1949 British Policy in Syria

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Summary:

Britain supports Syrian opposition parties--Hizb al-Shaab and the Baath Party.

Credits:

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Original Scan Translation - English Le Gaildellam 1-11/12

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British policy in Syria

Britain is inciting two strong parties against Field Marshal Husni al-Za'eem.

Hizb al-Shaab and the Baath Party that enjoy support by a popular majority in Syria are in favour of reaching an understanding with Iraq. In spite of HE Field Marshal Husni al-Za'eem's decision to dissolve all Syrian political parties and dose their offices with red wax, some parties are still operating in secret.

Hizb al-Shaab

Hizb al Shaab, which is headed by former deputy Rushdi al-Kikhya and has 36 seats in Parliament, started operating once again a few days ago and its leaders are holding secret meetings in Aleppo and Homs, two cities in which the Party enjoys the support of the overwhelmingly majority of the population. The most significant among these meetings was the one held at the home of HE Faydi al-Atassi, the former Syrian parliamentarian and the politician who entrusted Husni al-Za'eem with forming a transitional government after the coup d'état in Syria. I understood that Britain, after failing to compel Field Marshal Husni al-Za'eem to do its bidding, and after the latter shifted his policies in favour of America, France, and the Cairo-Riyadh axis, has once again roused these parties and called them to duty. It succeeded in doing this given that these parties' programmes and aims coincide with its own with respect to the establishment of the Greater Syria or the so-called Fertile Crescent. Several Hizb al-Shaab leaders have told me that they favour the conclusion of an agreement with Iraq and I felt the same tendency on the part of some party members operating in other parts of the country. I understood that Hizb al-Shaab had refused to cooperate with Field Marshal Husni al-Za'eem for many reasons, chief among which is the Party's desire to put on trial all those who held power in Syria for the past six years. Furthermore, the Party has its own personal opinion about reinstating constitutional live in Syria; it favours the election of a Founding Council which would be entrusted with writing a new constitution for the country, and the formation of a neutral government to oversee the writing of a new Legislative Election Law and the holding of new elections.

Hizb al-Shaab's contacts

I noticed that Hizb al-Shaab maintains many avenues of contact with the Arab Baath Party, one of the most powerful parties in Syria that boasts among its membership a large number of worthy youths; these contacts might culminate in an agreement between the two parties. Both parties believe that the current regime in Syria is a military dictatorship and that it strayed far from the democratic path they aspire to follow.

I also know that Hizb al -Shaab has strong relations with a number of Iragi parties.

America and France

There is a belief within Syrian political circles that Britain will not leave the situation in Syria as is, and will not allow America and France to continue operating politically and economically in the country as freely as they are doing now. It has therefore established contact with these parties in order to create an opposition movement against Field Marshall Husni al-Za'eem who is currently pursuing a humiliating and flagrant foreign policy.