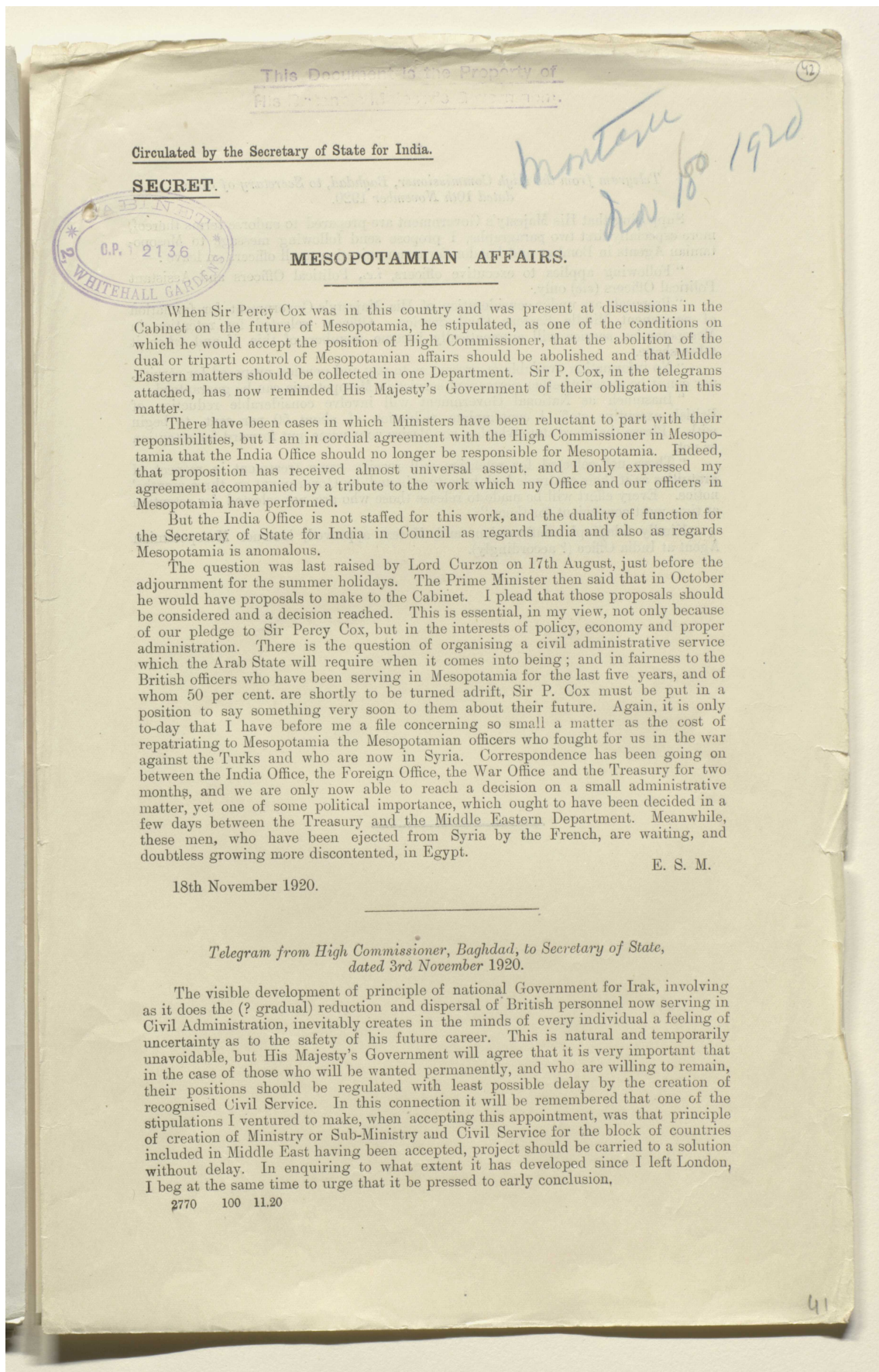
- (a.) That the new Department be created as from the 1st October next. On that day it may be mentioned that the Arab Bureau at Cairo, which has hitherto managed Palestine, the Hedjaz, and Aden, comes to an end. Palestine has already been taken over by Sir H. Samuel. The Hedjaz and Aden will revert to London, and will fall naturally to the new Department.
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If these proposals are accepted I believe that the new organisation can be started without difficulty or delay. When it has been tested for a few years, it can either be expanded into something larger, or be modified, in the light of experience.

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Circulated by the Secretary of State for India.

SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIAN AFFAIRS.

When Sir Percy Cox was in this country and was present at discussions in the Cabinet on the future of Mesopotamia, he stipulated, as one of the conditions on which he would accept the position of High Commissioner, that the abolition of the dual or tripartite control of Mesopotamian affairs should be abolished and that Middle Eastern matters should be collected in one Department. Sir P. Cox, in the telegrams attached, has now reminded His Majesty's Government of their obligation in this matter.

There have been cases in which Ministers have been reluctant to part with their responsibilities, but I am in cordial agreement with the High Commissioner in Mesopotamia that the India Office should no longer be responsible for Mesopotamia. Indeed, that proposition has received almost universal assent, and I only expressed my agreement accompanied by a tribute to the work which my Office and our officers in Mesopotamia have performed.

But the India Office is not staffed for this work, and the duality of function for the Secretary of State for India in Council as regards India and also as regards Mesopotamia is anomalous.

The question was last raised by Lord Curzon on 17th August, just before the adjournment for the summer holidays. The Prime Minister then said that in October he would have proposals to make to the Cabinet. I plead that those proposals should be considered and a decision reached. This is essential, in my view, not only because of our pledge to Sir Percy Cox, but in the interests of policy, economy and proper administration. There is the question of organising a civil administrative service which the Arab State will require when it comes into being; and in fairness to the British officers who have been serving in Mesopotamia for the last five years, and of whom 50 per cent. are shortly to be turned adrift, Sir P. Cox must be put in a position to say something very soon to them about their future. Again, it is only to-day that I have before me a file concerning so small a matter as the cost of repatriating to Mesopotamia the Mesopotamian officers who fought for us in the war against the Turks and who are now in Syria. Correspondence has been going on between the India Office, the Foreign Office, the War Office and the Treasury for two months, and we are only now able to reach a decision on a small administrative matter, yet one of some political importance, which ought to have been decided in a few days between the Treasury and the Middle Eastern Department. Meanwhile, these men, who have been ejected from Syria by the French, are waiting, and doubtless growing more discontented, in Egypt.

E. S. M.

18th November 1920.

*Telegram from High Commissioner, Baghdad, to Secretary of State,
dated 3rd November 1920.*

The visible development of principle of national Government for Irak, involving as it does the (? gradual) reduction and dispersal of British personnel now serving in Civil Administration, inevitably creates in the minds of every individual a feeling of uncertainty as to the safety of his future career. This is natural and temporarily unavoidable, but His Majesty's Government will agree that it is very important that in the case of those who will be wanted permanently, and who are willing to remain, their positions should be regulated with least possible delay by the creation of recognised Civil Service. In this connection it will be remembered that one of the stipulations I ventured to make, when accepting this appointment, was that principle of creation of Ministry or Sub-Ministry and Civil Service for the block of countries included in Middle East having been accepted, project should be carried to a solution without delay. In enquiring to what extent it has developed since I left London, I beg at the same time to urge that it be pressed to early conclusion,

2770 100 11.20

**'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office
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2

*Telegram from the High Commissioner, Baghdad, to Secretary of State,
dated 10th November 1920.*

Supposing that His Majesty's Government are prepared to endorse terms thereof, more especially first two paragraphs, I propose send following message to Mesopotamian Agents in Bombay and London for communication to all officers on leave:—

"Following applies to executive officers, *i.e.*, Political Officers and Assistant Political Officers (*sic*) only.

"Proposals are under consideration of His Majesty's Government for formation of permanent Middle Eastern Civil Service. Officers selected for retention in Mesopotamian service will automatically become members of this, if and when it takes shape.

"No information available at present as to pay and pension proposed for service, nor can it be stated whether permanent service in Mesopotamia can be guaranteed.

"Inasmuch as National Government will involve considerable reduction of British executive staff, I contemplate reduction of about 50 per cent. to begin with. Please therefore state whether you desire your name put forward for retention or not.

"Those not selected for retention will receive same treatment in respect of gratuities as if their contracts had been terminated by Government on three months' notice. Every effort will be made to release those who are not selected for retention at time most convenient for them."

Kindly telegraph confirmation, and, if text approved, instruct Mesopotamian Agent at India Office (? accordingly).

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SECRET.

C.P. 2308

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W.S.O.
Dec 16 1920



THE CABINET.

MESOPOTAMIAN ADMINISTRATION.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.

I circulate herewith observations by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, on certain points raised by the Secretary of State for India in his memorandum of 23rd July (C.P. 1680) concerning the military administration in Mesopotamia. The salient features of Mr. Montagu's criticism were telegraphed to Sir A. Haldane as a series of allegations on which his remarks were sought and which are printed in *italics* at the head of each section.

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1907

I have shown these observations to the Secretary of State for India, whose remarks are printed as an Appendix.

W. S. C.

THE WAR OFFICE,
16th December, 1920.

1. *The fighting value of the larger force is no greater than that of the smaller force to which it was hoped at one time that the garrison might be reduced.*

The fighting value of the troops in Mesopotamia has not been greatly in excess of that of a complete and fully trained Division.

British regiments and battalions are insufficiently trained and weak, and Indian battalions undertrained and on a low establishment. Constant operations, and moves imposed by them, have reduced opportunities for training to a minimum, and compulsory detachments have taken away numbers available for active operations.

2. *Too many battalions are being used to guard Turkish prisoners and Assyrian refugees.*

Turkish prisoners of war, whose numbers fluctuated between 18,000 and 15,000, were formed into a Labour Corps and employed mainly at Basrah, Kut, Baghdad and Shergat. The troops employed in guarding them amounted to an aggregate of approximately four Indian battalions. In order to reduce these numbers of regular troops guarding Turkish prisoners, Labour Corps personnel, ex-soldier and other, have been attested and trained to the number of approximately 2,500, thus releasing all troops from the duty of guarding prisoners and reducing administrative guards. No troops are used to guard Assyrian refugees; the Assyrian battalion provided all guards in the refugee camp from August, 1919, and, by taking over certain outside duties at Baqubah, enabled all regular troops to be withdrawn from there.

3. *The Inland Water Transport fleet being retained by the military administration is much in excess of what might be considered a reasonable reserve, and its wage bill is over 200,000* a month.*

(i.) The following is a précis of the tonnage requirements from January to June, 1920, showing the need for fleet maintained.

The steel of the Basrah—Baghdad railway line was linked up on the 16th January, 1920.

From January to June, 1920, the tonnage required from Baghdad and the forward area approximated to 750 tons daily. Of this amount the Basrah—Baghdad railway

* Presumably 200,000 rupees is meant.

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was able to carry, in the early part of the year, an average of 200 tons daily, with a maximum of 3,000 tons over a period of 10 days. The remaining capacity of the railway was occupied with civil freight, railway material, &c. The Inland Water Transport fleet had, therefore, to carry the balance (550 tons) daily from Basrah to Kut, with a small special tonnage approximating to 30 tons* per diem through to Baghdad. The Inland Water Transport fleet was maintained at a carrying capacity of 600 tons per diem, *i.e.*, 50 tons reserve, with the promise of reduction when feasible.

In June the railway situation was better, and the railway administration was able to undertake to carry an additional 100 tons per diem. The situation is not yet, however, such as to admit of the dispersion of the craft which had hitherto carried these 100 tons.

It was accordingly decided, so as to meet the wishes of the Army Council and at the same time to guard the safety of His Majesty's Forces, to offer on loan, with the prospect of delivery, the craft to those civilian firms which had purchased them.

It may here be stated that the sale of the fleet took place on 16th June. By 1st July, 248 craft had been declared deliverable, and, in addition, 73 craft had been prepared for overseas. More craft would have been delivered, but on the examination of the terms of the sale it was found that the State would, by delivering, suffer a heavy financial loss. On 28th July, 1920, the declaration of any craft as deliverable was stopped to enable the situation to be reviewed. Since that date 25 craft have been re-taken up and four have been declared deliverable. As the situation improves so will more craft be re-declared deliverable.

(ii.) Paragraph (i.) above gives the facts as they existed before the outbreak of the present hostilities, and shows the practicable need for the retention of the Inland Water Transport fleet up to 600 tons.

At the outbreak of hostilities, however, reasons for the retention of the Inland Water Transport fleet which, prior to that time, were theoretical, became paramount. Two possibilities presented themselves:—

- (a.) It might, through hostile action, be impossible to use the railway line between Kut and Baghdad for a prolonged period, while that from Basrah to Baghdad would, from the first, cease to be available as a through line.
- (b.) The danger from heavy floods, such as during April, prevented the Kut line from being used for a fortnight.

The first of these possibilities no longer belongs to the region of theory. The cutting of the Basrah—Baghdad line at once caused the tonnage which was being carried by the Inland Water Transport fleet to be raised to 1,000 tons a day, and had not this fleet still existed with a carrying capacity of 600 tons a day, the demands of the situation could not have been met.

I have no hesitation in stating that without the Inland Water Transport fleet it would have been impossible to maintain the army north of Baghdad. Moreover, the dispersion of the fleet, in conjunction with the temporary or prolonged interference with the railway communication, would have obliged any troops arriving at Basrah, which might have been required to proceed to Baghdad, to march the whole distance. I might add that, under the conditions above referred to, I should have had to rely on civil water transport for the evacuation to the base of the sick and wounded.

(iii.) The statement that the monthly bill of the Inland Water Transport is over rupees 200,000 is perfectly correct. As a matter of fact it is over rupees 250,000.

As a set-off to the wages bill and the costs of running must be placed a total of rupees 6,734,250, being the gross receipts on account of tonnage carried for the year.

An actual balance profit of rupees 96,000 is thus obtained on the working of the Inland Water Transport for one year.

4. Lavish expenditure upon swollen administrative staffs.

(i.) The Quartermaster-General's staff in Mesopotamia is in strength equivalent to that of a command in England.

(ii.) The troops in a Command in England are accommodated in barracks with stabling, &c., with municipal water supplies, electric light and modern conveniences. They live "at home" under an old existing organization where all their wants are catered for.

* Note.—30 tons Basrah to Baghdad requires the same tonnage as 60 tons Basrah to Kut.

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(iii.) Mesopotamia is the antithesis; the troops are accommodated in tents from Basrah in the south to 100 miles beyond Mosul in the north, and from Hit in the west to the Caspian and Ahwaz in the east.

(iv.) Here everything that is done for the comfort of the troops has to be improvised, and until the strength and permanent location of the garrison are decided upon the policy must be indeterminate, adding greatly to the administrative work. Moreover, the climate for four months in the year is trying, and the domination of the sun adversely affects everything.

(v.) The "Q" staff is concerned with normal peace policy measures, and the routine work of feeding, equipping and maintaining a force of 21,000 British, 210,000 Indian (including labour and refugees), and 40,000 animals. These numbers far exceed those of any command at home and have many scales of rations and ordnance demands, also separate rules and regulations and establishments. In addition to the above, the "Q" staff has during the past months been engaged in the following greater problems:—

- (a.) The preparation for the arrival in the country, and for the first move from the plains to a hill station at Karind, of all the married families. These plans entailed the movement of 1,000 women and children. It was necessary to provide at short notice every accessory of household requirements such as furniture, glass, china, linen, cutlery, &c., both in the plains and in the hills. Furniture had to be purchased from India, Rangoon, Singapore and England. A small amount of furniture was procurable locally, but, after the first day's purchase, the price of deal cupboards rose to 100*l.* a piece; consequently all further transactions had to be completed overseas.
- (b.) A constant succession of small wars, often two at a time from January onwards, during which time it may be affirmed that most of the units in Mesopotamia had changed their stations at least once, necessitating a constant re-arrangement of reserve supplies, &c.
- (c.) At the present time the administration of the force required to quell a rebellion throughout Mesopotamia, which has necessitated the arrival of an extra division from overseas, coupled with the interference with the railway services throughout the country and the re-expansion of the Inland Water Transport.

(vi.) Other tasks not usually thrown on a Command in England, which claim attention day by day here, are:—

- (a.) The passing of the country from military to civil control. Correspondence and decisions regarding railways, public works, E. and M. Directorates, the port and docks at Basrah, also posts and telegraphs have to be dealt with.
- (b.) The initiation of an organization for collecting hay, for growing vegetables, and for dairy farms.
- (c.) The problem of oil distribution for civil and military throughout the country.
- (d.) Supervision of Labour Directorate.
- (e.) Supervision of Inland Water Transport and all river problems contingent on 500 miles of river transport both on the Tigris and Euphrates.
- (f.) Dealing with overseas tonnage up to approximately 30,000 tons in ten days.
- (g.) Direct correspondence with War Office, Army Headquarters, India, Egypt, Black Sea, Civil Commissioner, &c.
- (h.) The care of—
 - 15,000 Turkish prisoners of war.
 - 24,000 Assyrian refugees.
 - 16,000 Armenian refugees.
 - 700 Russian internees.
- (i.) The difficulty of billeting in Baghdad and Basrah, where the accommodation is insufficient to meet the requirements of both the civil and military administrations.
- (j.) Preparation of a scheme for the building of cantonments throughout Mesopotamia for the post-war garrison, staff offices, hospitals, depôts and workshops.
- (k.) Negotiations for the purchase of land involved in the above scheme.

(8689)

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'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [44v] (88/136)

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(l.) The lack of communication with England demands the giving of decisions and the taking of greater responsibility than would be in the case in a command at home.

(vii.) The administrative staff on its present basis is, I consider, inadequate to do more than perform its ordinary routine duties. The strength does not suffice for that close supervision which is essential if economies are to be effected. In consequence the administrative system of the army in Mesopotamia merits the attribute "Extravagant" in so far as its weak numerical strength unavoidably perpetuates evils which are patent and which will continue to flourish so long as this system remains unaltered. I have previously pointed out the necessity for the appointment of an administrative officer of rank who should be provided with a carefully chosen and strong (numerically) staff, and I take this opportunity of reiterating my request. Economies are, I am convinced, possible in many directions, but they will not be secured unless an able staff is forthcoming, which, besides routine work, can undertake such questions as "Local Purchase," "Losses and Deficiencies," "Labour and its Importation from India," "Reduction of Transportation Charges" and other questions enumerated in the preceding paragraph. Besides these questions there are others such as the establishment of sick depôts and convalescent camps in Persia for occupation during the summer months by British troops, and the accommodation of schools of instruction at such camps and elsewhere.

All such matters demand time and care if they are to be dealt with properly, and the cost of the increased administrative staff for a few years would be amply repaid by the saving which it would effect.

(viii.) The Adjutant-General's Staff at General Headquarters approximates to that of a Command at home; the size of the area, communications and numbers to be administered in the two commands cannot be compared.

Correspondence is conducted with Army Headquarters in India as well as with the War Office. Two codes of military law and discipline are administered and two sets of enlistments, discharge, demobilization and pay regulations dealt with.

When serving out of India the Indian Army requires increased co-ordination of matters connected with religion, funerals and kindred questions, and in this country additional problems present themselves, connected with the establishment of a new civil Government and the change from military to civil control of the country.

The Adjutant-General's Branch consisting of:—

Assistant Adjutant-General,
2 Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals,
1 Staff Captain,

is not too large to deal with these matters and would benefit by an increase of 1 Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General and 1 Staff Captain to enable closer touch with formations to be kept by means of personal visits.

5. *Officers are making excessive use of Government motors for recreation.*

The War Office has been kept fully informed on this subject.

All touring cars are pooled, except those specially detailed for the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief; Divisional Commanders; General Officer Commanding, River Area; General Officer Commanding, 7th Cavalry Brigade; Brigadier-General, General Staff; and Brigadier-General, Artillery.

Hiring of cars was only permitted between 14.00 hours and 23.00 hours, and this privilege has been temporarily suspended since 9th August owing to the destruction by fire of the mechanical transport stores.

6. *The General Officer Commanding and the whole of General Headquarters staff withdrew to the hills on the outbreak of trouble in the Mosul Vilayet, leaving only a Lieutenant-Colonel to represent them at Baghdad.*

The outbreak of trouble in the Mosul Vilayet was met and dealt with locally without trouble. At that time the situation in North-West Persia seemed more critical than anywhere else, and I proceeded on 5th June to Teheran to consult and confer with Sir Percy Cox and the new Minister together, and to see for myself the military position. My visit was carried through with no delays beyond such as were

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necessary for a very brief inspection of troops, and a hurried visit to the Menjill Pass and for the overhaul on two occasions of the cars which I utilized. On the morning of 18th June I arrived again in Baghdad, having passed two nights in the train and covered 1,100 miles in motor car during my absence from headquarters.

Major-General Leslie, who commanded Mesopotamia between the time of General MacMunn's departure and my arrival in Baghdad, was in Baghdad as my representative and was fully acquainted with the situation. My General Staff (less one officer accompanying me) and a representative of the Administrative Staff remained in Baghdad.

(Signed) A. HALDANE, *Lieut.-General,*
Commanding-in-Chief,
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

20th September, 1920.

APPENDIX.

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

The Secretary of State for War has very kindly shown me his Memorandum and asked me if I wished to make any remarks on it. I should like to say two things only.

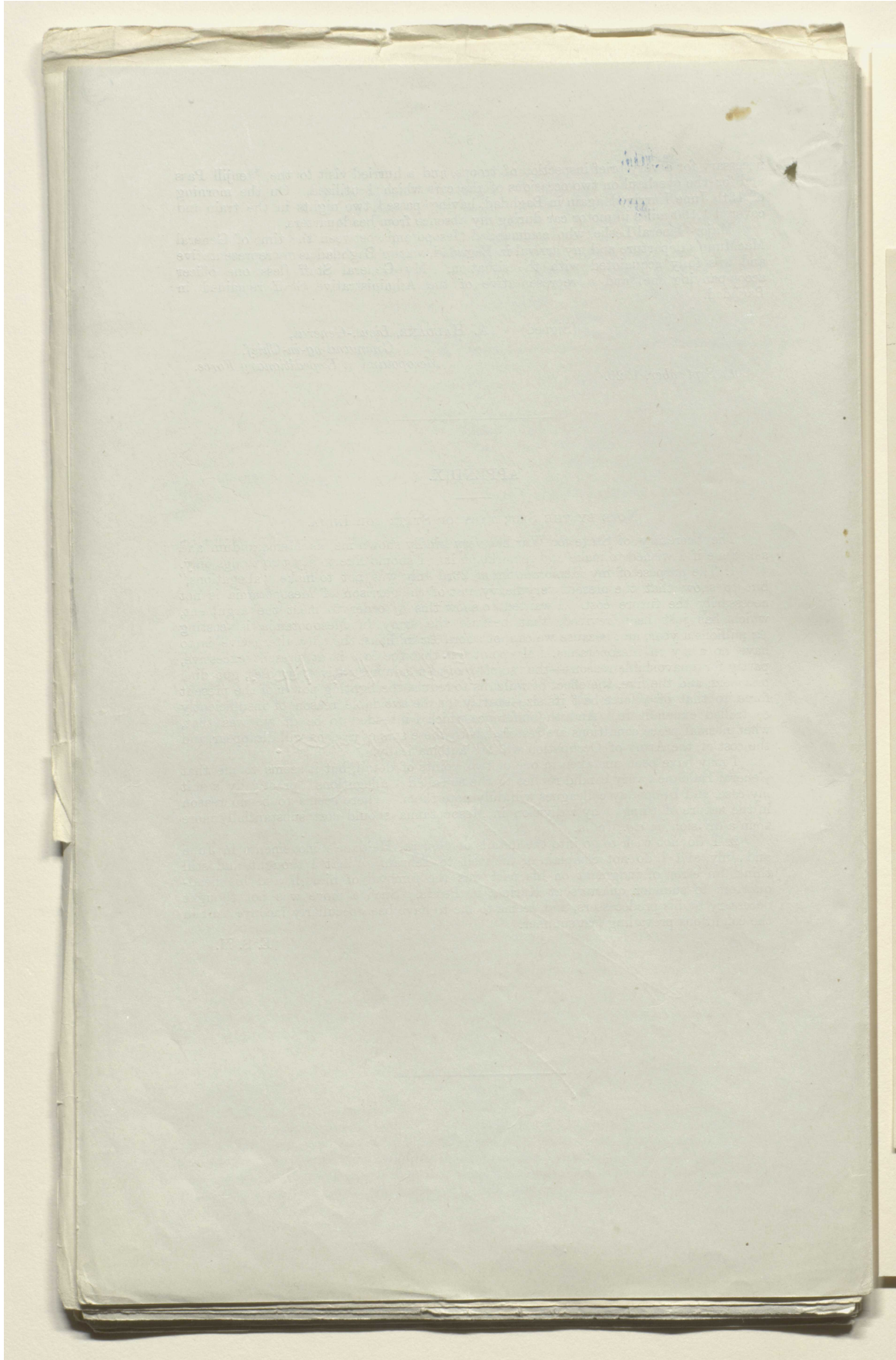
1. The purpose of my Memorandum of 23rd July was not to make "allegations," but to show that the present very heavy cost of the garrison of Mesopotamia is not necessarily the future cost. I wanted to show this in order to meet the argument, which has just been revived, that because the army in Mesopotamia is costing £x millions a year, and because we cannot afford £x millions, the only alternative is to have no army in Mesopotamia. My point was that the cost is at present excessive, partly for unavoidable reasons—the use of troops for administrative purposes, guarding prisoners, and the like, the effect of which is to reduce the fighting power of the present force to that of a force half its size—partly for the avoidable reason of insufficiently controlled expenditure. And the inference which I intended to be drawn was that, when normal peace conditions are restored, both these sets of reasons will disappear, and the cost of the Army of Occupation will fall automatically.

I may have been mistaken in one or two points of detail, but it seems to me that General Haldane's very candid replies to the so-called "allegations" practically admit my case, and I hope my colleagues will duly note them. There seems to be no reason in the nature of things why a division in Mesopotamia should cost substantially more than a division in, e.g., India.

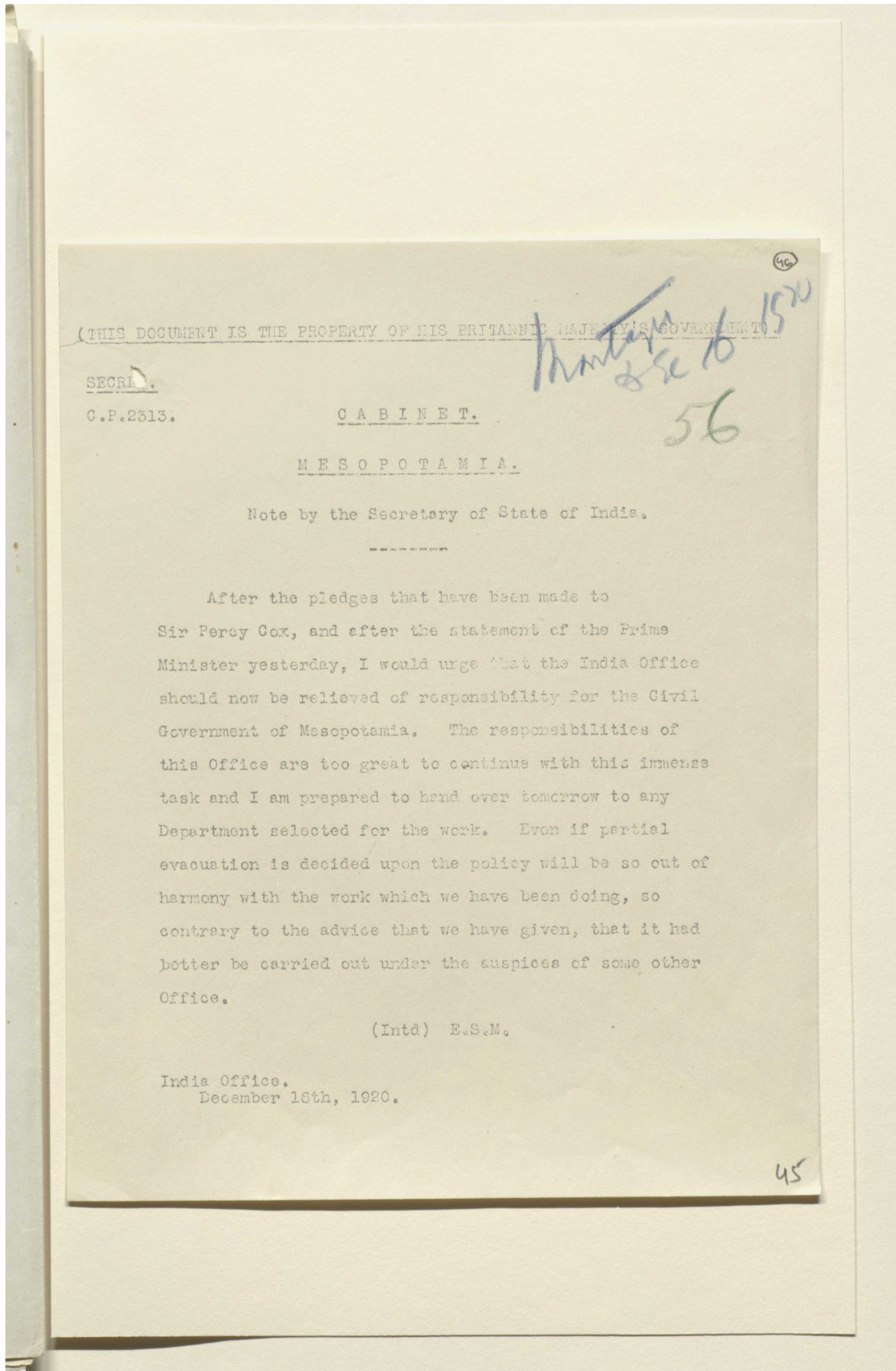
2. I do not wish to go into the details of General Haldane's movements in June and July, and I do not complain of his visit to Tebran. What I thought, and still think, an error of judgment on his part was the removal of himself and his headquarters to summer quarters at Karind, in Persia. Such a move was not thought necessary by his predecessors, and seems to me to have been peculiarly inconvenient in the conditions prevailing last summer.

E. S. M.

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SECRET.

C.P.2313.

C A B I N E T.

M E S O P O T A M I A.

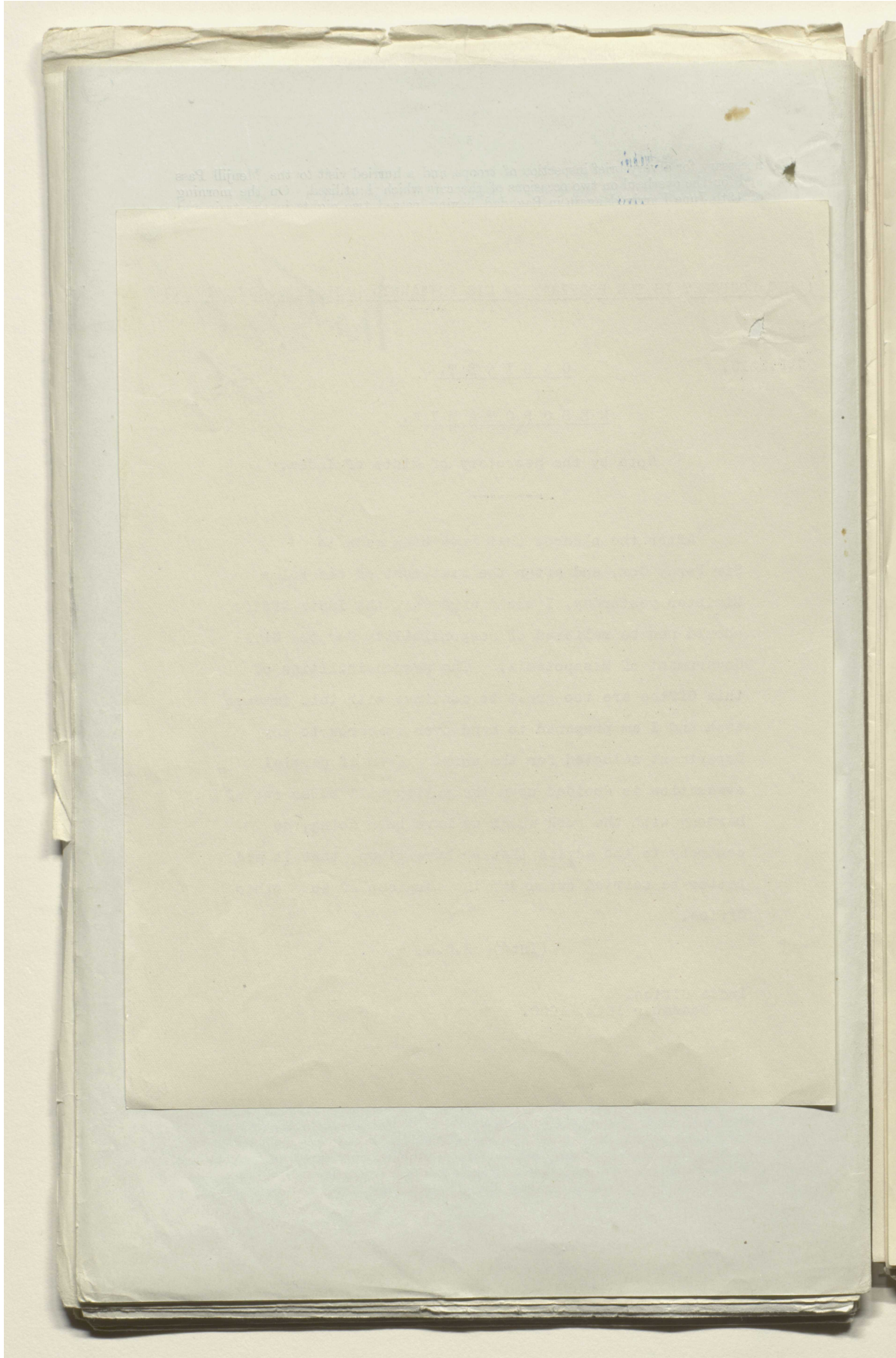
Note by the Secretary of State of India.

After the pledges that have been made to Sir Percy Cox, and after the statement of the Prime Minister yesterday, I would urge that the India Office should now be relieved of responsibility for the Civil Government of Mesopotamia. The responsibilities of this Office are too great to continue with this immense task and I am prepared to hand over tomorrow to any Department selected for the work. Even if partial evacuation is decided upon the policy will be so out of harmony with the work which we have been doing, so contrary to the advice that we have given, that it had better be carried out under the auspices of some other Office.

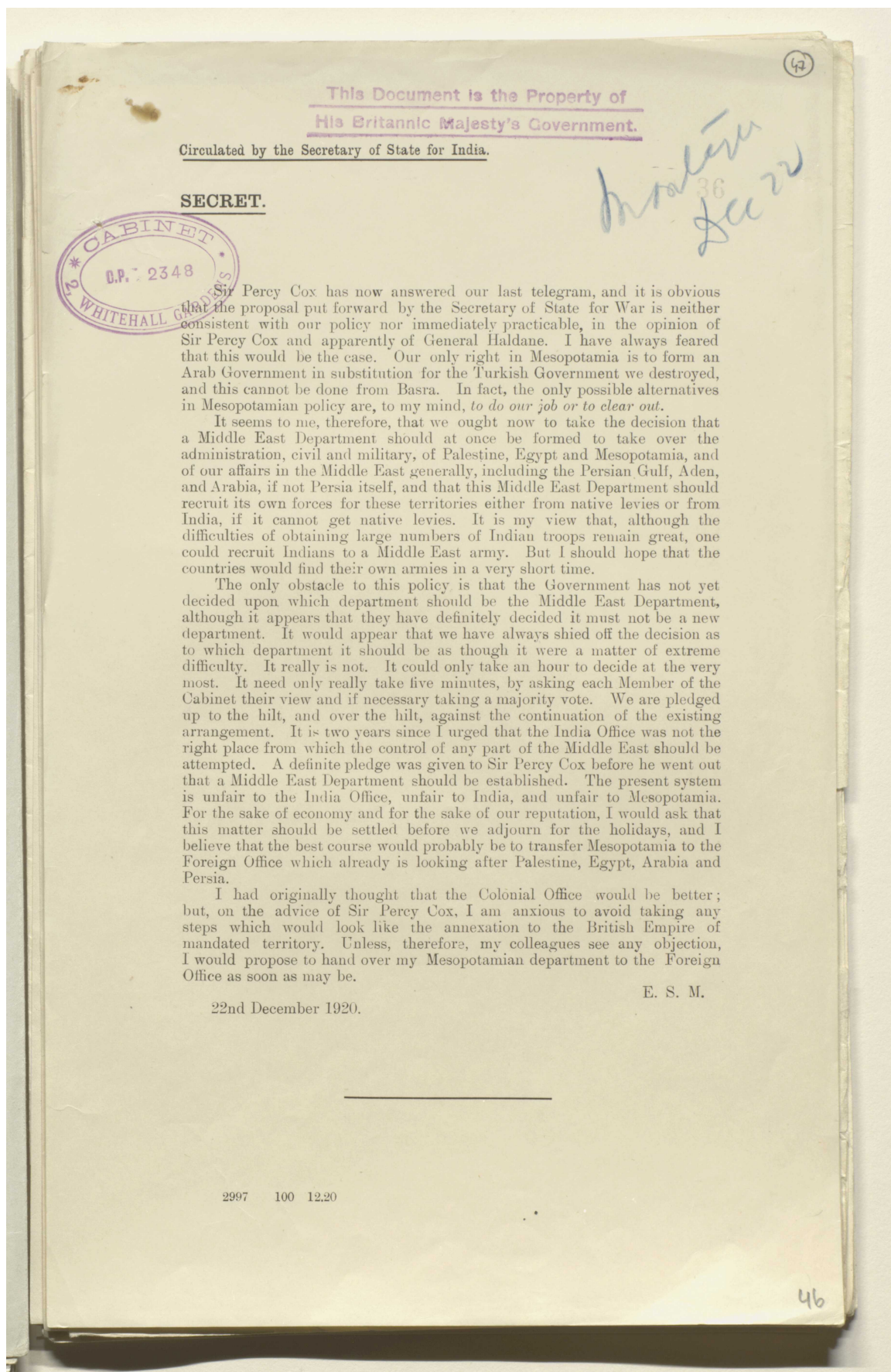
(Intd) E.S.M.

India Office.
December 16th, 1920.

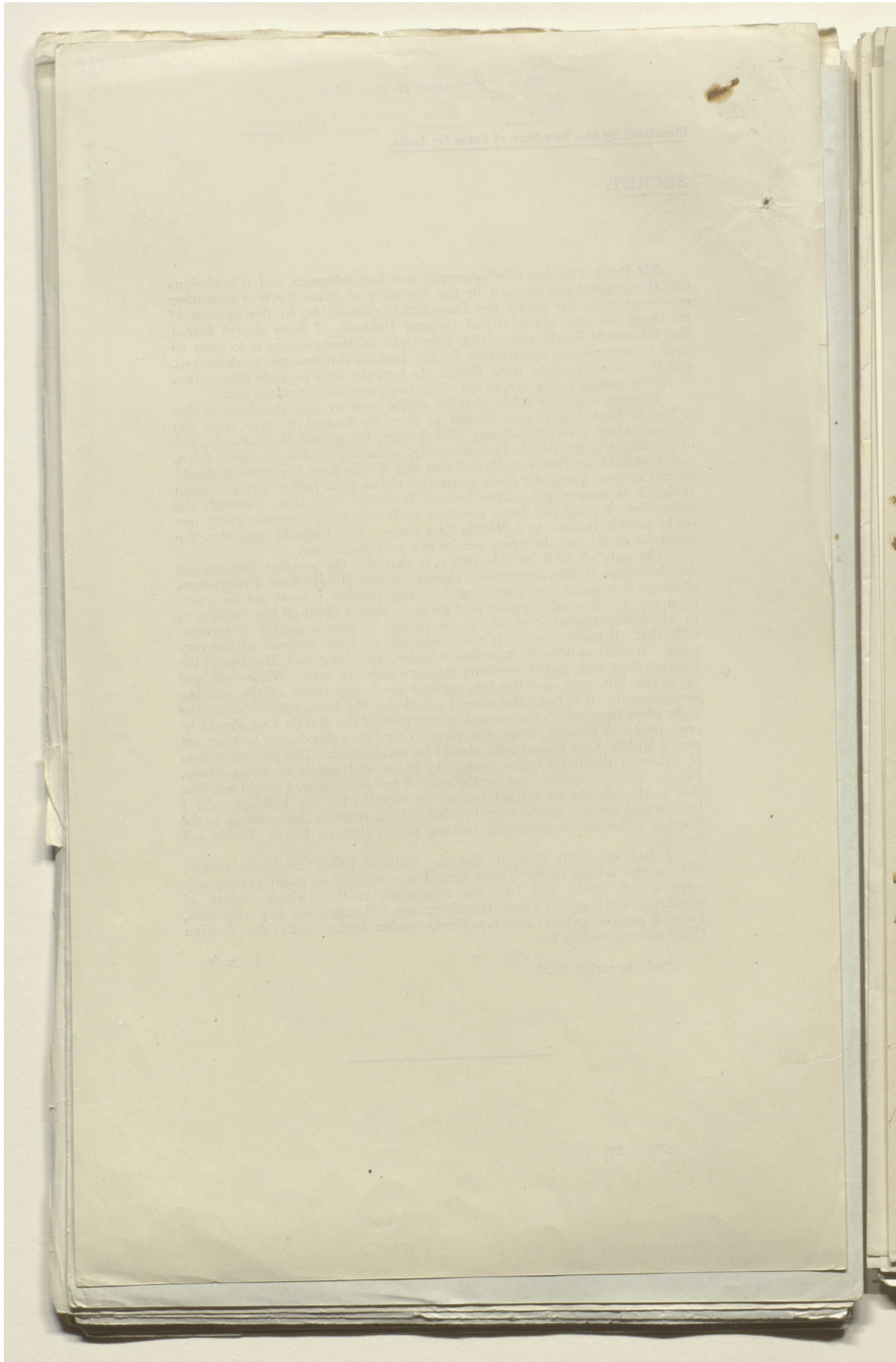
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SECRET.

C A B I N E T.

C.P. 2359.

MESOPOTAMIA.

Note by the Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs.

See C.P.
2358.

I have seen the Note by Mr. Montagu dated December 24th^o in which he questions the Statement made in War Office telegram 87319 of December 23rd. to G.O.C. Baghdad that "The Cabinet are anxious to reduce expenditure in Mesopotamia by withdrawal to a position covering Basra at the earliest possible moment".

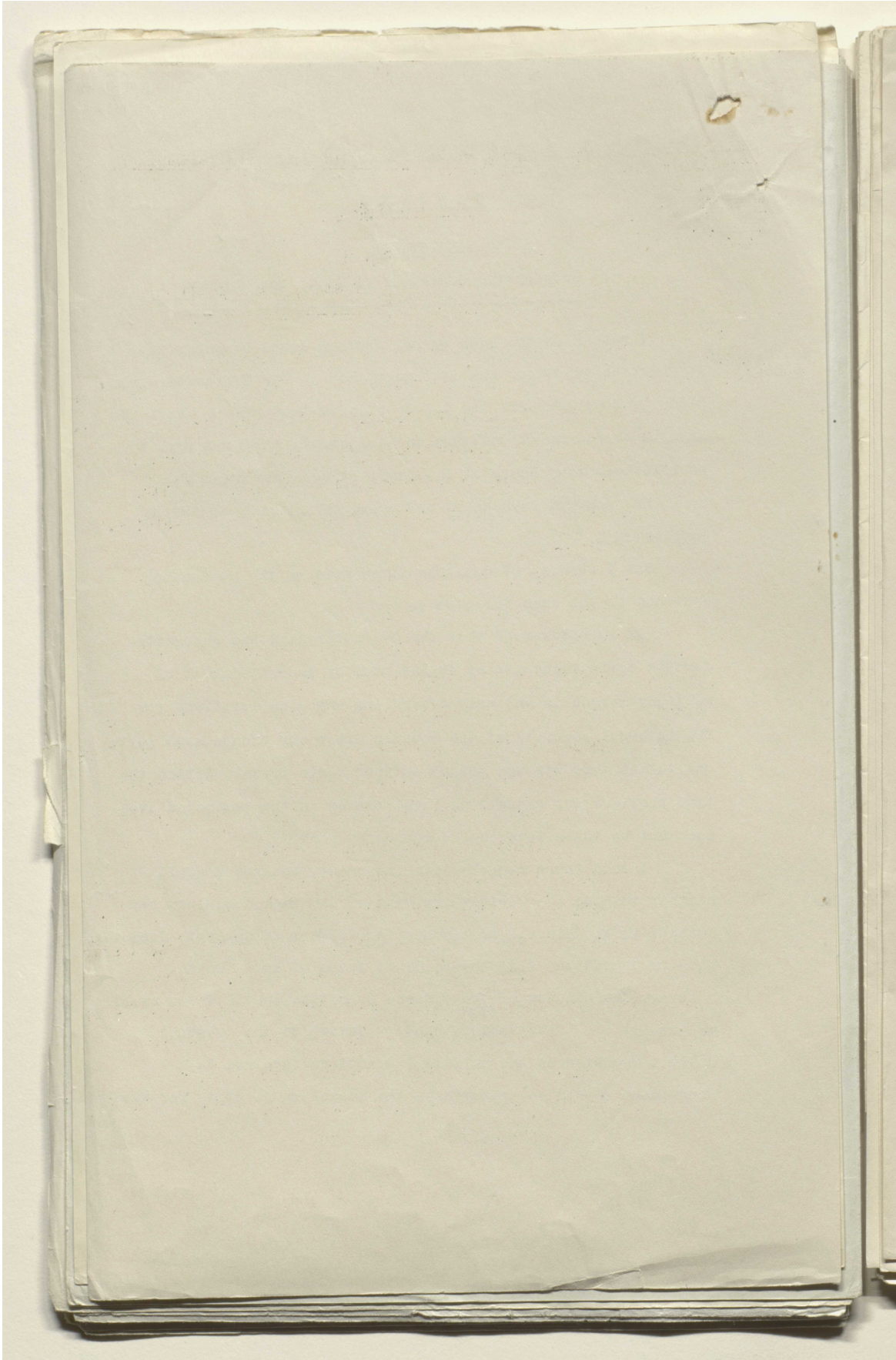
Mr. Montagu says he is not aware of any such decision. Neither am I.

But I object, if possible, even more to the succeeding sentence in the same telegram :-

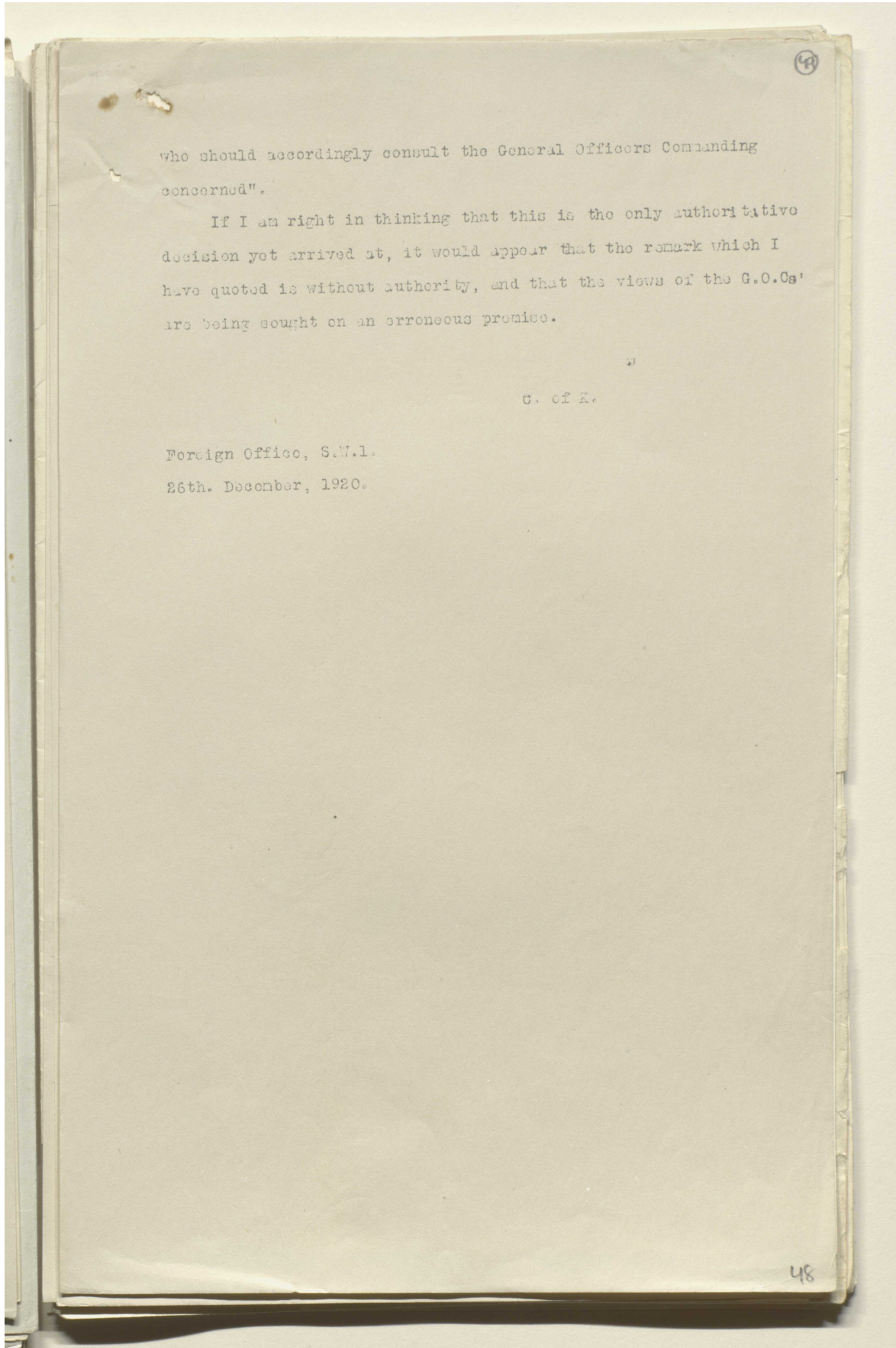
"It is understood that the Cabinet regard the necessity for the early reduction of expenditure by the withdrawal of military forces as entirely overruling any considerations for the internal security of the country after our troops have left; and taking this for the moment as your basis of calculation the time required for organizing local forces in the evacuated area need not be taken into consideration by you".

I read these remarks with amazement, because I could neither imagine the Cabinet arriving at any such decision, nor could I in the Minutes of any Meeting, either of Cabinet, Conference or Committee, find the smallest trace of it. On the contrary the Minutes of the Finance Committee (which I was unable to attend) recorded ^{that} without prejudice to the eventual Cabinet decision on the political questions involved "a Memorandum should be prepared by the Secretary of State for War,

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and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner,
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who should accordingly consult the General Officers Commanding concerned".

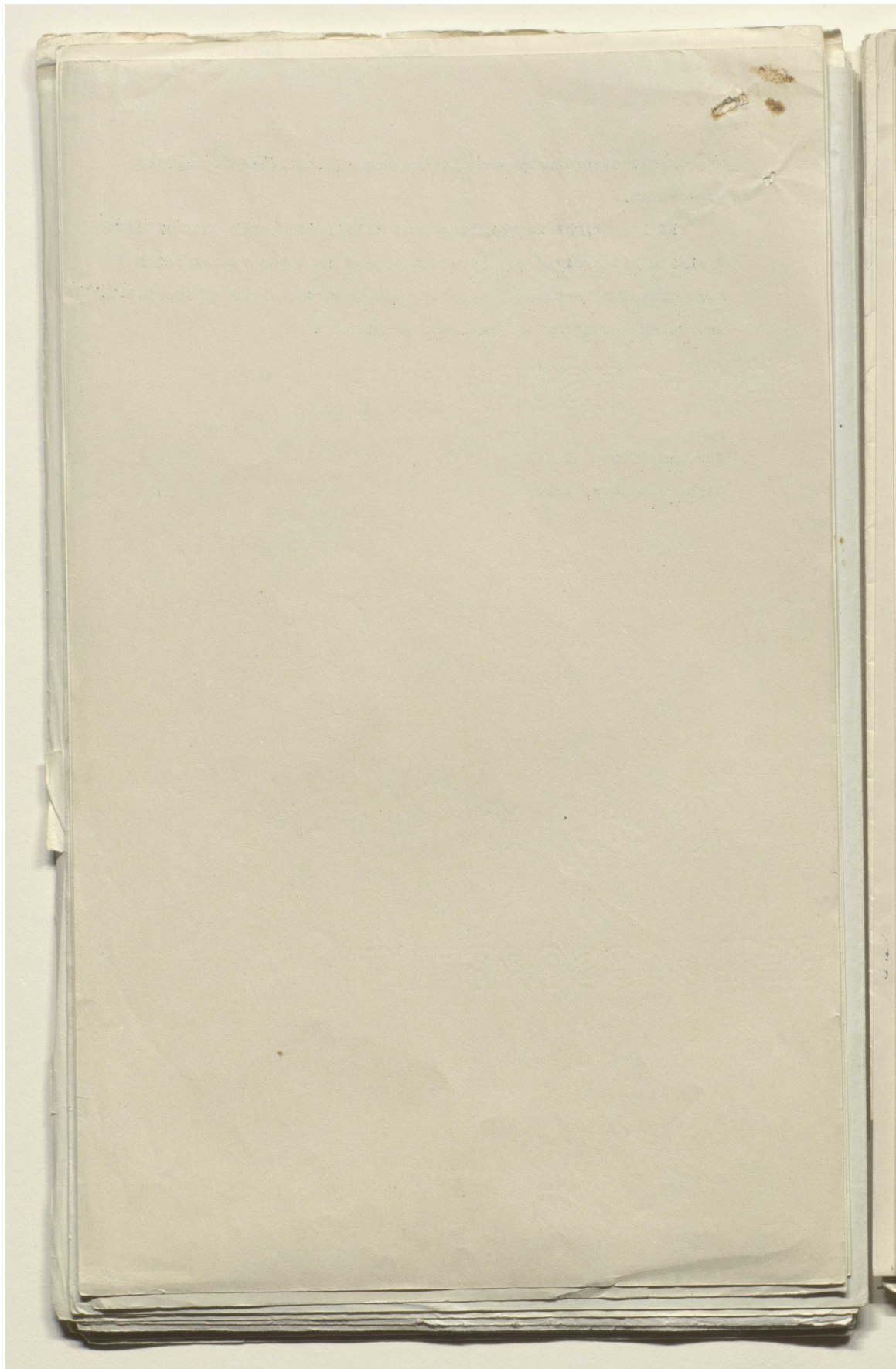
If I am right in thinking that this is the only authoritative decision yet arrived at, it would appear that the remark which I have quoted is without authority, and that the views of the G.O.Cs are being sought on an erroneous premise.

G. of R.

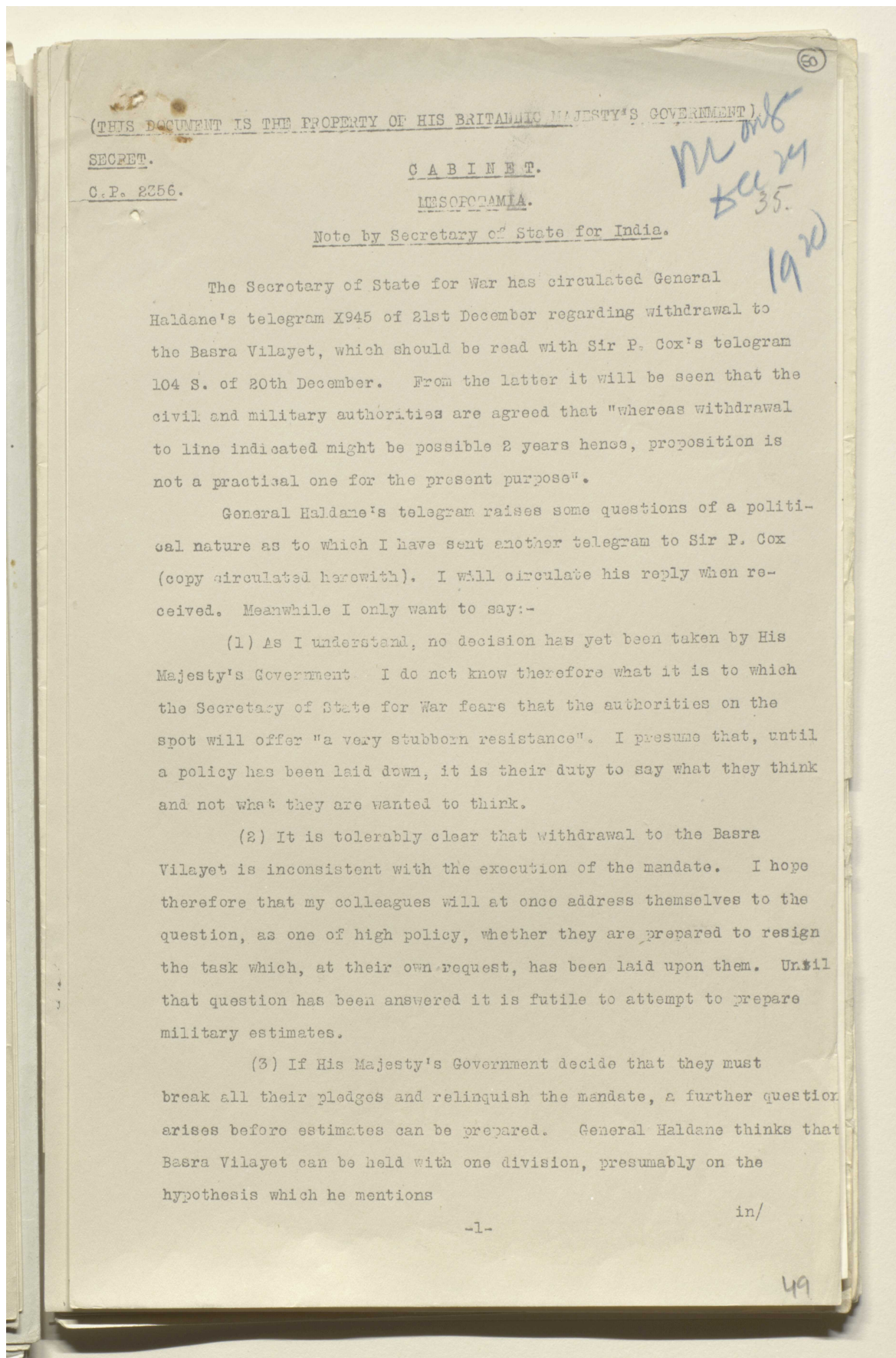
Foreign Office, S.W.1.

26th. December, 1920.

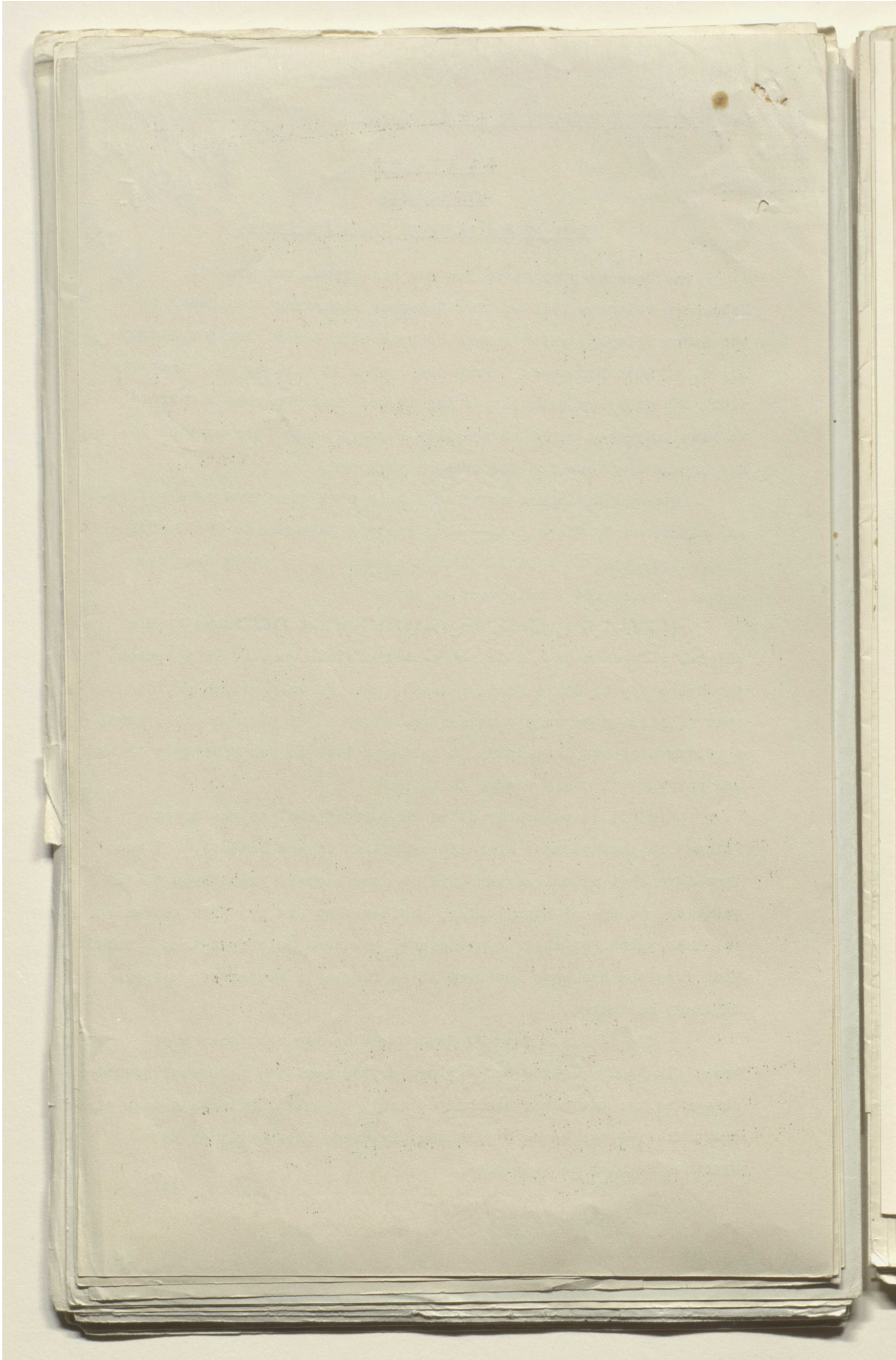
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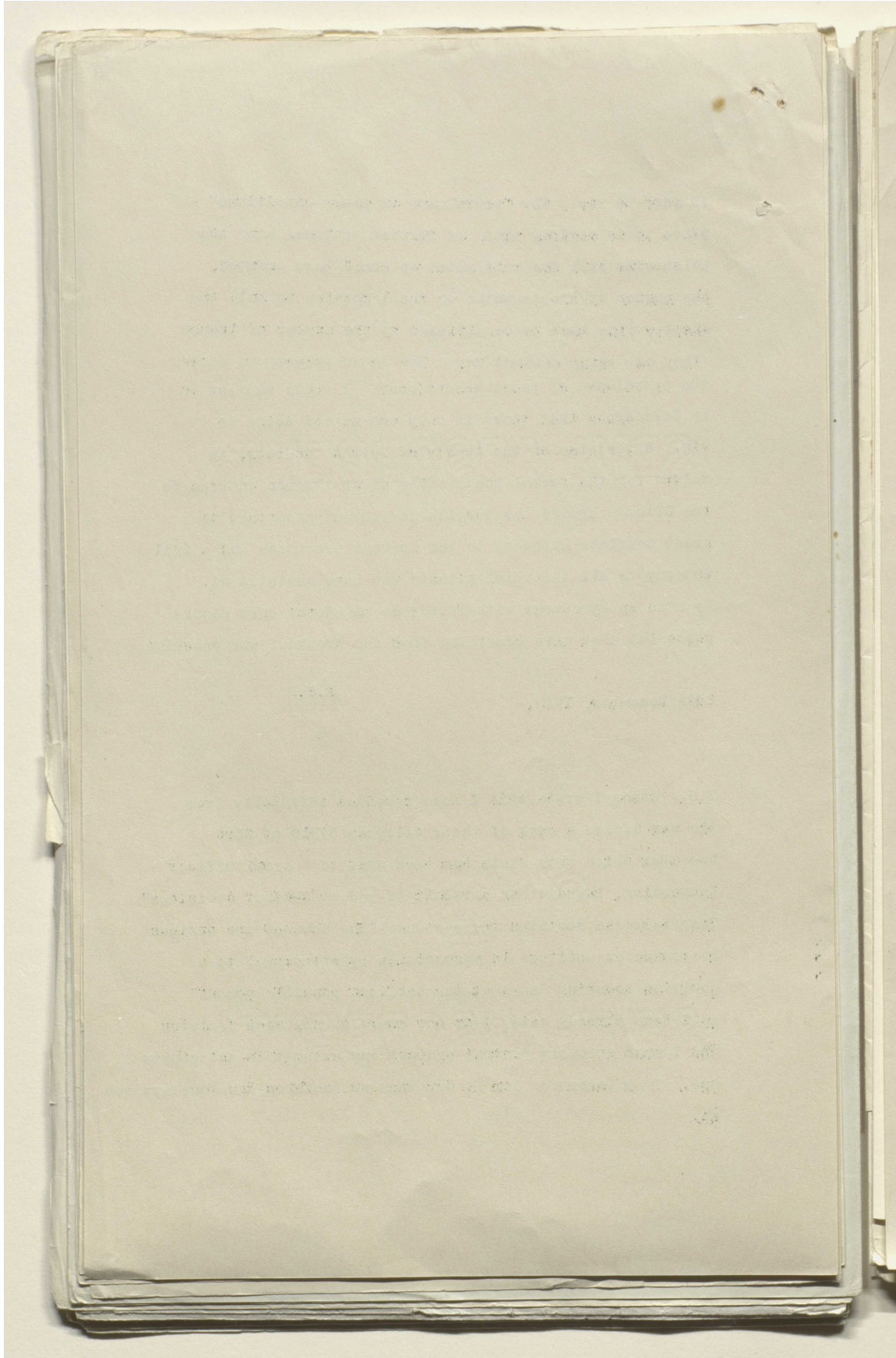
in para. 4 viz., the "prevalence of peace conditions" -- since it is obvious that, of Turkish Nationalists and Bolsheviks fill the void which we shall have created, the number of troops which we shall require to hold the shorter line must be conditioned by the number of troops they can bring against us. How do we propose to secure the prevalence of peace conditions? I would suggest to my Colleagues that there is only one way of doing so viz., a revision of the treaty of Sevres, whereby, in return for the formal restoration of so immense an area to the Ottoman Empire the Turkish Government undertake to grant complete autonomy to the Arabian provinces and a full amnesty to all their inhabitants who have assisted us. By such an agreement with Turkey we might not only secure peace but also save something from the wreck of our prestige.

24th December, 1920.

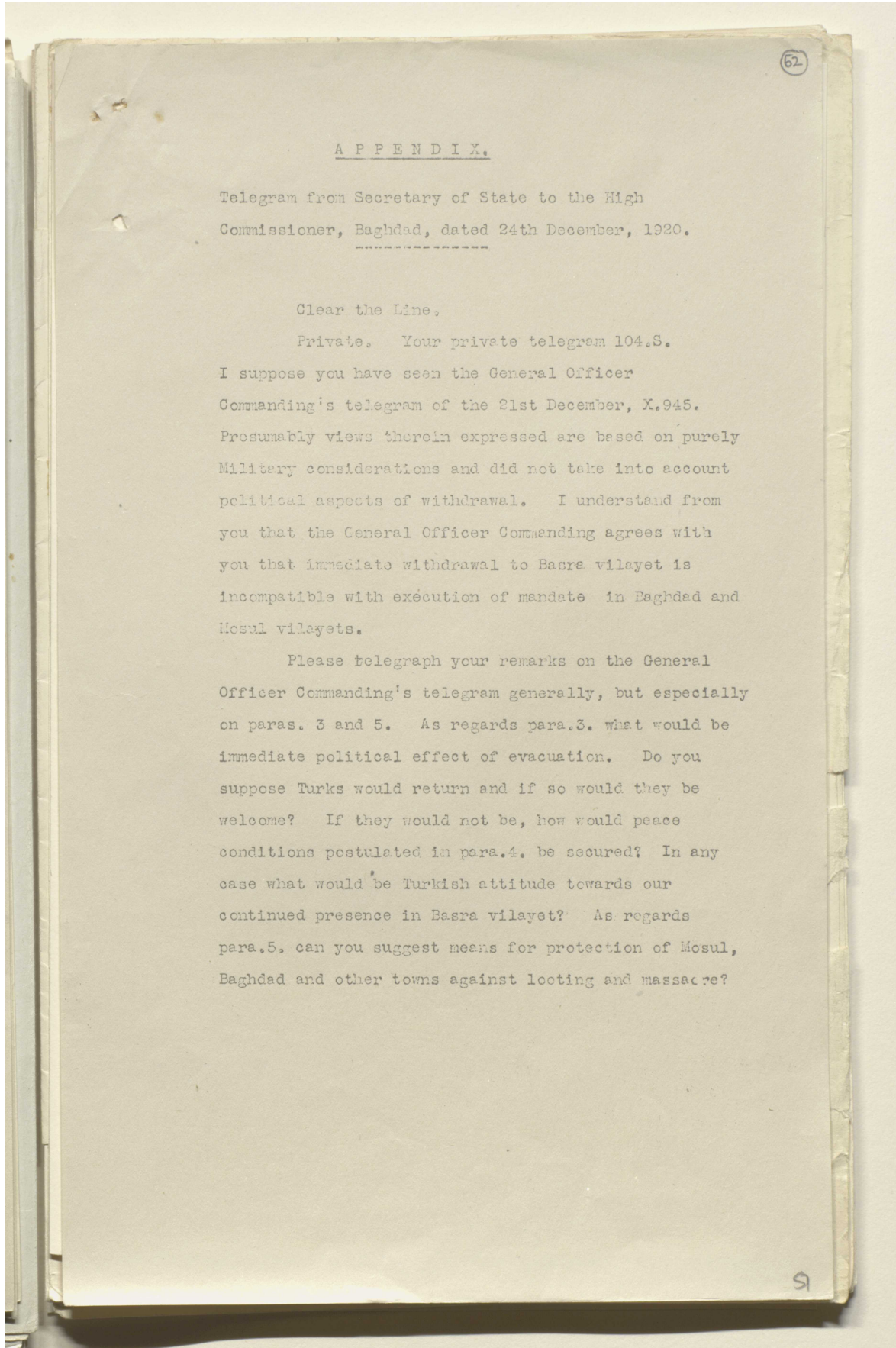
E.S.M.

P.S. Since I wrote this I have received officially from the War Office a copy of their telegram 87319 of 23rd December which they state has been sent to General Officer Commanding, Baghdad "as a result of recent Cabinet decisions" This telegram contains the sentence "The Cabinet are anxious to reduce expenditure in Mesopotamia by withdrawal to a position covering Basra at the earliest possible moment". As I have already said, I am not aware of any such decision and I must strongly protest against any attempt to anticipate one. I am informing Sir E. Cox that no decision has been arrived at.

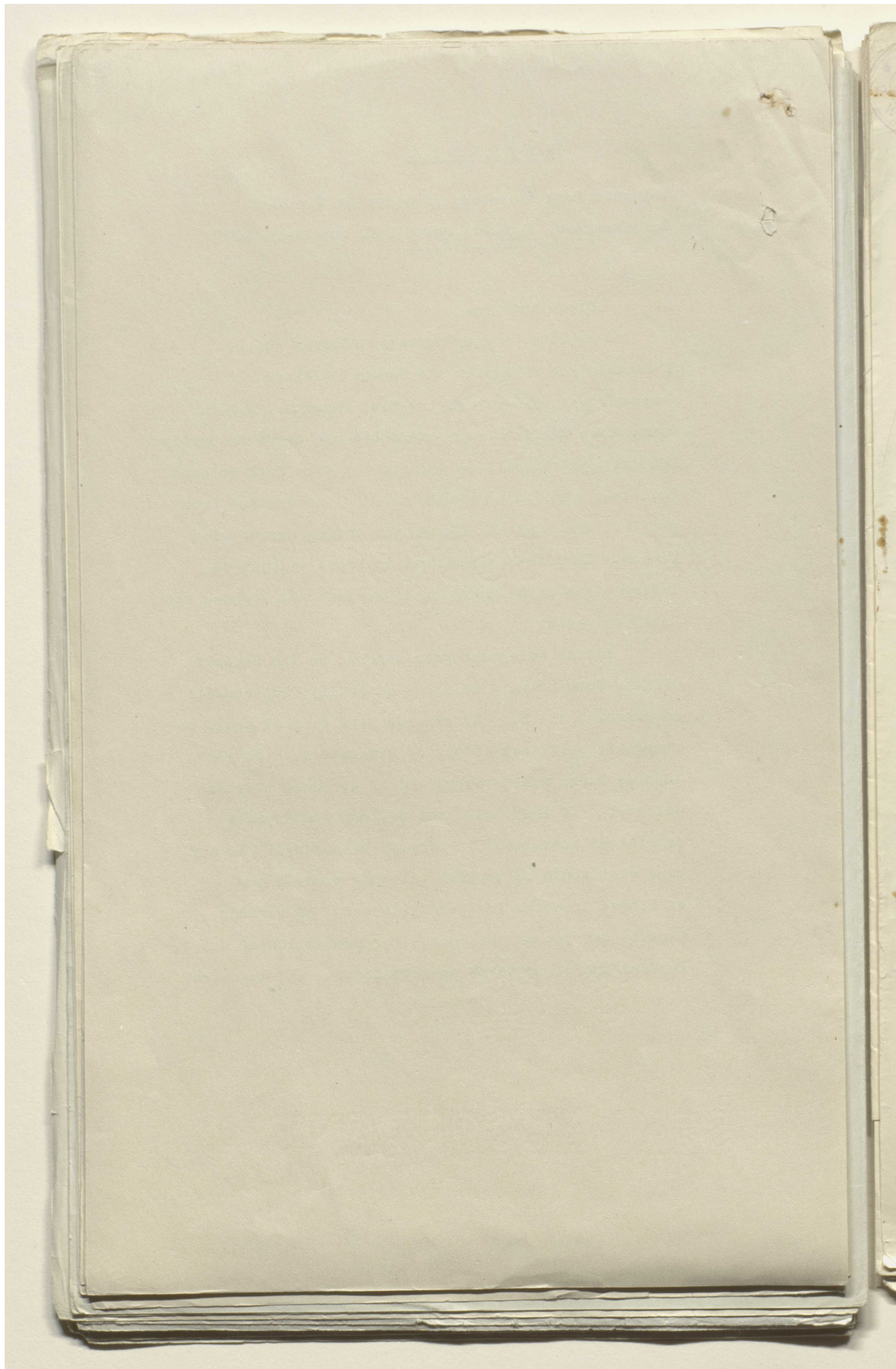
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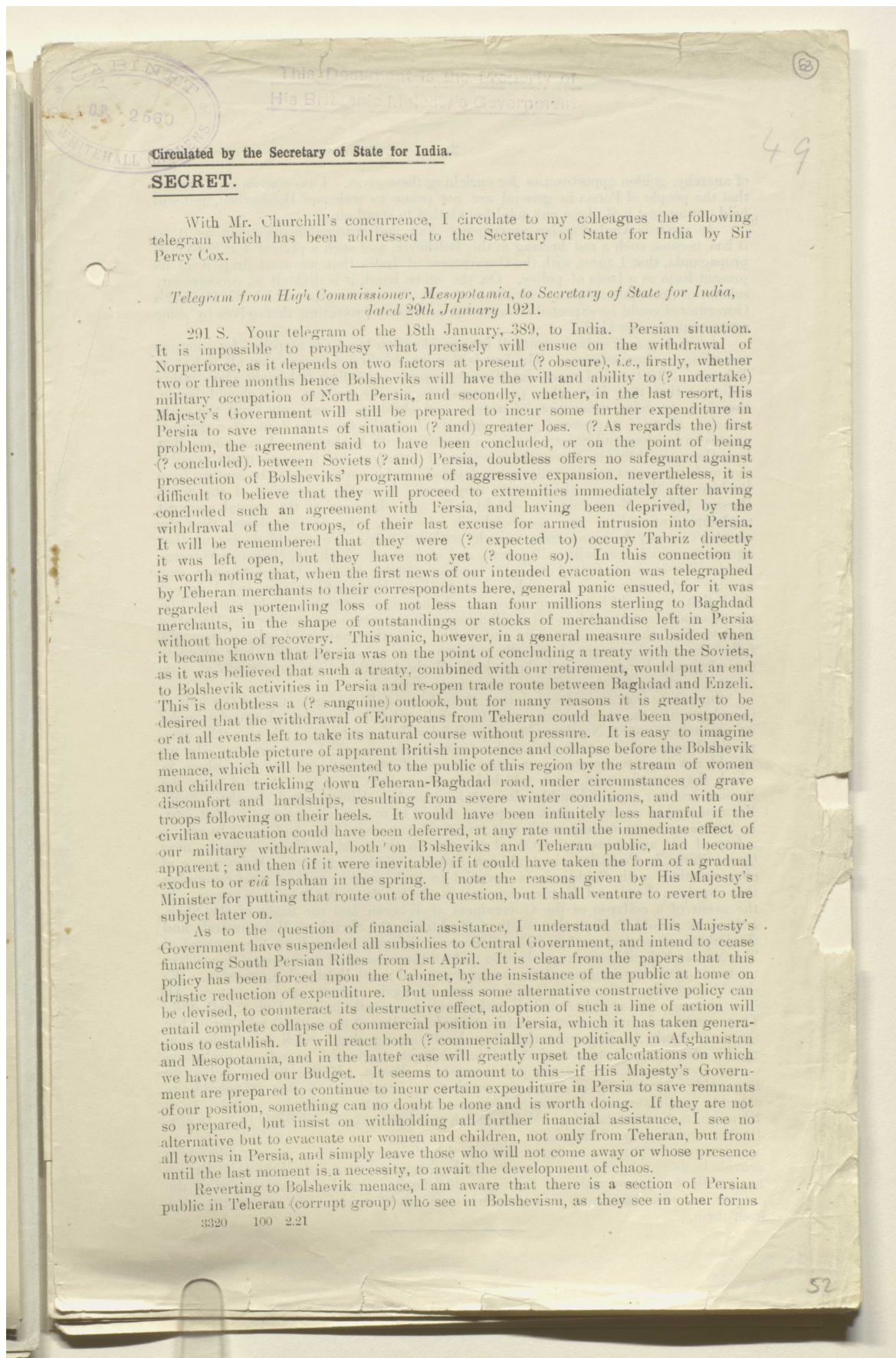
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'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [53r] (105/136)



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of anarchy, golden opportunities for enriching themselves. I am convinced, however, that the people of Persia in general are not prone to welcome Bolshevism, and will hold out against it if given any solid foundation to stand on.

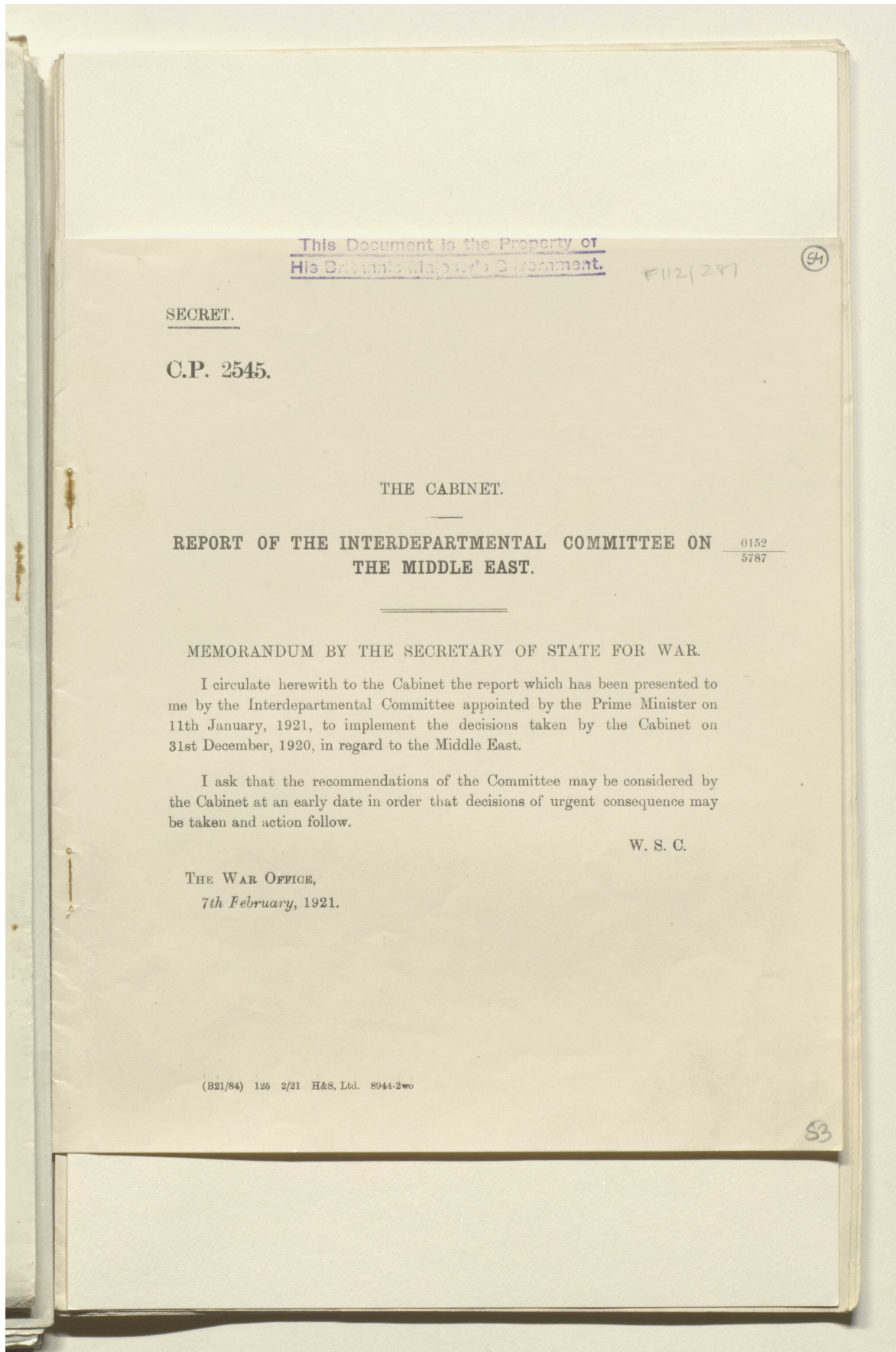
As regards Anglo-Persian agreement. Fair and reasonable document as it is, it has become such a red herring to the Bolshevik, and such a pretext for Extremist propaganda, that I agree with the Government of India that we must drop it in its present form as a basis of policy. On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive any scheme of financial assistance calculated to save Persian situation which His Majesty's Government could be expected to enter upon without protecting themselves by some agreement of same kind.

I now beg to (? submit omitted) for consideration two lines of policy for adoption according to circumstances. The first is that we should not assume that all is lost in Teheran. The trend of recent intelligence reports regarding Bolshevik plans rather indicates that they have other pre-occupations for the present. We should decide, therefore, to delay evacuation of women and children at any rate until the early summer, then, if it proves (? word omitted), it should take the form of a gradual exodus to Ispahan and Shiraz, but in co-operation with Bakhtiari. I am aware that here the main difficulty lies in the question of transport, but it seems quite possible that mule transport can be collected at Ispahan, and a convoy of vans be sent up from Bushire *via* Shiraz, on which route they would have the protection of the South Persian Rifles. Meanwhile, we should rally our adherents at the capital amongst moderate Nationalists and non-Bolshevik elements, who are convinced that the country can only be saved from anarchy with our help. We should devise another agreement which the Majlis will accept, and on basis of which His Majesty's Government will continue to help Persia. It is quite possible that such an agreement may involve our acquiescence in a change of Shah or change of dynasty, and I do not think that we should hesitate in giving it. In any case, attitude of Bakhtiari will be an important factor, and I do not at all agree with the view expressed by His Majesty's Minister that they are essentially unfriendly. On the contrary, I believe they are fully alive to advantages of friendly relations with us, and, provided their interests are safeguarded and promoted, the majority of them could be got to participate with us in any scheme for the saving of Persia from chaos.

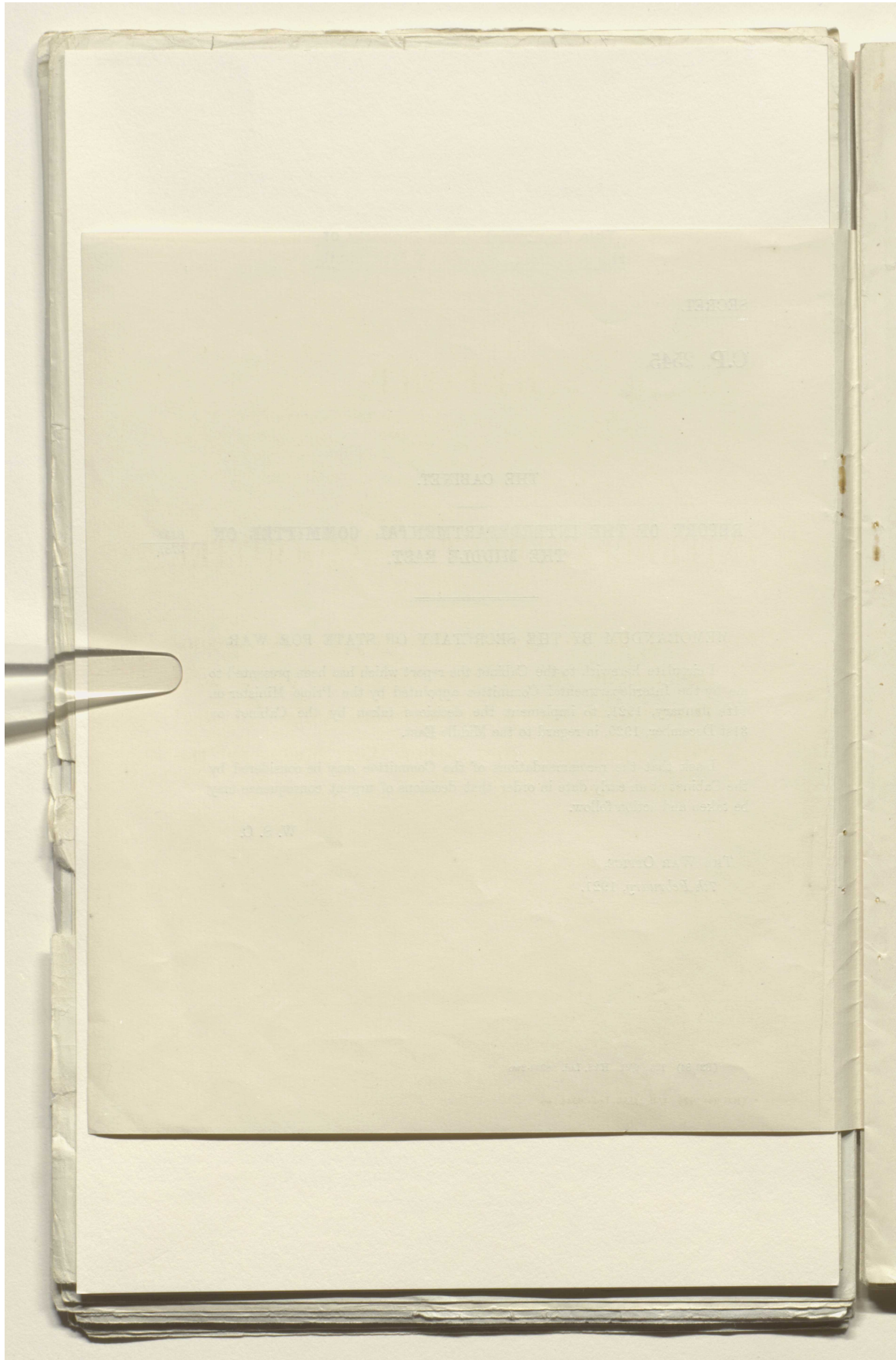
Supposing that it is decided that (? word omitted) has gone too far to admit of the adoption of the above policy, or if it is tried and fails, then I think we must make up our minds to let Northern Persia go Bolshevik if it wishes to; but in that case, provided again that we are prepared to spend some money, I see no reason why we should not hope to maintain our interests and effective influence in the sphere in which they mainly exist, and which I should include by a line passing from the Persian frontier near Khanikin, through Kermanshah, Khurumabad, Ispahan, Yezd, Kerman, and so on, and I think our policy should be to stabilise situation in that area. In fact, it seems to me impossible that we can do otherwise than endeavour to ensure safety of our numerous and vital oil interests in this part of Persia, namely, near Qasr-i-Shirin, in Pushtikuh, in Arabistan, and in Bakhtiari country. Maintenance of close relations with Bakhtiari is essential to both parties, and we must remember that Ispahan, Yezd and Kerman are now in the hands of Bakhtiari governors. In the event of a collapse of the Government at Teheran, and the flight of the Shah, I think we should (? allow the) Wali of Pushtikuh, the Sheikh of Mohammerah, and the Bakhtiari to declare their independence, or their separation from Government of Teheran, and should encourage them to make a three-cornered pact among themselves to stand together to maintain their own interests and resist Bolshevik aggression. We should probably (? do omitted) well to have Kashgais (corrupt group) in too. All four elements are mainly (? tribal) and already practically independent (? full stop). They would only need a hint to induce turbulent tribes (? to omitted) take action but for us it would be important that they should act together. Such a confederation would offer a very formidable bulwark to Bolshevik aggression, as well as protection of our own material and legitimate interests in Persia. If this line of policy be favourably entertained, it seems to me that we should do all that is possible to expedite improvement of communications, from South outwards, namely, from Khanikin to Kermanshah, from Mohammerah to Khurumabad, and roads from Ahwaz, Bushire and Bandar Abbas.

I would venture to suggest that, if the above suggestions are considered to provide basis for any constructive line of policy, representatives of all the chief British firms with commercial stakes in Persia should be called together for discussion of the subject, in order that it may be known what amount of co-operation may be expected from them.

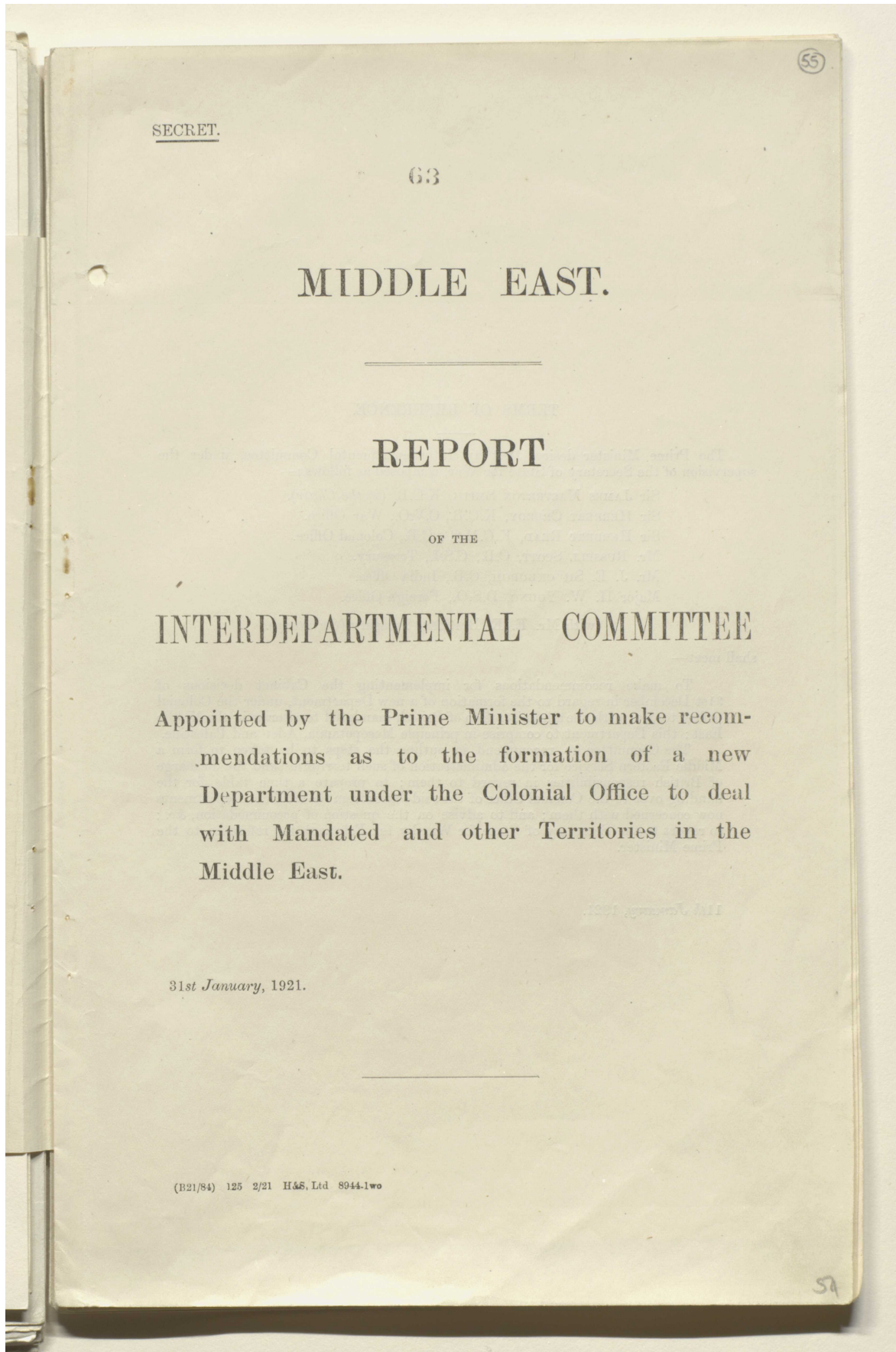
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TERMS OF REFERENCE.

The Prime Minister desires that an Interdepartmental Committee, under the supervision of the Secretary of State for War, composed as follows :—

Sir JAMES MASTERTON SMITH, K.C.B. (*in the Chair*).
Sir HERBERT CREEDY, K.C.B., C.V.O., War Office.
Sir HERBERT READ, K.C.M.G., C.B., Colonial Office.
Mr. RUSSELL SCOTT, C.B., C.S.I., Treasury.
Mr. J. E. SHUCKBURGH, C.B., India Office.
Major H. W. YOUNG, D.S.O., Foreign Office.

with Mr. E. E. BRIDGES, Treasury (*Secretary*).

shall meet—

To make recommendations for implementing the Cabinet decisions of 31st December in regard to the formation of a new Department, under the Colonial Office, to deal with the administration of British mandated territories in the Middle East; this Department to comprise in principle Mesopotamia, Aden and Palestine.

The Committee to recommend in outline the steps to be taken to form a Middle Eastern Service for the administration of such territories, and the discharge of British responsibilities in regard to them; to prepare a time table for the handing over to the Colonial Office of the said duties from the different Departments now concerned with them; and to advise on the question of accommodation, &c.; to report to the Secretary of State for War by 1st February for reference to the Prime Minister.

11th January, 1921.

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To
The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P.

Sir,

1. We were appointed by Cabinet Minute of the 11th January, 1921, to make recommendations for carrying out the Cabinet decisions of the 31st December, 1920, in regard to the formation of a new Department under the Colonial Office to deal with the administration of British mandated territories in the Middle East. We were instructed to report to you by the 1st February for reference to the Prime Minister.

I.—DEFINITION OF THE TERRITORIAL SPHERE OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT.

2. In our terms of reference, which are set out in full on the opposite page, it is laid down that the Department to be set up is to "comprise in principle Mesopotamia, Aden and Palestine." We assume that it was intended that the term Palestine should cover Trans-Jordania. We are, however, faced at the outset with the following difficulty: Mesopotamia, Aden and Palestine are not conterminous. The large intervening area is sparsely inhabited by Arab tribes, who depend in the main on one or other of these three territories for their contact with the outside world. The land boundary of the Aden Protectorate is fixed on the West and North, but remains undefined on the East, and the land boundaries of Mesopotamia and Palestine on the south-west and east, respectively, have not yet been determined. Owing to the fact that the nomad tribes in the adjoining territories move freely to and fro between the desert and the more settled areas, it is questionable whether these boundaries can ever be defined in a final and satisfactory manner.

3. We understand that Article 132 of the Treaty of Sèvres provides that the disposal of this Central Arabian area, with the exception of the Hedjaz, is to be made by the Principal Allied Powers; that it has been the intention of the Foreign Office to obtain recognition from the other Principal Allied Powers of the special political interests of Great Britain in these areas; but that it has not yet been found possible to approach them with this end in view.

Although the Kingdom of the Hedjaz has been recognized as an independent State, none of its land boundaries have as yet been fixed.

We also understand that it was the intention of the Foreign Office to submit that the delimitation of the boundaries of Mesopotamia and Palestine should be undertaken by Great Britain as the mandatory for these two areas, in conjunction with the Arab rulers concerned.

4. In considering the steps to be taken to form a new Department to deal with the administration of Mesopotamia, Aden and Palestine, we have found it essential to take into account the future of the intervening area, and the special difficulties arising out of the absence of clearly defined boundaries. We have assumed that it was the underlying intention of the Cabinet decisions of the 31st December last that all administrative and political responsibilities which will devolve upon His Majesty's Government in respect of the Arab areas of the Middle East should, as far as possible, be placed under the control of one Department. The wording of our terms of reference quoted above has encouraged us in this belief.

5. On the assumption that it is the intention of the Cabinet that the Middle Eastern, or rather the Arab, problem should be treated as one organic whole, we consider that the guiding principle should be that the new Department should be responsible for directing policy as regards the whole Arabian peninsula, subject to certain qualifications, which are discussed later, regarding the Kingdom of the Hedjaz.

6. We accordingly recommend, subject to certain reservations to which we refer later, that the sphere of the new Department should include all the territories south and east of the newly defined boundary between the French mandated territories of Syria and the British mandated territories of Palestine and Mesopotamia. On the west this sphere would be bounded by the Mediterranean; on the south-west by the frontier of Egypt and the Red Sea; on the south and south-east by the Indian Ocean; on the north-east by the north-eastern boundary of Mesopotamia and by the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf.

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7. This will entail the assumption by the new Department of all responsibility for the obligations resulting from the treaties which His Majesty's Government have from time to time negotiated with the Chiefs of the various districts of Arabia, and the responsibility for the negotiation of further treaties of this description. It will also entail the new Department having an influential if not a determining voice in the delimitation of the boundaries which have not yet been fixed, though the negotiations with the Principal Allied Powers would of course be conducted through the ordinary diplomatic channels.

8. With regard to the north-eastern boundary of the area, for which we recommend that the new Department should be responsible, we offer the following observations :—

(1.) **Kurdistan.**—We understand that Article 64 of the Treaty of Sèvres provides that, if within a period of one year from the coming into force of the Treaty the majority of the Kurdish peoples inhabiting the areas between the Armenian and Mesopotamian frontiers shall demand to be independent, and if the Council of the League considers them capable of such independence, Turkey will renounce all rights and title over these areas. In this case no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan (generally known as Southern Kurdistan) which has hitherto been included in the Mosul Vilayet.

We recommend that pending such a development the responsibility for Kurdistan should be vested in the new Department.

9.—(2.) **Persian Gulf littoral.**—These areas have for the last hundred years or more been under the political control of the Government of India, exercised for the past fifty years through an officer of the Government of India, with headquarters at Bushire—with the title of Political Resident in the Persian Gulf—who also controls the Northern (Persian) littoral as well as certain inland Consulates in South Persia. The Gulf is thus dealt with as a single administrative unit for all purposes. Posts at Bushire and on either side of the Gulf are interchangeable. The officers at each political agency (including an Arab residency agent at Sharjah, on the Trucial coast) correspond with the Government of India through the Political Resident at Bushire. This post is always held by an officer of many years' experience of the Gulf, assisted by an adequate staff.

10. All the accounts of the stations in the Gulf are dealt with at Bushire, where there is a Treasury of the Government of India. The currency of the Persian Gulf is almost exclusively Indian and the amounts involved are very large (*e.g.*, the Bahrein pearl trade alone aggregates over 4,000,000*l.* annually).

Almost all trade is with India; the Gulf lives almost wholly on cereals imported from India. Indian merchants handle the bulk of the trade.

11. Quarantine, Postal and Telegraphic Services, Public Works, Lights and Buoys, Naval duties, Military detachments and Political and Administrative personnel throughout the Persian Gulf are provided, controlled and partly paid for by India. The transfer to the new Department of the Arabian littoral would entail an additional burden on His Majesty's Treasury and could scarcely be accomplished without much confusion and possible friction. At the same time, we realize that the fact of Ibn Saud's territory having an outlet on the Gulf renders it essential that the new Department should have a deciding voice in all questions of policy affecting the littoral.

12. We accordingly recommend that the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf should remain under the control of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf; that this officer should be appointed as at present by the Government of India, but should be authorized to communicate direct with the Colonial Office on matters concerning the Arabian littoral; that the functions of the Government of India in respect of the Arabian littoral should be confined to administrative and purely local matters, and that the prior concurrence of the Colonial Office should be obtained by them to any measures of political significance; and lastly, that the relations of His Majesty's Government with Ibn Saud should be conducted exclusively by the new Department through the Political Resident at Bushire in the first place. It may also be desirable to provide that the Political Agent at Bahrein, whom we understand to be the official in direct touch with Ibn Saud, should in cases of urgency be communicated with direct by the new Department.

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13. **Relations with the Kingdom of the Hedjaz.**—If these arrangements are carried out, the Colonial Office will become the authority responsible for the direction of the Arabian policy of His Majesty's Government, except in regard to the Kingdom of the Hedjaz. On geographical grounds, there would be obvious advantages in an arrangement by which negotiations with the Kingdom of the Hedjaz were entrusted to the Department which is to be responsible for the territories surrounding it on three sides. It is also clear that the new Department will be seriously hampered in its dealings with Central Arabia if it is not in a position to exercise a direct influence over the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to the Kingdom of the Hedjaz.

14. It may appear somewhat anomalous that negotiations with an independent Kingdom should be entrusted to any Department other than the Foreign Office. It has been suggested that the direct conduct of negotiations between the Government of India and Afghanistan presents a somewhat similar arrangement to that indicated above, but we understand it to be the view of the Foreign Office, that the case of Afghanistan does not offer an exact analogy with that of the Hedjaz.

Afghanistan is not in general diplomatic relations with Western Powers; it is not a member of the League of Nations; it has practically no means of access to the outside world, and geographical reasons alone would be sufficient to make the Viceroy of India the channel of communication between His Majesty's Government and the Afghan Government. The Hedjaz, on the other hand, has only to ratify the Treaty of Versailles to regularize its position as an original member of the League of Nations; it contains the holiest cities of Islam, to which large numbers of the Moslem subjects of every power in the world make an annual pilgrimage; it lies on the Red Sea, and has access by water to the outside world, and European Powers will continue to be represented there in the future, as they have been in the past. We cannot deny that there is considerable force in this argument. At the same time, we are impressed with the paramount importance of the general direction and control of the Arabian policy of His Majesty's Government being vested in one Department of State, though we regard any arrangement by which the representative of His Majesty's Government in the Hedjaz should communicate with any Department other than the Foreign Office as unworkable.

15. We accordingly recommend that the channel of communication between His Majesty's Government and the Hedjaz Government should still be the Foreign Office, but that in all questions affecting purely Arab politics the Colonial Office should be regarded as the responsible British authority.

II.—SCOPE OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT.

16. We have thought it necessary to discuss at some length the definition of the territorial sphere for which the new Department should be responsible, since it was clearly impossible for us to make effective recommendations while it remained uncertain what areas were under consideration. For the same reason we think it necessary to have some working definition of the scope of the new Department before proceeding to discuss in detail the steps to be taken with regard to its formation. If our interpretation of the intentions of the Cabinet in regard to the territorial sphere of the new Department is accepted, the Colonial Office will become the responsible British authority on all matters relating to:—

- (a.) Administration and policy in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Aden.
- (b.) Policy in other Arab areas within the British sphere of influence.
- (c.) The delimitation of boundaries between British spheres and the territories of independent Arab rulers.
- (d.) All expenditure, whether civil or military, which may fall upon Imperial funds as a result of British responsibility for and interest in the areas concerned.

17. Some of the problems arising out of this definition have been dealt with in the recommendations which we have already made. As regards (d), we have not considered the question of financial adjustments with the Government of India. Nor have we examined the larger question of the incidence of expenditure in respect of the Mandated territories.

There remain three questions of major importance:—

- (1.) The arrangements to be made for carrying out British military policy in the Middle East, and the relations between the Colonial Office, and the War Office and Air Ministry.

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- (2.) The civilian Services which will be required for the Administration of Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Aden; and for political duties in other parts of Arabia.
- (3.) The constitution of the new Department of the Colonial Office.

We propose to deal with each of these questions separately.

III.—MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COLONIAL OFFICE, AND THE WAR OFFICE AND AIR MINISTRY.

18. The Cabinet decisions of the 31st December last contemplate that a fundamental change shall be made in the present position whereby the War Office and Air Ministry bear the cost of military operations in Mesopotamia and have to answer for such expenditure in Parliament, while the policy is in the main laid down by other Departments. We have, therefore, to consider what should be the relationship between these two Service Departments and the Colonial Office in regard to military operations in Mesopotamia.

19. This question will of necessity be affected by the decision taken as to the force which is to be maintained in Mesopotamia. We understand that a Committee has been considering this question under the chairmanship of the Adjutant-General to the Forces, and that the general policy aimed at is to replace the bulk of the regular garrison by an effective force of armed Constabulary and certain specially raised Indian (or possibly African) units officered from the British and/or Indian Armies. We understand that it is contemplated that the Colonial Office should recruit this latter force through an officer holding a post of Inspector-General under the Colonial Office, and that the arrangements should in the main be similar to those already existing as regards the recruitment and maintenance of the King's African Rifles and West African Frontier Force. The Colonial Office would arrange direct with the War Office for the loan of officers and personnel to form the necessary cadre and would assume direct and full financial responsibility. We will return later to these proposals. The more immediate and important question is to decide upon the arrangements to be made to tide over the transition period before this eventual normal establishment is reached.

20. We have assumed that for some time it will probably be necessary to maintain in Mesopotamia a considerably larger force than this eventual establishment. It is therefore necessary to devise means for putting an end at once to the present unsatisfactory system of divided responsibility.

21. A possible solution would be for the Colonial Office to set up a complete military organization, which should be in a position to offer military advice as to the forces necessary to carry out the policy decided upon by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and should be responsible for all the military and financial arrangements necessary to maintain troops in Mesopotamia. This suggestion does not in any way commend itself to us. It would be uneconomical to the highest degree and would involve duplication of work. Further, it is most undesirable to set up a large department to perform a task which it is hoped will be in the nature of a decreasing liability.

22. We recommend during the transitional period that the War Office and the Air Ministry should continue to be the Departments responsible for advising as to the forces required to carry out the general military policy decided upon.

We trust that the Secretary of State for the Colonies may, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for Air, have the advice of the departments of the War Office and Air Ministry concerned, on all questions affecting their respective forces.

23. Further, we recommend that the War Office and Air Ministry should act as agents for the Colonial Office in maintaining such regular forces, and in conducting such military and air operations as may be required in Mesopotamia during the transitional period.

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This question requires further explanation both on its financial side and in its military aspect.

24. **Financial relations.**—In its financial aspect, the War Office and Air Ministry would be responsible for including in their estimates of the cost of the Army and Royal Air Force, as a whole, the expenditure to be incurred in Mesopotamia, and would show a recovery of that sum to be made as an Appropriation in Aid to Army and Air Estimates. The Colonial Office would at a later stage present to Parliament estimates which would include an amount to be repaid to the War Office and Air Ministry in respect of this expenditure, and would charge their accounts with the amounts certified by the War Office and Air Ministry to have been expended. As far as finance is concerned, the Colonial Office would have to repay to the War Office and Air Ministry within the financial year, but if accounts were not immediately available, we should recommend the payment of advances within the year up to amounts estimated by the War Office and Air Ministry to be required: certificates of actual expenditure would be required from the War Office and Air Ministry, but the total which they were able to certify before the accounts for a given year closed, to have been expended up to the 31st March preceding, would be finally charged in Colonial Office accounts for that year.

Similar arrangements should be made in regard to the military and air expenditure of the War Office and Air Ministry, respectively, in Palestine.

25. For the purposes of securing adequate control, India Office military expenditure in respect of Indian Army troops serving in Mesopotamia should be charged in the first instance to the War Office. The latter would, therefore, include in their original estimates of cost to be incurred, and also as part of the recovery from Colonial Office, such Indian Army expenditure.

26. We consider that the Chief Financial Advisers to the High Commissioners in Mesopotamia and Palestine should be responsible for advising their respective High Commissioners in regard to expenditure generally.

27. We recommend that the financial arrangements outlined in the preceding paragraphs should take effect as from the 1st April, 1921.

28. **Relations between Civil and Military Authorities.**—We recommend that the High Commissioner in Mesopotamia should, as is customary elsewhere, have the titular rank of Commander-in-Chief, it being understood that the possession of this title will not confer on him any right to give executive commands to the troops. We recommend that the General Officer Commanding in Mesopotamia should be appointed by the War Office and Colonial Office in conjunction.

29. On matters of principle or policy in their military aspects, the General Officer Commanding in Mesopotamia should only communicate with the War Office through the High Commissioner, but he should have the right to communicate direct with the War Office on questions of intelligence, training and preparation for war, as well as on matters affecting the routine administration of the Army.

We understand that this is the arrangement suggested to regulate the relations of the Commander-in-Chief in India with the authorities at home.

It would also be well to ensure that the High Commissioner and the General Officer Commanding in Mesopotamia on the one hand and the Colonial Office and the War Office on the other should exchange regularly telegrams of mutual interest.

We think that these arrangements, which give effect to the principle of the ultimate responsibility of the military to the civil authority, will regulate satisfactorily the relations of the departments concerned, and that they should be adopted from the date on which the Colonial Office takes over the control of Mesopotamia.

30. There is however, one respect in which we would delay the application of this arrangement. We do not think it right that the Colonial Office should be called upon to assume any responsibility in regard to the military operations connected with the withdrawal of the British forces in North-West Persia.

31. We therefore recommend that the financial and military responsibility for the withdrawal of British Forces from North-West Persia should remain with the War Office until this Force has been withdrawn within the boundaries of Mesopotamia, and become subject to the ultimate control of the High Commissioner.

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32. There would thus be three stages in the process by which the War Office will divest itself of responsibility for military policy in the Middle East.

- (1.) The withdrawal stage during which the War Office is to retain full responsibility for the operations in Persia, until the withdrawal is complete.
- (2.) The transitional period during which time the War Office and Air Ministry will act as agents for the Colonial Office in the manner indicated above.
- (3.) The stage when the normal establishment has been reached. This establishment is to consist mainly of personnel under the direct control of the Colonial Office. The special forces of white constabulary and Indian (or possibly African) units would be administered and controlled by the Colonial Office. Any regular Units required in addition in the early stages would be lent by the War Office and Air Ministry as during the transitional period.

33. A similar arrangement as to the relations between the civil and military authorities is already in force in Palestine. There is, however, this difference, that the troops stationed in Egypt and Palestine are for certain purposes regarded as one force, under the Command of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, who, of course, can transfer troops from Egypt to Palestine or *vice versa*, but delegates such powers as he thinks suitable to the General Officers Commanding in Egypt and Palestine. The High Commissioner for Palestine is titular Commander-in-Chief, and is responsible for the general policy adopted in Palestine, subject to the special limitation imposed by these circumstances.

IV.—CIVILIAN SERVICES.

34. We are asked to "recommend in outline the steps to be taken to form a Middle Eastern Service for the administration of British mandated territories in the Middle East; and for the discharge of British responsibilities in regard to them."

35. **Administration of Palestine.**—Arrangements for the formation of a Palestinian service are already far advanced. We understand that staff has been recruited by the High Commissioner on the basis of a provisional establishment, and that negotiations are now proceeding between the Foreign Office and Treasury as to the permanent grading to be adopted for the officials of the Palestine administration. It has been agreed in principle that posts in this service are to be pensionable, but the details of the pension scheme have not yet been settled. In the circumstances, we do not consider it necessary to make detailed recommendations. The final settlement of negotiations with the Treasury as to the details of the scheme would be handed over to the Colonial Office by the Foreign Office.

36. We are of the opinion that having regard to the fact that His Majesty's Government, as the Mandatory for Palestine, have undertaken to give effect to the proclaimed policy of establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and to the special international importance of the country, it would not in any case prove feasible to combine into one service the administration of Palestine and of the other areas within the sphere of the new Department.

37. We therefore recommend that the Palestinian Service should remain distinct from whatever service it may be necessary to set up to fulfil British responsibilities in other areas of the Middle East.

38. In dealing with the civilian staff required for the other areas, we find it necessary to distinguish two main categories: first, the technical services which are necessary to carry on Government services in the settled districts, *e.g.*, irrigation and postal services, railways, customs, &c.; secondly, the officers who will be required to act as advisers to the Arab authorities. It will be convenient to deal first with the technical services.

39.—**Technical services.**—(1.) **Persian Gulf littoral.**—In paragraph 12 we have already recommended that for administrative and purely local purposes the control of the Government of India over the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf should be maintained.

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It follows from this recommendation that the administrative and technical personnel at Koweit, Bahrein, &c., should remain under the control of the Government of India, which would continue to be responsible for questions of recruitment, &c. :—

40.—(2.) **Aden.**—The existing civil administration of Aden is carried on by members of the Bombay Political Department, &c., numbering in all about twenty-five officers :—

41. We recommend that this administrative service should be taken over and organized by the Colonial Office on the lines of, and possibly as part of, similar services under that department.

42.—(3.) **Mesopotamia.**—We understand that the technical services in Mesopotamia will, in the main, be organized as part of the Arab Government, and that officers in these services will not be in the employment of His Majesty's Government. We have not therefore made any recommendation as to these services.

43.—(4.) **Trans-Jordania.**—We would suggest that it might at some later date be found convenient for the technical services in Trans-Jordania to be administered as part of the technical services of Palestine.

44. **Advisers and Political Officers. — Mesopotamia.** — The political administration of Mesopotamia is at present being carried out by officers who have been recruited in a number of ways. Some officers have been loaned by other Governments who are now pressing for their return. A considerable number of Army officers have been seconded for definite periods. There are also a great many temporary officers who served in the East during the war and who are now engaged on a temporary basis with contracts varying for the most part from one to three years.

We understand that the High Commissioner estimates that 40 officers will be required in the immediate future for political duties, but that the number may be capable of subsequent reduction to 30.

45. We have considered whether it would be desirable to fix a definite cadre and to establish a Mesopotamian service on the lines of the Palestinian service. We think that such a step would hardly be consistent with our obligations as Mandatory for Mesopotamia, and that the proper course is for the civil administration of Mesopotamia to remain on a provisional footing. Further, the number of British officials required in Mesopotamia is at the present moment decreasing, and it seems likely that for some time to come sufficient personnel of the right quality will be available on the spot.

46. We do not therefore recommend setting up a Mesopotamian service or creating a pensionable establishment, unless it becomes clear that the necessary personnel is not obtainable on the special conditions recommended in paragraph 47. Nor do we think it necessary to suggest any special method of recruitment.

47. It will, however, be necessary to give some security of tenure to officers not loaned from parent services. We approve in principle the suggestion made by the High Commissioner for Mesopotamia, that a certain proportion of such officers should be given 5 years' engagements. Instead of a pension scheme we suggest that it would be desirable to arrange a system of gratuities payable in respect of each completed year's service, such gratuity being payable both to officers who are given 5 years' engagements and to the margin of officers whom it will be necessary to employ over and above those who are engaged for the longer period. The details of this scheme should be worked out between the Colonial Office and Treasury.

48. As regards officers loaned from parent services, special steps are essential to secure the loan of an adequate number of experienced officials for as long as may be necessary to fill a proportion of the more responsible posts. The exact conditions of engagement will have to be settled in each individual case, but we recommend that arrangements should be made in all cases to secure that service under the Mesopotamian administration will count for pension.

49. In addition to the Political Officers required for service in Mesopotamia, a certain number of officers will be needed to perform similar duties in other areas. We understand that there are at present five officers engaged on such duties in Trans-Jordania but that it may be necessary to increase the number. A certain number of officers will also be required for duty in the Aden Protectorate and on the Persian Gulf Littoral.

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'Papers relating to transfer of Middle Eastern Affairs to the Colonial Office and creation of a new Department there, 1920-1921, with Cabinet notes of Milner, Montague, Churchill, self, and others' [59v] (118/136)

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We are of the opinion that the officers who will be needed for political duties in these areas will have to possess the same general qualifications as the Advisers and Political Officers in Mesopotamia.

50. We therefore recommend that there should be one body of "Arab Political Officers" who should be liable for service in any part of the territorial sphere of the new Department outside Palestine. We recommend that the arrangements which are proposed in paragraphs 47 and 48 should apply to this body of officers as a whole.

V.—FORMATION OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT UNDER THE COLONIAL OFFICE.

51. The last question which we have to deal with is "the formation of the new Department under the Colonial Office" and the preparation of a time-table for the handing over to the Colonial Office of these new duties.

52. From the definitions of the scope of the new Department which we gave in paragraph 16 it is clear that the new Department must contain sections or branches capable of dealing with questions of policy, administration and finance. The existing organization of the Colonial Office does not provide the expert advice which the new Department will require. Political and administrative questions affecting the Arab areas demand a knowledge of local customs and language. To effect the desired reduction in the expenditure which has hitherto been incurred in connection with the Arab countries, a very close scrutiny and control of local expenditure will be necessary. The formation of the special forces, referred to in paragraph 19, which will be required if Imperial funds are to be relieved of the heavy cost of maintaining regular units of the British or Indian armies in Mesopotamia and Palestine will demand expert military advice.

53. We assume that the Secretary of State will exercise his control through an Under Secretary, and an Assistant Under Secretary. We do not think that it is for us to consider whether either or both of these officials will require to be specially appointed for the purposes of the new Department, or whether the duties involved in the new responsibilities of the Colonial Office will be discharged by one or other of the existing Under Secretaries and Assistant Under Secretaries. The point at which the political and administrative, military, and financial branches should separate is, in our opinion, immediately below the Assistant Under Secretary. There would be three sub-divisions, organized as follows:—

(1.) Political and Administrative—

 Palestine.
 Mesopotamia.
 Aden and Arabia.

(2.) Military—

 Relations with the War Office and Air Ministry on questions arising out of the employment of regular British or Indian units.
 Organization of local troops and consequent provision of British personnel.

(3.) Financial.

54. In addition to the above general outline technical advice may be required upon such subjects as Muhammadan Law, Commerce, Public Works, &c.

It will probably be found possible for this technical advice to be provided in the main by existing branches of the Colonial Office.

55. We recommend that in forming the political and administrative sub-division of the new Department full use should be made of the services of officers with local experience, and that there should be free interchange between officers serving at home and abroad.

56. In Appendix A we present a diagram showing in outline our conception of the provisional organization required to discharge the functions that we have assigned

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tentatively to the new Department. But it is clear that the accuracy of any estimate of numbers must depend upon the policy of His Majesty's Government in the Arabian sphere, and the measure of control that it is proposed to exercise from London over the actions of the authorities on the spot. In any event we recommend that steps be taken immediately to provide accommodation on an adequate scale in order to avoid the dislocation that might otherwise be caused in the early days of the new organization. While it is difficult to make any close estimate of the number of officers required, we recommend that about twelve to fourteen rooms should be made available to accommodate the staff of the new Department. The necessary steps are being taken by the Office of Works in consultation with the Colonial Office.

57. Decisions of great consequence will have to be taken in the immediate future by the Government on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and it is, in our opinion, essential that he should have at his disposal an adequate staff directly the new responsibilities are transferred to him, if British expenditure in the Middle East is to be reduced effectively.

58. We recommend that in the first instance the new Department should be manned by officers loaned from parent Services and that no additional permanent commitment should be incurred until the future of the new Department can be gauged with greater precision.

59. We anticipate that the arrangements for securing the loan of the personnel from their parent services, and for obtaining the accommodation required, should be completed by the 1st March next.

We therefore recommend that the transfer of the new responsibilities to the Colonial Office should become effective upon that date.

VI.—SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

60. **Territorial sphere of the New Department** (paragraphs 2-15).

Subject to certain reservations the sphere of the new Department to include all the territories south and east of the newly defined boundary between the French mandated territories of Syria and the British mandated territories of Palestine and Mesopotamia (paragraph 6).

Reservations are made as regards Kurdistan (paragraph 8), the Persian Gulf littoral (paragraphs 9-12) and the Hedjaz (paragraphs 13-15).

61. **Scope of the New Department** (paragraphs 16-17).—The Colonial Office to become the responsible British authority on all matters relating to:—

- (a.) Administration and policy in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Aden.
- (b.) Policy in other Arab areas within the British sphere of influence.
- (c.) The delimitation of boundaries between British spheres and the territories of independent Arab rulers.
- (d.) All expenditure, whether civil or military, which may fall upon Imperial funds as a result of British responsibility for and interest in the areas concerned.

62. **Military arrangements** (paragraphs 18-33).

Relations between the Colonial Office and the War Office and Air Ministry (paragraphs 22-23).

The financial arrangements proposed to take effect as from the 1st April, 1921 (paragraph 27).

The High Commissioner in Mesopotamia to have the titular rank of Commander-in-Chief (paragraph 28).

The responsibility for the withdrawal of British forces from North-West Persia to remain with the War Office until this force has been withdrawn within the boundaries of Mesopotamia (paragraph 31).

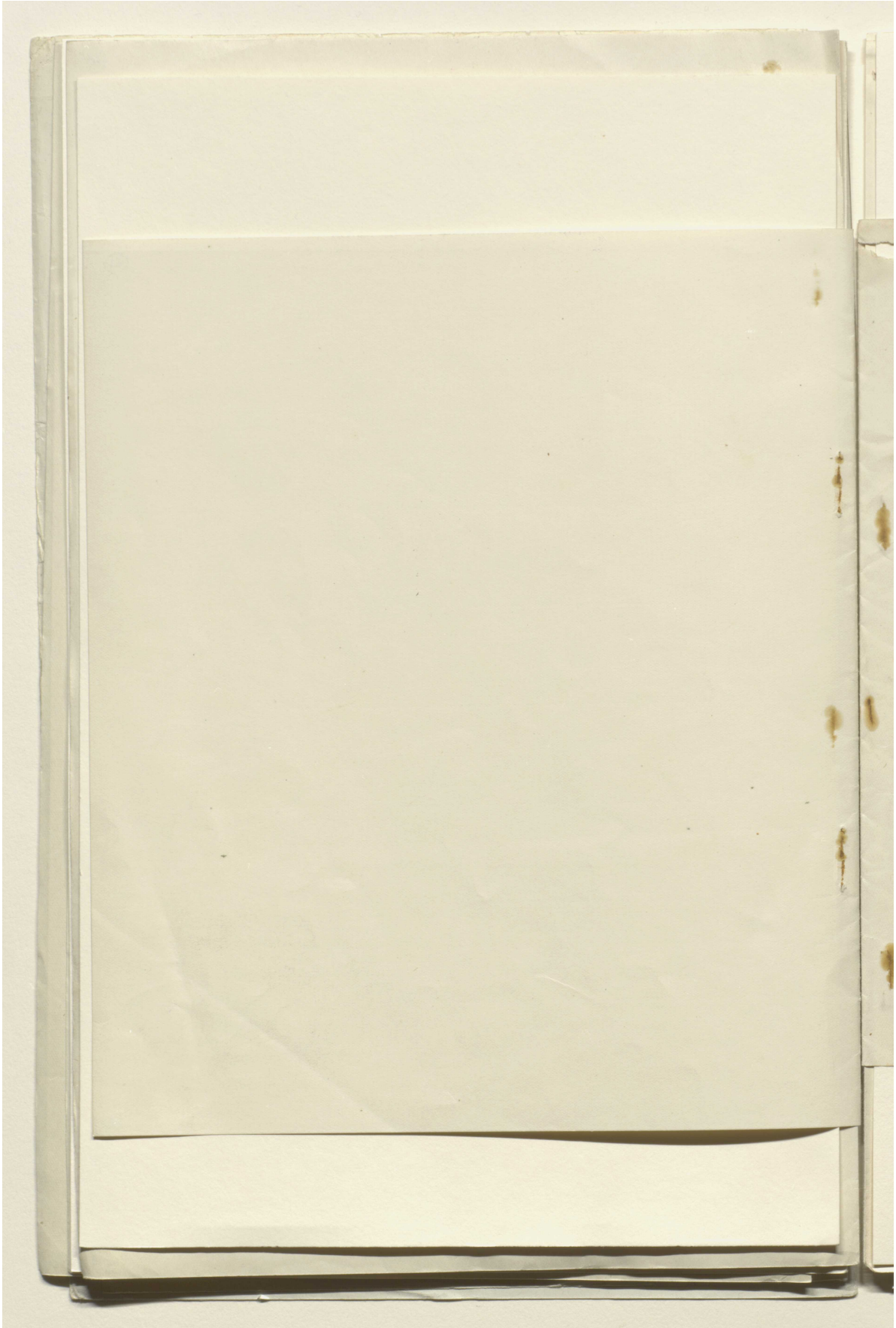
63. **Civilian services**.—The Palestinian service to remain distinct from other civilian services in the Middle East (paragraph 37).

The administration of the Persian Gulf littoral to remain under the control of the Government of India (paragraph 39).

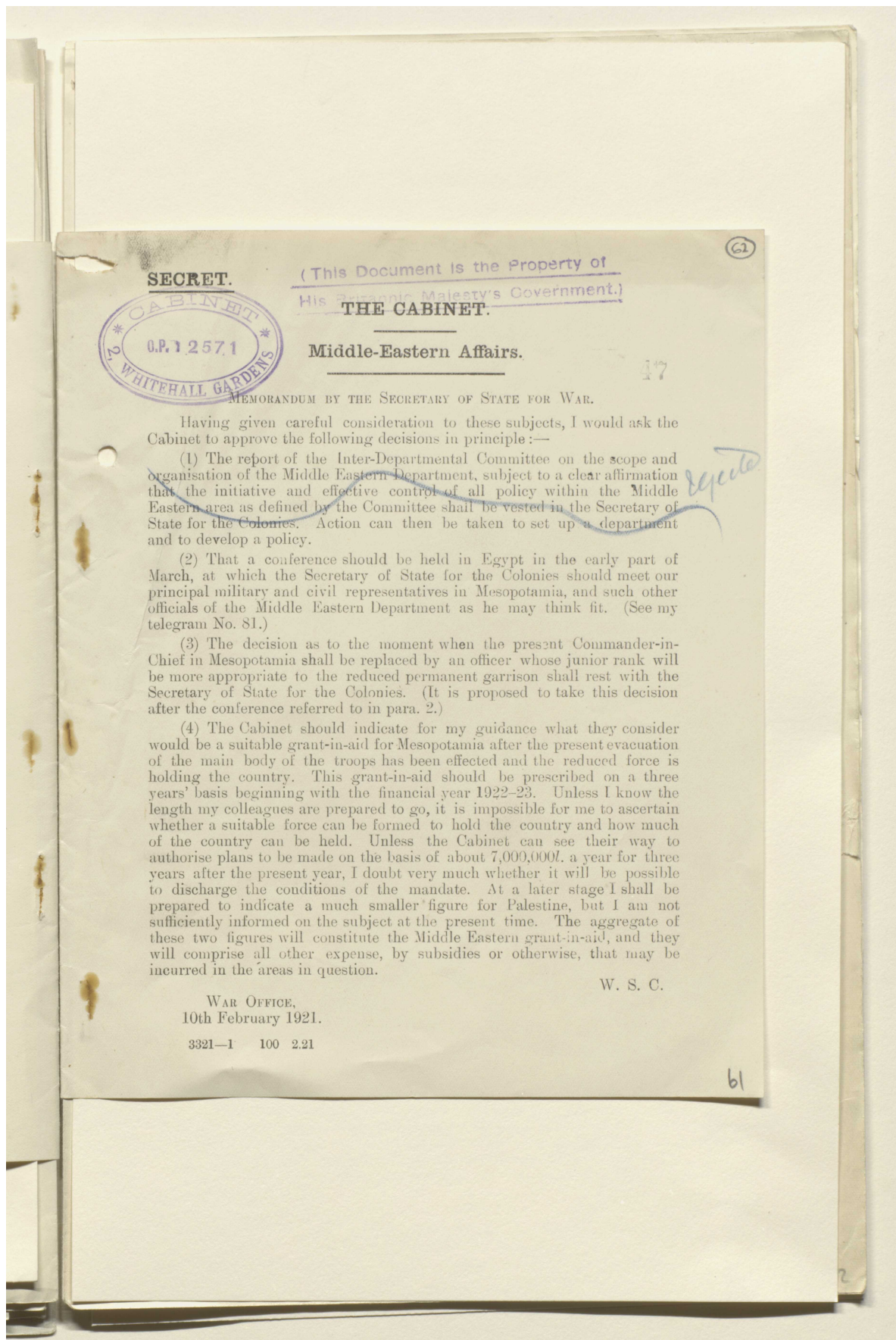
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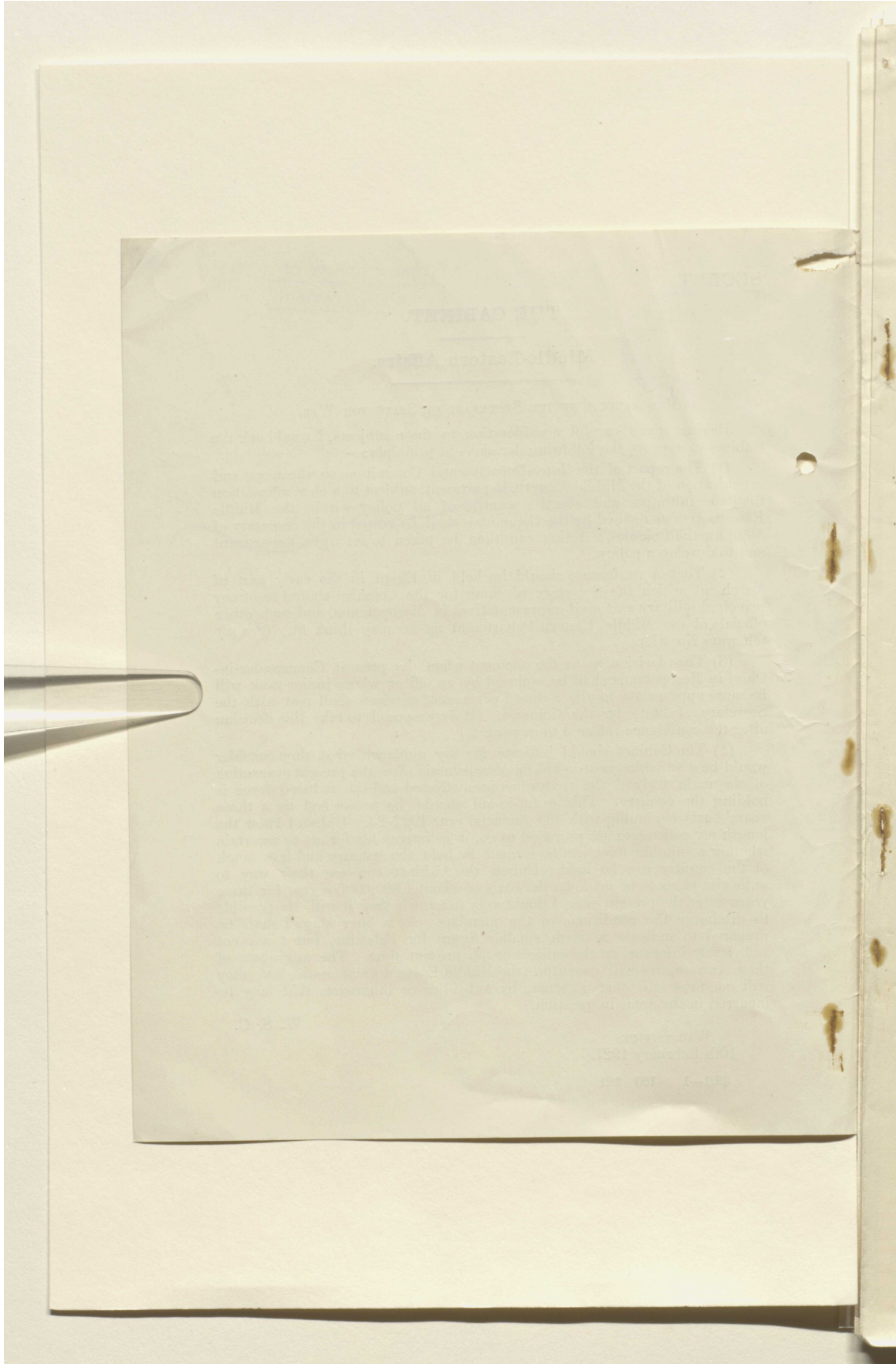
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SECRET.

MESOPOTAMIA.

PRIVATE TELEGRAMS.

1 *From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Mesopotamia,
8th January 1921.*

Clear the line.

Personal and Secret. Following from Secretary of State for War to you and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, to whom please communicate copy at once.

No. 1. I have been entrusted with the general direction of the Cabinet policy in Mesopotamia. At the moment of taking up this task I wish to define it precisely for your guidance and in order that you may be able to assist me to the full.

It is impossible for us to throw upon the British taxpayer the burdens for military expenditure in Mesopotamia which are entailed by your present schemes for holding the country. Unless some better method can be devised and brought into operation within the financial year 1921-22, retirement and contraction to the coastal zone is inevitable and must be accomplished as rapidly as possible. Seeing, however, that General Ironside's fighting troops cannot begin their retirement from North-West Persia till 1st April, and that Mosul must be held until at least his rearguard has reached Kanikin, it is certain that very considerable military forces must remain in Mesopotamia during the greater part of the financial year 1921-22. The presence of these forces for many months to come, and the effects produced upon the Arabs by the suppression of the rebellion and by the surrender of rifles, give me the hope that by the effective use of the resources at our disposal we may be able to set up an Arab Government, through whose agency the peaceful development of the country may be assured without undue demands upon Great Britain. It is to this policy that we must devote our efforts.

I will address you at an early date upon the selection of an Arab ruler.

It is scarcely appropriate to consider the permanent garrison of Mesopotamia in terms of brigades and divisions.

I contemplate the formation of an Imperial Mesopotamian Police Force (British) of exceptional individual quality, and the formation of Indian military units specially recruited from India or by volunteers from the forces now serving in Mesopotamia, together with an application of the system of air control which has already been elaborated.

I trust that by these methods, in regard to which action will be immediately begun, it may be found possible for us to do justice to the mandate which we have accepted.

Let me assure you of my earnest wish to collaborate with you in this task and thus to avoid the melancholy consequences attendant upon its failure.

Answered by Nos. 4 and 5.

2 *From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Mesopotamia,
8th January 1921.*

Clear the line.

From Secretary of State for War. No. 2. My immediately preceding telegram. Your position will remain as defined in War Office telegram to General Officer Commanding, Baghdad, 86089, dated 27th August.

3 *From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, 10th January 1921.
(Duplicate to General Haldane.)*

Personal and Secret.

87463. In pursuance of my No. 1. On your proposed rate of military reduction, I have had to take on Army Estimates for financial year 1921-22 over 25 millions, in addition to about one million on Air Estimates. Any saving which can be effected on this total without a disaster will greatly improve our position and chances of eventual success. You should therefore expedite the departure of every unit that can be

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spared and hold on only to the essential points. Do not keep artillery beyond what is needed for the kind of operation you have recently had to conduct. On the other hand, I am sending you two more air squadrons, the first starting within a month, making six in all. You should begin to apply the principles of the air scheme, at any rate in some parts.

(2) Committees have been set up at the War Office to frame a scheme for raising an Imperial Mesopotamian Police of high individual quality, in the first instance up to 2,000 men. Secondly, to frame a scheme for recruiting from India special regiments and battalions for permanent service in Mesopotamia up to 8,000 men. Thirdly, as an alternative, to consider the possibility and to frame a scheme for using West African troops.

(3) Until we know whether we are going to be able to devise a scheme for holding Mesopotamia, I cannot sanction railway scheme or permanent works apart, of course, from repairs to torn up lines.

(4) Prime Minister is anxious that I should visit Mesopotamia in March, and take necessary decisions on the spot. A light cruiser would bring me from Suez to Basra in seven days. Responsibility for deciding will rest with me, but I should like to know your view, together with itinerary of one month's duration in the country, and any advice about climate, &c.

(5) Let me have your answers jointly or severally to this telegram not later than the 21st January. Telegraph also fully on every point where you require my assistance.

Answered by Nos. 7 and 8.

4 *From High Commissioner, Baghdad, 13th January 1921.*

(Received 3 p.m.)

186 S. Personal and Secret. In reply to your personal and secret telegram No. 1 of 8th instant. Please communicate the following to Mr. Winston Churchill:—

"In order to obviate possible misinterpretation arising, mutilation or otherwise, I beg to repeat back salient points of your message as understood by me.

"I note your assumption of the direction of the Cabinet's policy in Mesopotamia.

"I gather that my estimate from 1922 onward, of one division for Baghdad and Mosul Vilayats and one brigade for Basra Vilayat as irreducible minimum compatible acceptance of Mandate, has been rejected as still too costly.

"I note that Mandate has been accepted, but that nevertheless the withdrawal of British garrison from Mesopotamia is intended, and will commence with withdrawal from Mosul as soon as tail of Ironside's force reaches Khanikin, and that thereafter His Majesty's Government hope to assure peaceful development of this country by less costly means.

"I learn that you personally contemplate carrying out this policy by the creation of an Imperial Police Force (? assisted by) Indian volunteer units, also by a system of air control.

"As regards above, your telegram No. 1 gave me the clear impression that you were conveying to me decisions of His Majesty's Government, both as to policy and plans; if that is the case, I am constrained to let you know at once that I am not prepared to associate myself with one or the other, and if pressed to do so, must, with deep regret, ask His Majesty's Government to accept (? my) resignation.

"If, on the other hand, they were not decisions for my (? guidance), but proposals for my comment, I shall, on hearing that from you, send reply in detail with reference to your telegram 87463, which has since reached me."

Answered by No. 10.

5 *From General Haldane, Mesopotamia, to Secretary of State,
13th January 1921.*

Your personal and secret telegrams, through India Office, No. 1, dated 8th January, received.

1. My views from a military point of view as to the necessary garrisons this country as a whole, and for the Basra vilayet alone, were expressed in my 0/2088/54, dated 15th November, and my X. 945, dated 21st December, to you.

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In my opinion, if chaos is to be avoided no reduction in the forces already sanctioned in Troopers 86763 D.M.O., dated 1st November, can be made until Arabs, or other forces, have proved themselves able to take the place of our troops, both for maintaining internal order and for resisting external aggression.

2. As regards the Air Force scheme, see my O/184/106 dated 25th November.

As a result of experience during 1920 I do not consider that the scheme, which would involve a large reduction of troops, could be applied to Mesopotamia without grave risks until the Royal Air Force have proved that they can maintain law and order in the country.

Though a valuable auxiliary, I do not consider the Royal Air Force can yet be considered as a primary force. For final restoration of order in any disturbed area and for (? protection of) communication, land forces are essential, and until the Royal Air Force are in a position to carry out the functions of transporting troops and war material all communication to air stations must be adequately guarded. For the relief of invested (? posts), land forces and transport are essential.

I have begun to experiment air control on the Upper Euphrates, and propose depending on that force to maintain order in the Middle Euphrates area between Hillah and Nasiriyah, to which I have allotted no troops.

Neither of these involved outlying air stations, with small garrisons liable to be invested as Air Force, will be supplied from Baghdad or Shaibah.

To apply this control at Mosul and Kirkuk would be dangerous. These areas are contiguous to the Turkish frontier and aerodomes would be liable to attack by artillery. Immediate relief of garrisons might be necessary and external attack would be certain to cause internal disturbances, to repress which all my mobile forces would be required. There is ample evidence of intention on the part of the Turks to make an attack on Mosul and reduction of troops there would precipitate their actions.

3. I have received your 87463, dated 10th January, and will reply after further consultation with Sir Percy Cox.

6 *From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Mesopotamia,
15th January 1921.*

Priority A.

314. Personal and Secret. Secretary of State for India's telegram of the 9th instant. We must carefully distinguish between policy and method. Do you think that Feisal is the right man and the best man? Failing him, do you prefer Abdullah to any local man? Have you put forward Feisal because you consider taking a long view he is the best man or as a desperate expedient in the hopes of reducing the garrisons quickly? If you are really convinced that Feisal is necessary, can you make sure he is chosen locally? Once I know your true mind on these points decision can be taken here immediately. We can then consider method of bringing about what we have decided on in the most favourable and diplomatic manner. I do not think Cabinet would allow French objection to debar us from taking the best course. I do not think it would be impossible to placate the French provided matters are handled with them candidly and courteously. Anyhow, do not let us slip into taking the wrong man against our better judgment.

Part II. Telegraph to me separately explaining when you propose National Assembly should meet and what its basis of election will be. I presume these conditions will be prescribed in relation to the end we have in view, namely, the good government of the country and the honourable discharge of our mandate without undue expense. Western political methods are not necessarily applicable to the East. Send me full information of your plan.

Answered by Nos. 11 and 12.

7 *From High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, 15th January 1921.
(Received 16th, 10 a.m.)*

Clear the line.

Private and personal.

222 S. My telegram 186 S. In view of despatch of General Haldane's telegram 1192 of the 13th instant, and the possibility of its urgent consideration by the Cabinet,

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I venture to submit my comment too, without awaiting the reply to my telegram above quoted. I will first comment on General Officer Commanding's telegram.

Para 1.—I agree, but subject to reservation that provided that a division is maintained in Baghdad and Mosul Vilayats, and the reduction begins in Basra Vilayat, I would be prepared, as far as I can see at present, to risk the reduction to one division and one brigade by end of 1921, or spring of 1922. When I say one division and one brigade I mean strength of trained forces, with necessary proportion of British to Indians, whether they are called Imperial Police, or Volunteers, or by other convenient designation.

Para. 2.—I agree that, while the Royal Air Force will be a valuable auxiliary, it can be nothing more for present purposes, and its employment will not necessarily allow reduction of land forces below my minimum estimate. We have to remember, moreover, that it is a most expensive arm to maintain.

With the rest of General Officer Commanding's telegram I generally concur.

I now offer comment on your telegram.

My primary observation is that the evacuation of the Mosul Vilayat, at the time proposed by you or at any time before the National Government, or His Majesty's Government are in a position to replace our troops by other forces, is incompatible with acceptance of mandate.

Secondly, I am sure neither your proposal nor the efforts of National Government to create their own forces can sufficiently materialise in time to admit of commencement of evacuation on arrival of General Ironside's forces at Khanikin. General Haldane's observation that he could begin to withdraw from Mosul at that moment, was simply a statement of military possibilities, made without consultation with me, and taking no account of the political aspect of such a project, or of the chaos which would result, if it were put into execution. I took steps to make this clear directly his telegram was shown me.

I fear that you attach much too much importance to effect of suppression of present rebellion and the collection of 50,000 rifles in the process. Provided that they are not again subjected to violent propaganda from outside, and that forces for the maintenance of internal security are not prematurely reduced below the safe minimum, I had every hope that lesson which they have now learned will last the tribes some time. (? But we) must remember that those of lower Euphrates are traditionally prone to rise against authority, whenever they realise that the Government is weak, and it is not safe to assume that if our armed strength is unduly weakened and propaganda renewed, they could not be got to rise again. In any case, the future of the Government depends on its ability to collect revenue, and these tribes will never pay revenue unless they know that Central Government is in a position to enforce payment in the last resort. It is true that 50,000 rifles will have been collected during our military operations, but fresh supplies are all the time coming in, and Jaafar Pasha, who has just returned from a tour in the disturbed districts estimates that there are still 300,000 rifles in Irak.

In conclusion, I venture to touch upon personal question. You are aware that after two or three weeks of discussion in London I was assured that His Majesty's Government had definitely decided to accept mandate and to stay where they now are as long as it was necessary to maintain their obligation(s) under it. On this assurance I agreed to come out and undertook to devote all my (? efforts) first to the early formation of a National Government and then to speedy creation of national forces in order to relieve His Majesty's Government gradually of the great expense at present borne by them in the maintenance of their army in this country. So far I have not (? failed in) my part of the task, and, although I have many difficulties to contend with and many others ahead, I have every (? hope of) continuing to make satisfactory progress towards the end in view, provided that pace is not unduly forced.

I can assure you that premature evacuation, or even talk of evacuation, especially at the moment when we are by no means free from menace of hostilities from the north in the spring will inevitably be cause of the collapse not only of the present provisional Government but of whole machinery of civil administration in Baghdad and Mosul vilayats now in critical state of transition.

I will reply separately regarding itinerary of your proposed visit to Mesopotamia after further consultation with General Officer Commanding-in-Chief to whom I am giving a copy of this telegram.

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8 *From General Haldane to Secretary of State, 19th January 1921.*

Clear the line.

X. 1244. Personal. Your 87463, dated 10th January.

I have suggested the immediate reduction of No. 5 Medium Battery, and intend to propose to War Office on completion of operations the reduction of the batteries of the Field Artillery Brigade from six to four guns each.

Labour is being reduced by some 10,000.

Any other reduction that may prove possible I will put forward.

Paras. 2 and 3 noted.

Para. 4. The following is proposed for your tour. Sir Percy and I will meet you at Basrah, where you would see local notables.

From Basrah to Baghdad by rail *via* Nasiriya and Hillah; from Baghdad to Mosul by rail and road; from Mosul visit outposts and then proceed *via* Kirkuk to Sulaimaniya, and back to Baghdad *via* Kirkuk and Kim(? dir)ban. From Baghdad visit Fallujah, Ramadi and Hit on the Upper Euphrates, also Karbala and Nejed and return Baghdad, proceed Basra by rail to Kut-el-Amara and thence by river. Climate may be variable; bedding, summer and winter clothing and sun hat, preferably Cawnpore Tent Club pattern, should be brought.

9 *From General Haldane, Baghdad, to Secretary of State, 19th January 1921.*

Clear the line.

X. 1247. Personal. Continuation my X. 1244, dated 19th. Your 87463, dated 10th, para. 1.

I have been considering the possibility of withdrawing to Baghdad a cavalry regiment from the Upper Euphrates which might later be dispensed with, and trusting entirely to (? aeroplanes) for maintenance of order beyond Fallujah. I asked opinion of High Commissioner with regard to bearing of proposal on civil administration.

2. His view is that withdrawal of the garrison now would be misunderstood by the population who would apprehend that they were being left in the lurch. Lawlessness would spread, a risk we cannot afford at present when position at Dair-Ez-Zor is uncertain. All revenue from Upper Euphrates area would be lost and British personnel would have to be withdrawn.

3. The estimated revenue from the Upper Euphrates area amounts to Rs. 8½ lakhs. And the cost of a cavalry regiment in the area to probably 100,000l. The saving from withdrawal would not compensate for the state of lawlessness within our boundaries which would ensue. I am therefore compelled for the present to put aside my proposals.

10 *From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, 23rd January 1921.*

Priority A.

33. Personal and Secret.

1. I am sorry to receive your telegram 186 S., but I hope that its tone is due to misunderstanding. I intend to try my utmost to preserve our control of Mesopotamia, and it is only if every scheme for reducing the present enormous military expenditure is rejected by those on the spot, and if no less costly methods can be devised, that the consequences indicated in my No. 1 will follow. It would surely be worth while to examine alternative methods patiently and considerately. No province in the British Empire has ever been acquired by marching in and maintaining a large regular army at the cost of the British Exchequer, but always by skilful and careful improvisations adapted to its special needs. We have still several months in which to decide whether any of these methods are feasible. Meanwhile you are wrong to suppose that your scheme of setting up one of the Sherriff's sons as local ruler has been rejected as a whole, and if you had waited to receive my further telegram this would have been clear to you.

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2. I quite understand your difficulties, and you in your turn ought to try to realise the difficulties which exist at home and face the inexorable facts. For instance, we have spent over 30,000,000*l.* on military expenditure in Mesopotamia in 1920-21. We are probably committed to a further 25,000,000*l.* in 1921-22. You now propose for several years after 1921-22 a garrison of one division, one brigade, and line of communication troops, which, with the Air Force, would not cost less than 12,000,000*l.* or 14,000,000*l.* a year. I do not think there is the slightest chance of the Cabinet or Parliament agreeing to expenditure on such a scale for a country which we only hold under the League of Nations and are pledged to return to the Arabs at the earliest possible moment. The maintenance of the British Navy itself may well turn upon the expenditure of 12,000,000*l.* or 14,000,000*l.* a year on new construction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not know which way to turn for money, and the whole country is furious at the present rate of expenditure, no part of which is more assailed than money spent in Mesopotamia.

3. I have undertaken very reluctantly to face this storm and difficulty in the hope that all British work and sacrifice in Mesopotamia may not be cast away, and I have a right to loyal aid and support from the men on the spot. I am not committed to any particular alternative method of providing the force necessary to sustain the Arab Government, but I am determined that every avenue shall be promptly and thoroughly explored. For this reason I have set up without a day's delay the Committees which are necessary.

4. Why should you assume that ordinary regular troops organised in divisions and brigades, with their lavish and ponderous staffs, are the only form in which the requisite element of force can be supplied? Surely it is worth while considering whether a smaller number of men of much higher individual quality would not be just as effective and less costly to maintain. Again, Air Marshal Trenchard, who has great experience not only of the air, but of the Mohammedan population of West Africa, has elaborated in full detail a scheme for maintaining control once peace and order have been re-established. Thirdly, there is the question of whether the Indian troops who will be required in support of the Arab Government cannot be better raised specially for Mesopotamian service, and whether a higher efficiency and more British officers and a proportion of British non-commissioned officers per unit would not enable the same work to be done by fewer men with a consequent diminution in the difficulties of supply.

5. If all alternative methods fail and we have to choose between an indefinite recurring charge of 12,000,000*l.* or 14,000,000*l.* a year or retirement to Basra and the immediate coastal zone, I have no doubt whatever that the retirement will be ordered. You would take a great responsibility if, before any such decision has been taken, you deprived His Majesty's Government of your local knowledge and influence, and thus diminished gravely the chances of a satisfactory solution.

Answered by No. 13.

11 *From High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, 24th January 1921. 1049*
(Received 11.15 a.m.)

Clear the line.

258 S. Personal and secret. Your telegram of the 15th January, 344. I have delayed replying in the hope that some of the parties concerned would show their hand, or ventilate their opinion. During the month which has passed since I made suggestions regarding Faisal, situation has developed on the following lines:—

Firstly, Saiyid Talib has specifically conveyed to me through his British Adviser, that he has definitely abandoned intention of becoming the candidate for Amirate of Mesopotamia, and proposes to cease propagandising for that purpose.

On receipt of above intimation, I had no doubt that there was something behind it, and have since found following explanation.

The Naqib when he first took office at my urgent instance disclaimed all ambition to compete for Sultanate. Since then he has never again referred to the subject, except to express the opinion that Shereef's family have no right to look in the direction of Irak. I have lately learnt, however, from a confidential employee of his, that he does now wish to be a candidate in the interests of his children. It appears that he recently broached the subject to Saiyid Talib and asked latter to

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support his candidature, Talib agreed to do so, and hence latter's communication to me, but his real motive in doing so, is that he believes Naqib's days are numbered and that he himself would then step into his shoes. As regards people of Irak it is proved by documents which have recently come into our possession that last spring all the principal Shiah Sheikhs on the Lower Euphrates who have been leaders of recent insurrections were in communication with Faisal and Abdulla or their agents and were congratulating one on his success in Syria and urging other to come over to Mesopotamia.

There is also, no doubt, that these Shiah tribes still want a Sherif, because they believe that Sherif and his family are more favourable to Shiah than a member of any other Sunni family would be.

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From High Commissioner, Baghdad, 24th January 1921.

(Received 25th, 10 a.m.)

Clear the line.

259 S. Personal and secret. In continuation of my telegram No. 258 S. On the other hand there is a growing faction here both among the extremist politicians who want no mandate, and the moderates who would accept it, who profess to consider that Sherif family have discredited themselves by their hostility to the Turks and the Caliph, and that the interests of Irak would be best served by introduction of a Turkish Prince. They advocate this also on the ground that under a Turkish Prince the Sunnis will be better able to maintain their predominance over the Shiahs, both in administration and in matters of religion, and secondly, because they think that control of mandate will be lighter with a Turkish ruler than with an Arab. One who is in close touch with Nationalist elements here, expresses confident opinion that among politicians of Baghdad the candidates for Amirate now stand in the following order:—(1) Turkish Prince, (2) son of Sherif, (3) Naqib, with little following, and (4) Talib, with still less

The trend of opinion in favour of a Turk is significant and I think dangerous to our interests. I also notice considerable disinclination on the part of the present Government to give Shiahs reasonable share in it. As to considerations which prompted my suggestion regarding Faisal, I believed then, and believe now, that one of the sons of Sherif would be welcome to considerable majority of people of Irak. They know nothing about their individuals and would probably expect Abdulla, as he was nominated last year, but I do not think that they would care which it was.

I suggested Faisal, not because I have any personal knowledge of any of them, but because I thought that his experience during the war would make him the most competent and effective for the urgent work of creating an army, and because I thought that he had the most prestige. Abdulla, as far as I know, is less competent, but more friendly; while Jafar Pasha and his friends are favouring Zaid on the ground that he is young and could be trained. I do not think from (*s.c.*) the Irak much matters which.

As regards election, I only received the final printed draft of electoral law for scrutiny a few days ago, and it will take some days to deal with. Meanwhile, I find strong feeling among the Arab officials recently nominated to posts in provinces under the new scheme that they would like to give time to get into the saddle and learn their districts before they are confronted with the possibly serious worries connected with an election months of (*sic*) Ramazan fall in (*sic*) May, and they must either be got over before that, which may be difficult, or postponed till it is over, pros and cons requiring further thought.

In any case it is useless, in my opinion, starting election until the mandate is published and the effect known. I hope that publication will take the wind out of the sails of the "No Mandate" party, but it is impossible to say for certain, and it is no less important for us than for the general public to know where we are in this connection before the elections are brought on. I am of opinion that mandate must first be published. Then if we wish to let Sherif's family enter the list, as I recommend, we should let him offer himself and see result.

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13 *From High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, 26th January 1921.* 1223
(Received 28th, 12 noon.)

273 S. Personal and Secret. Your personal and secret telegram No. 33, dated 22nd January. Your telegram No. 1 defined the policy of the Cabinet precisely for my guidance, and wording of it as received by me appeared to convey clearly that, though they had accepted mandate, it was fixed intention of His Majesty's Government to evacuate Mosul as soon after the 1st April as Gen. Ironside's rearguard reached Khanikin. My acceptance of this course was assumed in spite of my telegrams 104 and 119 S., which had fully explained impossibility of such withdrawal consistently with acceptance of mandate. Such a decision left me, and would leave me no alternative but immediate resignation, with the fullest sense of responsibility.

The method by which you contemplated carrying out the policy above was one which might, or might not, prove feasible after examination, but in any case could not possibly have taken shape in time to replace troops before their proposed withdrawal in the spring or early summer.

The proposal to which I referred as having been rejected as a whole, was not primarily the introduction of Faisal, but the reduction of the mandatory troops to one division and one brigade after one year to which the proposal of the introduction of Faisal was to be an accompaniment. With the above explanation I may say that I fully appreciate the very difficult position in which the Cabinet is placed, in matter of expenditure, and I am entirely with you as to absolute necessity of cutting it down, and ready to co-operate in exploring every avenue for so doing, promptly and thoroughly, provided that, during the process of investigation or experiment no premature action in the direction of withdrawal or reduction below the safe minimum is taken.—Cox.

Answered by No. 17.

14 *From Secretary of State to General Haldane, 26th January 1921.*

Please comment on the following:—"In the event of Cabinet deciding upon evacuation of Mesopotamia and withdrawal to immediate vicinity of Basrah town, bulk of our troops to remain in the country till hot weather is over. All preparations to be made meanwhile for the swiftest possible evacuation after that period. Stores, munitions, &c., to be sent out of the country continually, meanwhile. No detachments to be allowed beyond railheads, which would compromise the speed of the general withdrawal once it has begun. On this basis, what would be the maximum rate of withdrawal if it began in September? What are the limiting factors which prevent your moving the troops thus cleared of stores, refugees, &c., out of the country in three months, so that by 31st December we shall be responsible for nothing outside Basrah town? I do not at all understand why you should find any difficulty in executing this operation provided your communications are clear and your troops are all on rail and river communications by 21st September. To move 90,000 men along a railway and two rivers in three months is surely a very moderate demand, *i.e.*, only 1,000 men a day. You should assume that the port of Basrah will be kept fully supplied with shipping, so that all echelons can be embarked as soon as they arrive. Do not concern yourself with the shipping problem at all, nor with any other consideration than the purely military operation."

15 *From Secretary of State to General Haldane, 28th January 1921.*

Clear the line.

Personal and Secret. Quartermaster-General states we were feeding on 1st December 1920, in Mesopotamia and Persia:—

British, 19,360; natives, 86,117; native followers, 46,400; *native labourers, 23,746; local labourers, 13,501; civilians, 3,310; refugees, 33,351. Total personnel, 225,785. Animals (principally donkeys), 53,198.

This is no doubt one of the reasons why we are being driven out of the province by the expense. Let me have as soon as possible your own anticipated programme

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-of reductions under all or any of these heads on the basis of (a) the two division standard, (b) the one division standard plus ancillaries in both cases. You will receive a further telegram on this subjects from troopers.

16 *From General Haldane, Baghdad, to Secretary of State,
2nd February 1921.*

Clear the line.
Your 87663, 27th.

1. I assume the following conditions in my reply below :—

(a) That decision to evacuate country, with the exception of Basrah, will be communicated to me before the end of March so that all surplus munitions, stores, &c., and refugees can be cleared before the (? final) movement of troops begins.

(b) That peace conditions, external and internal, will prevail.

2. The limiting factors in respect to speedy movement are the (? traffic) capacity of the various means of transporting troops. These are:—Railway, Shergat to Baghdad. Railway, Kingarban to Baghdad. Railway, Baghdad to (? Kut-el-Amara). River, Kut-el-Amara to Basrah. The first three (? may be) ignored as the ruling factor is the fourth.

3. By April the Inland Water Transport will have been reduced to a fleet capable of delivering 600 tons daily. With this fleet the movement of the force down river will take 5½ months.

4. If the movement of troops from Mosul and Kirkuk be begun on 1st September the withdrawal could be completed by the end of February.

5. If conditions permit of use of the Baghdad-Basrah Railway and the Disposals Board have not sold out of country the vessels now being handed over to them, the speed of withdrawal could be increased slightly and the movement completed by end of January.

The Baghdad-Basrah Railway however cannot be used without risk which it would not be justifiable to accept.

17 *From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Baghdad, 7th February 1921.*

Personal and secret. Many thanks for your 273 S. I quite understand your position and sympathise with it. Position here is also very difficult.

18 *From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Baghdad,
7th February 1921.*

Clear the line.

No. 81. Personal and Secret. The questions at issue cannot be settled by interchange of telegrams. I cannot, in view of approaching Imperial Conference, find time to visit Mesopotamia. I propose therefore a conference in Egypt beginning during first or second week of March. A light cruiser can bring you from Basra to Suez in approximately seven days. Conference would take a week. You could therefore be back in Mesopotamia after absence of less than a month. I should wish you to bring with you General Haldane and General Ironside, also your chief financial adviser. I shall be accompanied by principal officers of new Middle Eastern Department of Colonial Office.

Main questions to be settled are following:—First, the new ruler. Second, future size, character and organisation of the future garrison. Third, the time-table of reduction from present strength to that garrison. Fourth, total amount of the grant-

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in-aid. Fifth, arising out of above the extent of territory to be held and administered. After such a conference I shall be in a position to make definite recommendations to the Cabinet for action.

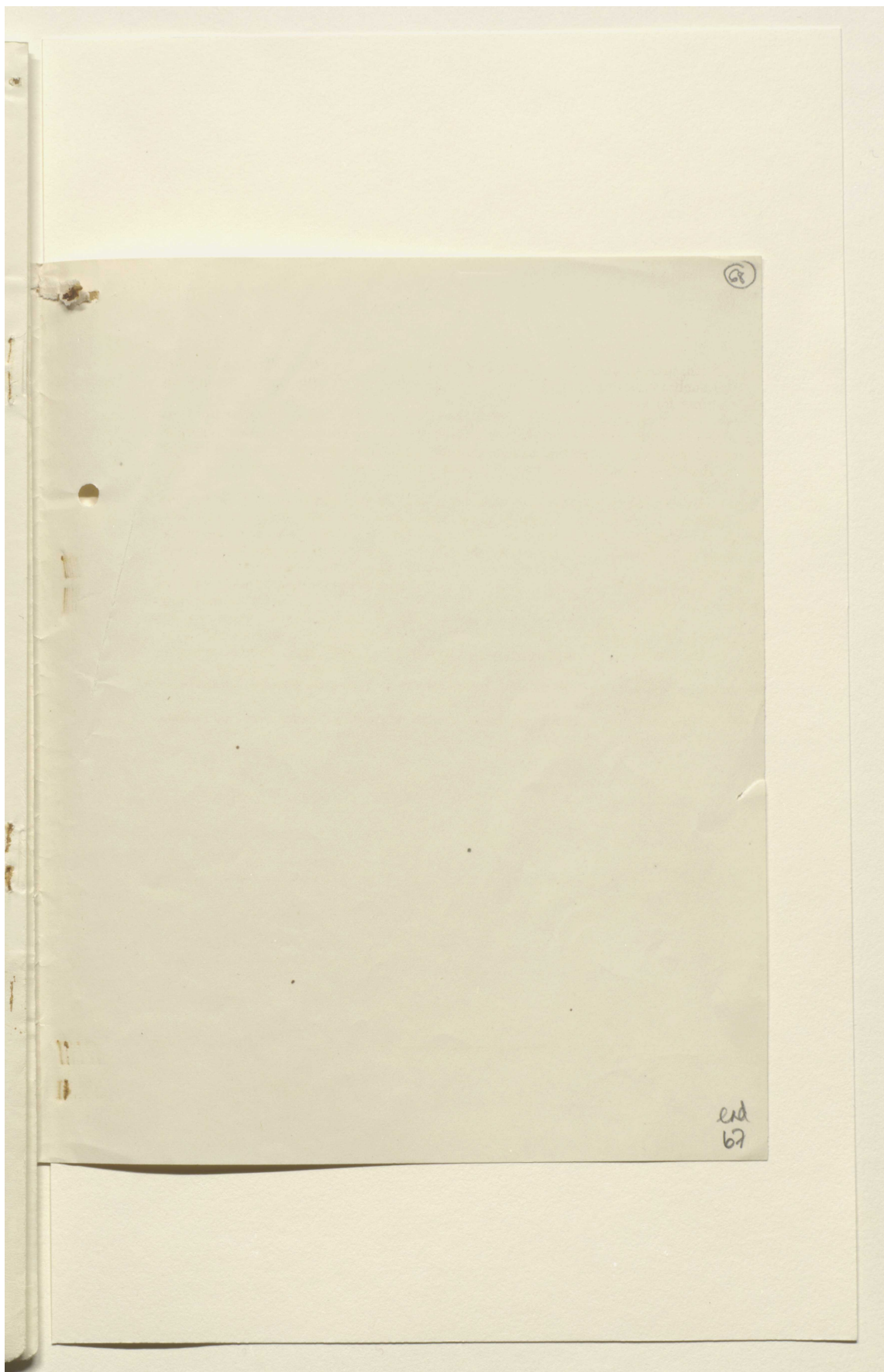
I shall also endeavour to use this conference as an occasion for getting into personal touch with the various British authorities in the Middle Eastern triangle who are being placed under the authority of the Colonial Office, such as Resident of Bushire, High Commissioner of Palestine and Administrator of Aden, who are also being summoned.

New department will comprise within its sphere an effective control of all factors in the Arabian problem. It is greatly to be hoped that the Inter-Allied Conference summoned in London for 21st February will revise Treaty of Sevres so as to secure a real peace with Turkey. I hope this result will be known to us at the time of our discussions.

I am sorry to put you to this trouble, but it is absolutely necessary and I cannot do more than meet you half-way. I must therefore request you to facilitate carrying out of my proposal to the utmost of your power; but of course, if you consider your absence from your post for nearly a month would be disastrous, you should state your case. In the event of a conference being impossible, I shall then have to come to decisions here as to the actual course to be followed. If conference in Egypt proves feasible, it is desirable that we should have our hands as free as possible in order to take the best decisions from a central point of view.

Show this to the General and reply as soon as possible in order that exact dates can be fixed.

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