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No. 10

U.S. Consulate
Jerusalem Oct. 2 1882

Hon. John Davis
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that during the past three months I have watched with care and considerable anxiety the progress of events in Palestine as connected with the troubles in Egypt, but at no moment has it seemed to me that the emergency demanded a special report to the Department. It is now, fortunately, too late to indulge in speculations with regard to Arabi Pasha or the movements of the English army in Egypt; still it may be of interest to put on record some facts illustrative of the political condition of this country at the present time and during the crisis through wich, it is to be hoped we have safely passed.

It can now be asserted as a fact beyond dispute that once if not twice during the past few weeks we have been on the verge of a terrible catastrophe. At first the friends of Arabi worked in secret and the very existence of such friends was denied by some of the best informed Europeans.

But as their numbers increased their movements assumed a bolder and more open character, and a crusade against the infidels was actualy preached in the mosques, while the common Moslems became very defiant in their manner and language and not only denounced but insulted both Christians and Europeans openly upon the streets. The native Christians have lived, during the last three months, in actual terror, expecting the worst, and not knowing at what moment the storm might burst upon them.

It is known that Arabi Pasha had, for some months previous to the outbreak in Egypt, secret agents at work throughout Palestine and among the Bedouin tribes to the east and south of us, and I have what seems to be credible authority for the statement that the same was true of Arabia also. As regards the Mohammedans of Palestine there have been hardly two parties; by which I mean that the sympathy for Arabi Pasha has been deep and almost universal embracing as it has all classes from the lowest fellahin to the Governor himself.

While, however, his Excellency Raouf Pacha the Governor of Palestine, has been the admirer and warm friend of Arabi Pasha, and while he has not hesitated to express openly his sympathy for him and his interest in the succes of his cause, his course on the other hand has been such, in some respect at least, as to merit the approval and the thanks of Europeans and of all those who desire the peace of the country, and whose lives and property have been at stake. For example during the month and fast of Ramadan he gave orders that all coffee shops were to be closed at a certain hour (earlier than usual) lest if allowed to remain open late, discussions and disputes between christians and moslems might arise, which would lead to serious disturbances. The full importance of such an order can be best appreciated by those who are most familiar with Oriental life and customs. Furthermore he openly warned all mohammedans against giving offence in any way to Christians,- advice which has by no means been generally followed.

The Governors good sense and respect for law has been further shown by the prompt arrest of the Sheiks of several Moslem villages numbering twenty or more, who had planned to commence the massacre of Christians on a certain day. One of those concerned informed the Pasha of the plot and this led to their arrest. How long these men were kept in confinement I do not know, but a sufficient period for the Pasha to show to Europeans that, openly at least, he disapproved of their (the plotters) conduct.

The actual out breaks in this province have been few and insignificant with the single exception of that in the district of Hebron. There the disturbance threatened at one time to become a very serious matter, and ten or more persons were actually killed. The Government claimed that this outbreak had nothing to do with politics but was confined solely to the moslems who had taken advantage of the excited state of affairs to settle some local feuds, and after a few arrests were made apparent quiet was again restored. But the other side of the story is thought to be quite as worthy of credence, namely that the matter was closely connected with politics and that the moslems were hoping to make this or some such event the pretext for a general uprising. It may be of interest to mention

mention that the English in Egypt sent agents to Syria and Palestine to purchase horses and mules. Several hundred of these animals were collected at the seaports of these animals were collected at the seaports of Beirut and Jaffa. Between thirty an forty were bought in Jerusalem and while being taken to Jaffa the thirteen men in charge of them were arrested and imprisoned, while the horses were brought back to this city. This was done by order of the Governor Raouf Pacha. The men being Turkish subjects, were charged with the intention of going to Egypt to join the English service and thus of fighting against their coreligionists. A Christian judge who stands high in the estimation of the Governor conducted the examination of the suspected parties, and found that there was no evidence against them at least no evidence that would justify their punishment. Mr Moore the English Consul, interceded for the men and even made a direct demand for their release which was accordingly granted.

Meanwhile an order had come from Constantinople for the release of these men and likewise permitting the shipment of the horses to Egypt. The affair created the most intense excitement. The bitter feeling between Christians and Moslems became suddenly inflamed and had not the news of the first defeat of Arabi's forces arrived at that juncture, the most disastrous results might have followed. The sympathy that has existed for Arabi Pasha has been illustrated in another way, namely, by the gloom and despondency that have come over the Moslems here since the news of the capture of Arabi has been confirmed.

It is noticeable that since the arrival of this news, his Excellency the Governor has been very much depressed and the feeling manifested by some not so high in rank as the Pasha has been touching in the extreme, since they looked to Arabi Pasha as their spiritual leader and the one who was to have delivered them from the oppression of the Turk.

The present movement in the Mohammedan world so far as I can judge, seems to have been directed quite as much against the Turk as against Europeans. The Mohamedans have long been desirous of cutting themselves loose from Constantinople and of establishing a new religious centre some where in Arabia. Hence perhaps, fearing the consequences, the Sultan may have hesitated to declare Arabi a rebel, and the great anxiety with which the Moslems in this country awaited the issue of the first encounters of Arabi with the English. Had Arabi in these encounters achieved marked successes, no one can divine what uprisings and massacres these might have been in all Mohammedan countries.

While I trust that the Department will not consider that I am occupying too much space with events and facts that are already past, I am happy to state that at the present moment comparative quiet exists in all parts of Palestine, and the inhabitants of all parties and religions are rejoicing together in the prospect of returning peace, with which it is to be hoped will come like wise prosperity.

As this is my first report to the Department I may be allowed to refer to the fact that the pleasantest relations exist between myself and my colleagues and that the Pasha himself has shown me special attention. Indeed it gives me pleasure to report that Americans seem just now to enjoy the special favor of these Eastern rulers and these people

I remain Sir Respectfully
your obedient servant

Consul

No 11

U.S. Consulate at
Jerusalem Oct 7th 1882

Hon. Alvey A. Adee
Third Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir.

I have the honor to inform you that the U.S. Ship "Tripoli" Comdr. H. B. Seeley, arrived at Jaffa from Alexandria September 30th. Seven officers and twenty three men made a short visit to Jerusalem on the 1st and 2d of October. The