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CAIRO 1921

TEN DAYS THAT MADE THE MIDDLE EAST

C. BRAD FAUGHT

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To Neil Newitte and Trevor Lloyd

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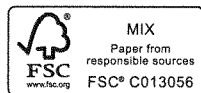
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THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In the autumn of 1918, as the catastrophic First World War wound down along the Western Front, far to the east in the Syrian capital city of Damascus a rapturous celebration of the country's newly won liberation from four centuries of Ottoman rule broke out. On the morning of 1 October the Australian Desert Mounted Corps, a part of General Edmund Allenby's combined British and imperial force, had led the way into the still-burning and chaotic city. Soon thereafter, and in a respectful nod to the impending arrival of the Arab Northern Army fighting in the name of Prince Faisal of the Hashemite dynasty of the Hejaz region of Arabia, the Australians would withdraw from the conquered city in order that the Arabs alone might enjoy their supreme and historic moment of triumph.¹ And enjoy it they did. Amidst shouts of joy and piercing ululation, the vanquishing of the Ottomans was savoured throughout the city of 300,000 that had served historically as the focal point of pan-Arab society. Revelling in the experience also was the young British officer, Lieutenant-Colonel T.E. Lawrence. Having started out as an Arab Bureau deskman in Cairo early in 1915, the intrepid Lawrence had

gone on to become Faisal's chief military adviser. In the process he had become a heroic figure to most Arabs. Known to them as 'Aurens', later on that first day of October he drove into Damascus in his armoured Rolls-Royce, nicknamed 'Blue Mist'. Wearing full Arab dress as usual, Lawrence was 'cheered by name', as he recalled later, 'covered with flowers, kissed indefinitely, and splashed with attar of roses from the house-tops'.²

Belying the celebratory nature of Lawrence's welcome in Damascus, however, was the utter exhaustion he felt by this late stage in the war. After some two years of life amidst the harsh desert battlefields of Arabia, Palestine and Syria, Lawrence was both emotionally and physically spent. He had fought hard, led desperate men, and endured a severe beating and rape at the hands of Ottoman captors, while all the time nursing the supreme hope of helping the Arabs achieve their independence from Ottoman rule.³ But over the next forty-eight hours in Damascus that persistent hope would begin to falter in the face of the even stronger persistence of Anglo-French realpolitik. Two days after Lawrence's arrival in the city, Faisal would make a triumphant entrance of his own – on horseback, followed a few hours later by Allenby.

The charismatic Arab sharif, or prince, and the stern British commander had agreed to meet that afternoon at a local hotel in order for Allenby to inform his counterpart of the British government's uncompromising plans for the newly liberated Syria, plans that would put paid to Faisal's hopes for immediate Arab independence. Despite being allies in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire for the preceding two years, neither man had met the other in person before. Upon their meeting, Allenby was impressed immediately by Faisal, judging him to be, as he wrote later to his wife, 'keen', 'fine', 'straight in principle'.⁴ To Faisal, according to Lawrence's description, Allenby appeared as 'gigantic and red and merry, fit representative of the Power which had thrown a girdle of humour and strong dealing around the world'.⁵ Over the course of a briskly tense thirty-

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minute meeting that day, the two men would set in motion a burgeoning plan for a new style of Middle East governance.

The Hotel Victoria, the site of their meeting, no longer stands in the centre of Damascus, having given way long ago to the city's twentieth-century urban development. But in 1918 it was the only 'A-class' hotel in the city and for half an hour on the afternoon of 3 October its luxurious interior became the scene of a remarkable late-wartime encounter between Allenby and Faisal. Lawrence, as Faisal's main British adviser, was present also, and the meeting's controversial outcome was of such great disappointment to him that he abruptly quit the war at that very moment and headed for home. The meeting would prove to be a rigid exercise in intra-imperial wartime enforcement.

Allenby had come to it with instruction from the British government to make clear to Faisal that the future of Syria was one that necessarily required the presence of formal French supervision, a state of affairs necessitated by the Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement, arrived at by both countries two years earlier in 1916 (see below, p. 28). 'But did you not tell him that the French were to have the Protectorate over Syria?' So asked an exasperated Allenby of Lawrence after Faisal had balked when told of the restrictive condition that had been placed upon future Syrian independence. 'No, Sir, I know nothing about it', Lawrence had replied, according to the account of the proceedings offered later by the Australian general Harry Chauvel, who was also present at the meeting. Disingenuousness is rarely a useful tack in negotiations, and certainly Allenby was angered by Lawrence's feigned ignorance over the provisions of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Allenby became angrier still when Lawrence said he would refuse to work in tandem with the French liaison officer who must now be assigned to Faisal. Instead, Lawrence indignantly stated, he was due for leave and was therefore going to take it immediately. An obviously upset Allenby shot back: 'Yes! I think you had!', and with that a dejected Lawrence left the meeting.⁶ Outside the hotel he met up with Lieutenant-Colonel Pierce Joyce, one of his

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close colleagues from the desert campaign, who found him at that moment to be 'a depressed and insignificant figure in dirty unwashed Arab clothes'. After a brief exchange, Lawrence said, 'I am going home for my work is done'.⁷ By the next evening he had left Damascus altogether – a city to which he would never return – and was on his way to Egypt and from there a return to England.

Later, in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, his highly personal memoir of the Arab Revolt, Lawrence would express regret for the manner of his peremptory departure from the Middle East: 'at once I knew how much I was sorry'.⁸ But if subsequent generations are inclined on occasion to go looking for a moment when the term 'Middle East' began to enter the lexicographical front rank of international affairs, the Damascus meeting of Allenby and Faisal followed by Lawrence's abrupt and regretful farewell serves well as a candidate. Very soon thereafter however, and in light of the fact that he believed the Arabs to have been betrayed at Damascus, Lawrence would embark on a protracted attempt to convince both the British and French governments that Faisal should be allowed to keep and govern the land that his Arab forces had helped to win for the Allies: 'fighting King Faisal's post-war political battles', as Joyce described it later.⁹ For the doggedly committed Lawrence this campaign would run all the way until March of 1921, when it culminated with ten days of crucial policymaking at Cairo.

The nature of what Lawrence, together with a number of other leading figures of the day, would attempt to achieve at Cairo had sprung directly from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East during the First World War. Its defeat had clear and wide-ranging ramifications for British – as well as for French and Russian – imperial interests in the region. As the Victorian era drew to a close in the late nineteenth century, the British Empire had found itself in the midst of a complicated and ever-changing geopolitical environment.¹⁰ A unified and imperial Germany had emerged

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as a clear rival, its industrial manufacturing capacity having grown to exceed that of Britain's own, while its navy posed an equal challenge to the supremacy on the high seas long enjoyed by the Royal Navy. Meanwhile, the centrality of the Suez Canal and the route to India to British imperial strategy – the so-called 'swing door' of empire – had recently come in for a moment of severe challenge by the similarly competitive French. Anglo-French rivalry had increased in the region over the preceding generation. The Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884–85 had resulted in a speedy delimitation of most of sub-Saharan Africa by a small number of European states with Britain and France in the forefront of this partition. In an era when controlling the headwaters of the Nile was of high importance to Europeans, one of the key zones of Anglo-French contest was the territory on either side of the Upper Nile. Accordingly, only a last-minute British mission – sent to the remote outpost of Fashoda and led by Earl Kitchener in the aftermath of his successful Sudan campaign of 1898 – would smooth the ruffled feathers of Anglo-French diplomacy. If Kitchener were to have failed in this mission it was believed in both London and Paris that war would have been the likely result. As it was, however, shortly thereafter the Anglo-Boer War emerged to embroil the British in a three-year-long conflict in South Africa. So costly was this war that the acknowledged bard of empire, Rudyard Kipling, concluded that Britain had been taught 'no end of a lesson'. The fact that Germany had been an active sympathizer with Boer geopolitical aspirations against Britain during the war would only deepen the sense of concern about the prevailing state of British imperial affairs.¹¹

At the same time, in the lands of the Middle East, presided over by the Ottoman Empire for the previous four centuries, the British looked on with growing concern. Supported traditionally by Britain as a means to check regional Russian expansionism, especially along the North-West Frontier of India, the Ottoman Empire appeared to have entered a period of terminal decline. To some extent, the so-called

'sick man of Europe' had been viewed as ailing for years. But by the turn of the twentieth century such fears were being clearly borne out, as independence movements in the Balkans along with Russian expansionism in the Caucasus struck hard against Ottoman imperial integrity. Additionally, France had made a move on Tunisia, taking it away from the Ottomans in a manner that the British themselves had employed earlier when occupying both Cyprus and Egypt. Meanwhile, another of the rival European empires, the Austro-Hungarian, would annex Ottoman Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, just as resurgent Italian imperialism would assert itself in Libya in 1911. All told therefore, in the years leading up to the outbreak of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire's decline would push the British to reassess fundamentally their traditional policy of bolstering it in the service of strengthening their own imperial position.¹²

British imperial policy in the Middle East had always been comprised of an amalgam of methods and plans used to achieve particular ends. Traditional diplomacy, through which the British employed an integrated system of consulates and residencies to further their interests, was the first of these methods. Next came informal spheres of influence, characterized by economic, financial and military penetration that were designed to win favour with local indigenous elites. The most long-lasting example of these was known as the 'Great Game', a protracted exercise in intrigue, subterfuge and collaboration played readily by Britain and Russia within Persia and Afghanistan.¹³ Third, the British created buffer zones or curried favour with client states to ensure that their vital interests, contingent upon the integrity of the Suez Canal, remained safeguarded. Egypt of course had become the fulcrum of this policy since its occupation by the British in 1882. Highly important too was the nearby transit port of Aden, a key station along the route to India. Lastly, from time to time Britain believed it necessary to launch military or naval operations to ensure that the security of its regional position was maintained. The Second Afghan War of 1878-80 is a prime example of this phenomenon, as is

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the Gordon Sudan Expedition of 1884–85. Altogether, these aspects of imperial strategic policy meant that during the first decade of the twentieth century Britain would achieve a pronounced degree of domination in those areas in or near the Middle East that bore most directly on ensuring security over the vital Suez passageway to India.¹⁴

Despite the effectiveness of this strategic quadrilateral for the British, the picture was never necessarily a clear one. Centre and periphery were always shifting in their relationship with London's best-laid plans, inevitably coming up against unpredictable local realities. Indeed, the regional situation had been complicated further still by the rise of a more assertive German foreign policy during the 1890s on a trajectory that would continue throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. Under the control of the young and ambitious Kaiser Wilhelm II, imperial Germany had begun to make evident its own ambitions in the Middle East to rival those of Britain, as well as of Russia. Among the ways in which these ambitions were demonstrated was a state visit to Jerusalem and Damascus by the Kaiser in 1898.

More substantial though was the key role taken by the German state in designing and building the Hejaz Railway, which would open in 1908. One of the Kaiser's closest advisers at the time, Max von Oppenheim, would help to persuade him of the idea that pushing German influence eastwards might result in an enhancement of the country's imperial reach. As a former attaché at the German Consulate in Cairo, in Wilhelm's estimation von Oppenheim spoke with authority on this attractive potentiality. Equally strong on the point was the German ambassador at Constantinople, the imposingly patrician Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein. One of the chief outcomes of these influences was the Kaiser's decision to back the building of what would become an 800-mile-long railway stretching from Damascus to deep inside the Arabian desert before terminating at the Islamic holy city of Medina.

For years the Ottoman sultan, Abdulhamid II, had dreamed of just such a railway running from Damascus all the way to Mecca as an iron

road to ferry the Muslim faithful on their annual Hajj pilgrimage. In addition, it would serve to highlight the Sultan's devotion to the duties of being caliph of the Islamic world as well as providing clear evidence of Ottoman imperial power. As a prelude to building the railway the Ottomans would construct a telegraph line along the same proposed route. Once strung, it served as a persuasive demonstration that building a railway was also achievable. Accordingly, in May of 1901, construction on the *Hamidiye-Hijaz* – 'praiseworthy' – railway began. It was expected – and in most places within the Ottoman Empire enforced – that contributions from devout Muslims worldwide would be forthcoming to make travelling on the Hajj easier, safer and cheaper.

The successful construction of the Hejaz Railway came to depend largely on the labour of Ottoman soldiers. It relied also on foreign, especially German, technical expertise. Its manager, for example, was an engineer from Leipzig named Heinrich August Meissner who had served in various places throughout the Ottoman Empire as far back as 1886. To the British, meanwhile, the new railway was considered an Ottoman-German strategic provocation, and potentially threatening to their regional interests. The security of the nearby Suez Canal was their chief concern of course, informed by the Mahdi's revolt in Sudan in 1884 to which General Gordon had been unsuccessfully dispatched.¹⁵ But an ongoing jihad in Somaliland was of great concern also, as had been an earlier rising along the North-West Frontier of India. Once the railway opened in 1908, British suspicions would be exacerbated by the appointment of a number of German nationals to various levels of its operations, including as consecutive directors-general between the years 1910 and 1917.¹⁶ All told, the British feared that the railway was a means by which to solidify an Ottoman-German imperial axis in the Middle East.

In the last years before the outbreak of general European war in the summer of 1914, these imperial rivalries and challenges would be put into even sharper relief. The Ottoman Empire continued to decline

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in the face of internal revolts such as what occurred during the First Balkan War of 1912–13 and which resulted in the loss of virtually all of its remaining territory in Europe. For Britain, meanwhile, to the longstanding importance of the Suez Canal as the so-called ‘spine’ of empire was added the recent discovery of oil in nearby Iran.¹⁷ Shortly before the beginning of the war the Royal Navy had switched from using coal to oil to power its fleet, and thus had become highly dependent on liquid ‘black gold’ to keep it fully operational as the primary sword-arm of trade and empire. To this end, Winston Churchill, as first lord of the Admiralty, had moved decisively in June of 1914 to purchase for the British government a controlling stake in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to guarantee security of supply for the navy in the future.¹⁸ The modern Western-directed oil industry was rising fast and the Middle East’s central place in it was in the process of being made abundantly clear. For Britain, this new geostrategic reality added yet another important dimension to its broad-based regional interest. Accordingly, there was little doubt in London that the looming war in which the Ottoman Empire would very likely come to support the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary meant that the potential for a cardinal geopolitical reconfiguration of the Middle East was at hand. And the British, it may be argued, were better prepared for this sort of fundamental change than any other great state in Europe.¹⁹

Only a few years before Allenby and Faisal’s fateful meeting in 1918 in Damascus, the groundwork for the circumstances that would make such a meeting possible had been put in place by the British high commissioner for Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon. A lifelong British diplomat and servant of empire, in 1915 McMahon had been sent to Cairo as successor to Lord Kitchener, whose brief three-year tenure as high commissioner in Egypt had come to an abrupt end upon his hurried appointment as British secretary of state for war in August of 1914.²⁰ Although McMahon was understood to be an experienced and cautious imperial hand, one might well have questioned the latter

attribute once he decided to open up a potentially provocative correspondence with Sharif Hussein. The ageing Hashemite dynast ruled over western Arabia's Hejaz region, containing within it both Mecca and Medina. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the rest of territorial Arabia fell under the competing dynasties of the House of Saud and the House of Rashid.

It may well be that the British high commissioner in Cairo had acted provocatively in replying in August of 1915 to the sharif's introductory letter sent to him a few weeks earlier. But if so, it was only because the way forward in this regard had been charted by Kitchener's earlier interview of one of Hussein's sons, Prince Abdullah, in Cairo in February of 1914. In that brief but important meeting Kitchener had attempted to gauge the Arabs' willingness to support the British against the Ottomans should war come to pass in the region in the near future. Indeed, later, in March of 1915, Kitchener would inform his fellow members of the War Council in London that 'should the partition of Turkey take place . . . it is to our interests to see an Arab Kingdom established in Arabia under the auspices of England . . . containing within it the chief Mohammedan Holy Places, Mecca, Medina and Kerbala'.²¹ Pre-war tensions in the Hejaz between the Arabs and the Ottomans had been on the rise for years, a situation exacerbated by the building of the Hejaz Railway. To the Bedouin Arabs who lived in much of the territory traversed by the railway its construction had portended a tightening of Ottoman control over the Hejaz, an especially unwelcome development in the eyes of Hussein and the Hashemite royal family itself. Making the prevailing situation even less appealing to Hussein was the menacing presence of a 10,000-man Ottoman garrison at Medina. Indeed, by this point in 1915 the sharif and his four sons had agreed already amongst themselves that an Arab revolt against Ottoman imperial rule in the Hejaz was the correct course of action to take. And it could begin, they had surmised, as early as June of 1916.²² To all of these real and potential developments in the Hejaz the British Foreign

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Office, under its assiduous and long-time secretary Sir Edward Grey, would give its ready assent.

A couple of months after Kitchener had made plain his aspirations for the rise of a British-influenced Hejazi Arab state in the post-Ottoman Middle East, in May of 1915, during a visit to Damascus, Prince Faisal was given by the representatives of two key Arab nationalist secret societies – al-Fatat and al-Ahd – the document that became known as the ‘Damascus Protocol’, and which would serve as a pretext for his father Hussein’s initiation of the protracted correspondence with McMahon.²³ In the protocol, the conditions required by the nationalists for Arab support of the Allies in their war against the Ottomans – a war which by then was well underway – were spelled out. Once accepted, this document would seal the Hashemite royal family’s decision to raise a revolt in the future against their Ottoman overlords.

A few months later, on 14 July 1915, Hussein’s initial letter would land on the high commissioner’s desk in the British Residency overlooking the Nile in the centre of Cairo. The highly charged correspondence between them would run until March of the following year and number ten letters in total, five from each man. These letters formed the core of the way in which the British as well as the Allies more generally would react to the sharif’s decision to pit his Hashemite Arab kingdom against the considerable modern might of the tens of thousands of Ottoman troops deployed across Arabia, Syria and Palestine. The letters did not constitute a formal treaty or a binding agreement between the British and the Hashemites. But their contents did show a clear willingness by McMahon to take (Hashemite) Arab nationalist aspirations seriously. Moreover, they acknowledged that potential Allied battlefield success would be linked to support for the post-war creation of an independent Arab state.²⁴ In the letters Hussein showed himself to be ready and willing to sacrifice his own men and money in a bid to win independence from Ottoman control. His position aligned well with the British ambition to topple the

Ottoman Empire altogether, which would have the effect of sundering its regional control and damaging severely the war-making capacity of the German-led Triple Alliance.

For some eight months the McMahon–Hussein correspondence went back and forth between Mecca and Cairo until concluding on 10 March 1916. On that date the high commissioner delivered his final letter to the sharif, in which he agreed to the various requests for British help that had been made – including the provision of a stock-pile of weapons and the payment of £50,000 in gold sovereigns – and acknowledged that the Arab Revolt would begin a short time later in June.²⁵ And begin it did, the first shot fired by Hussein himself from his palace window in Mecca at dawn on the tenth day of the month.²⁶ That single shot, which split the antebellum quiet of an early morning in Islam’s holiest city, would set off more than two years of fierce desert warfare between the Arabs and the Ottomans.

Over 100 years on, the resultant Arab Revolt continues to fascinate. The leading figure in this conflict is T.E. Lawrence, or ‘Lawrence of Arabia’ as he would be called at war’s end, by when the story of his charismatic leadership of the Bedouin during the revolt had turned him into a global celebrity. Born in Wales in 1888 during a peripatetic period in the life of his unconventional family, by the age of eight Lawrence lived with his parents and three brothers (a fifth and final brother would be born in 1900) in a large house in the leafy precinct of north Oxford. Number 2, Polstead Road, the Lawrence family home, would be the focal point for many years to come in the life of the intellectual and retiring ‘Ned’, as Lawrence was called in his youth. Indeed, his parents, Thomas and Sarah, would provide him with a small study at the base of their home’s back garden so that he could enjoy the privacy and solitude he craved as a sensitive and bookish adolescent. Within a fully kitted-out retreat equipped with electricity, a telephone link to the main house and a fireplace, the teenaged Lawrence would read voraciously and, later, as an undergraduate, write extensively.

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Lawrence's student writing would culminate in a thesis, the capstone of the three years that he spent reading for a degree in modern history at Jesus College, Oxford. His undergraduate thesis had come about as the result of a growing interest in the history of the medieval Crusades. His abiding interest in the field would yield a couple of long summer vacations spent touring first through France by bicycle and then later on foot in Syria. In both places Lawrence investigated and sketched the Western architectural heritage of the Crusader castles that had been constructed mainly during the twelfth century. Indeed, so engaged was Lawrence by this work that during the summer of 1909 he would walk solo from the top of Syria to the bottom, covering altogether about 1,000 miles in the process. During this meandering walk he recorded his findings meticulously, learned to speak Arabic, and began to nurture a passion for the people, society and culture of the Middle East that would come to dominate the rest of his life.

In 1910, the year that Lawrence was awarded a first-class degree at Oxford, the keeper of the university's Ashmolean Museum, D.G. Hogarth, offered him a job working as an archaeologist in Syria. The location was to be at Carchemish, a 3,000-year-old Hittite site rich in both significance and artifacts. Lawrence leapt at the opportunity to join the dig. Indeed, a return to the Middle East is just what he had desired above all else during the first months after graduating from Oxford, even if it meant turning down the offer of a postgraduate scholarship. Before departing for Syria, Lawrence spent part of that summer in camp with the Oxford University Officers' Training Corps and then once again in cycling through France. Finally, in November Hogarth confirmed Lawrence's appointment as an archaeological assistant and he was off. Initially he went to Lebanon, where he stayed for two months to work on his Arabic. In February of 1911 Lawrence then moved on to the ancient city of Jerablus in northern Syria. The Carchemish site that would be his professional home for the next three years and 'the best life I ever lived', as he called this period later, was located next to Jerablus.²⁷

The Carchemish dig occupied a large site on the west bank of the Euphrates River very close to the border with Ottoman Turkey. In addition to the Hejaz Railway, the Ottomans had also constructed the Berlin–Baghdad railway line, which ran right alongside Carchemish.²⁸ Begun under German supervision in 1903, this line would remain unfinished until completed by others many years later in 1940. But during the period of Lawrence’s three-year residency at Carchemish the line would become increasingly controversial in the context of regional imperial rivalries, which the discovery of oil in Iran and the high probability of its existence also in Mesopotamia would do much to intensify. Meanwhile, the recently fully operational Hejaz Railway had become an arrow pointed at the heart of Arabia, and as such clear evidence of the power and reach into Arab lands of continuing Ottoman suzerainty. Little did Lawrence know in 1911 upon his arrival in northern Syria that six years hence he would begin to plot how best to blow up and generally disable the Hejaz Railway in the service of the Arab Revolt.

The years that came between these events would see Lawrence develop first as an accomplished archaeologist, and second as an even more able British intelligence operative and leader of Arab irregular forces in the field.²⁹ Lawrence’s first months at Carchemish saw him create a circle of friends, many of them local Arabs, establish a work and social routine, and from time to time be introduced to passing notables. One such person was forty-three-year-old Gertrude Bell, who by that time had become a well-known desert traveller. Her capacity for long-range expeditions together with a remarkable linguistic facility, a keen eye for photography, and an evocative writing style, had made her the most famous European woman in the Middle East. Like Lawrence, Bell was an Oxford graduate in modern history, and from their first meeting in May of 1911 – ‘he [Lawrence] is an interesting boy’, she wrote home, ‘he is going to make a traveller’ – they would be linked together permanently as part of the wartime British political and military vanguard in the region.³⁰

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Until the summer of 1914 Lawrence's life continued to revolve completely around the Hittite dig at Carchemish. During this period, he would also make occasional trips home to Oxford as well as travelling locally and into neighbouring Lebanon. Meanwhile, the weakening Ottoman Empire continued to fray at the seams. Just a few years earlier in 1908, for example, the Young Turk Revolution had forced Sultan Abdulhamid to restore the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 and transfer more power to the Chamber of Deputies. For some radical nationalists however, such as the Young Turks who were in favour of constitutional reforms, these concessions had come too late and were of unsatisfactory scope. Consequently, in April of the next year, the Sultan would be deposed by force. In the aftermath, political instability grew in the Ottoman capital of Constantinople as well as throughout the empire.³¹ Lawrence too was caught up in the pre-war turmoil, writing to a friend, for example, 'down with the Turks. But I am afraid', he commented knowingly, 'there is not life, but stickiness in them yet'. In particular, he hoped that independence might come to the subject Arabs should the Ottoman Empire be brought down from within.³²

Beginning in 1914, Lawrence's increasing expertise in understanding the region along with his advanced language skills would be made use of by the British War Office. In January of that year, for example, he commenced a special map-making expedition under the auspices of the London-based Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF). Together with a close colleague of his from Carchemish, Leonard Woolley, as well as Captain Stewart Newcombe, a member of the Royal Engineers who would figure prominently in the Arab Revolt to come, they traversed the rugged Sinai Peninsula. They did so under the guise of being wandering archaeologists. In truth, however, they were operating as British spies and gaining a detailed geographical knowledge of the area, including that of the forbidding Negev Desert. Acting at the behest of Lord Kitchener as secretary of state for war, their survey had been undertaken in anticipation of what the

impending European conflict might mean for Great Power politics in the Near and Middle East. Get it done 'p-d-q [pretty damn quick] as whitewash' is the way Lawrence described his map-making task, in a style typical of the man.³³ The survey would be published later by the PEF as *The Wilderness of Zin*. Its completion in the autumn of 1914 acted as a suitable moment to mark Lawrence's entry into the kind of life which was going to be his now that the war was underway. The halcyon days of the Carchemish dig thus came to an end, and with their passing Lawrence's life was about to be given over to the dangers and vicissitudes of the Great War and the resulting Arab Revolt.

Years later, in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Lawrence would write of having dreamed early on of 'hustling into action' a new Asia, specifically in the form of an Arab uprising against their Ottoman overlords.³⁴ By December of 1914, such 'hustling' might be said to have begun in a nascent way already: in that month Lawrence was sent to Cairo by the War Office as a junior intelligence officer. As of late October the Ottoman Empire had entered the war formally on the side of the Central Powers. The stage was set, therefore, for a decisive conflict in the Middle East, the outcome of which – as anticipated keenly by Lawrence – would spell the end of 400 years of Ottoman imperial power across the region.

For Lawrence however, until well into 1915, his desk-bound intelligence post in Cairo would leave him 'BORED', as he would write home despondently in June of that year.³⁵ Still, he was good at his job, especially editing the *Arab Bulletin*, a key British intelligence organ. But as time wore on the prospect of any sort of effective Arab rising appeared to him to be distressingly remote. This inert state of affairs he blamed on the five men of the Hashemite royal family in the Hejaz who were not yet completely united over whether sponsoring a revolt was the right way forward for the Arabs in the context of the expanding European war. During that first full year of the conflict however, the inchoate nature of a prospective rising had

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begun to congeal for the Hejazi Arabs, spurred by the correspondence undertaken by Sir Henry McMahon and Sharif Hussein.

Towards the end of 1916, however, and then in the middle of the following year, two important events would take place that altered the trajectory of the war in the Middle East. The first of these was the sending of Lawrence, along with a small party of British intelligence officers, from Cairo to Arabia in October of 1916. They would go there to interview the elder three of Hussein's four sons (the youngest was only in his teens) to determine under which of them a much more effective Arab military campaign might be waged against the Ottomans. Lawrence himself said that he was looking for the one son who had 'the necessary fire' for such a task, as he described it in a letter home.³⁶ This special mission to Jeddah in the Hejaz would introduce Lawrence to Prince Ali, Hussein's eldest son, Prince Abdullah, who came next in line, and finally to Prince Faisal himself. Disappointingly, Lawrence found both elder sons, especially Abdullah, to be unimpressive as potential military leaders. However, this feeling was manifestly not mutual, at least as far as Abdullah was concerned. Upon meeting Lawrence, he was impressed by his erudite display of local knowledge, not believing that any non-Arab could know as much as did he about tribal relations and the region's trackless desert geography. Moreover, Lawrence seemed to be highly informed about Ottoman troop movements in the Hejaz. Equally impressive was that Lawrence had conveyed all of this local knowledge to Abdullah in fluent, even colloquial, Arabic. 'Is this man God', the Hashemite prince is reported to have exclaimed in disbelief during his meeting with Lawrence, 'to know everything?'³⁷

Notwithstanding Abdullah's fulsome praise, Lawrence would leave their meeting at Jeddah unsatisfied in his quest. Consequently, he moved on to interview the third of King Hussein's eligible sons, Prince Faisal. After riding hard on camelback for 100 miles inland from Jeddah, Lawrence arrived at Faisal's remote desert encampment

in late October. Upon his arrival, however, Lawrence's rough journey was proved worth making. 'This was the man I had come to Arabia to seek', he would write later in *Seven Pillars*. As far as Lawrence was concerned, if Faisal took clear charge of the Bedouin of the Hejaz the Arab Revolt had a real chance at success. He would do so, and during 1917 the slow-to-develop uprising against the Ottomans began to coalesce, with both Faisal and Lawrence at its heart.³⁸

As a consequence, over the first half of that year the nascent Arab Revolt became less of a nationalist dream and more of a battlefield reality. One of the main reasons for the revolt's increased effectiveness was Faisal's ability as a leader to recruit and then to hold his men long enough in the field to make progress against the Ottomans. Commanding an army comprised essentially of irregular troops was not an easy task, but as the revolt slowly gained ground in the spring of 1917 – owing especially to successful attacks on the Hejaz railway – the prospects for its success brightened. To the British official mind, the Bedouin had much potential as warriors. They are 'wonderfully good and silent', Pierce Joyce emphasized in a report, 'at getting into position for dawn attacks'.³⁹

The second momentous event that changed the course of the Arab Revolt in its early stages was the arrival in theatre in mid-1917 of General Allenby as the new commander-in-chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF). Lately transferred from the enervating atmosphere of the Western Front, and determined to succeed, Allenby would be rejuvenated immediately by his new command. Not least in this regard was the impact on him of his initial meeting with Lawrence, a revealing encounter between two men of vastly different experiences and of clearly diverse temperaments drawn together nonetheless through the exigencies of war. Indeed, not long before meeting Lawrence, Allenby had arrived in Cairo as successor to the ineffective General Archibald Murray. As a career cavalryman Allenby had been ground down especially by the relentless inertia and enormous losses of the Western Front. His relocation to the

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vitality of Cairo followed by the open spaces of the Palestine and Syria campaigns to come would give him a fresh start. In June, at his send-off in London, Allenby had been given an emotional charge by the prime minister David Lloyd George to deliver Jerusalem as a Christmas gift to the nation. The British people were starved for a clear battlefield victory, he was told. It was up to Allenby therefore to deliver one, and he was determined to fulfil the task.

Accordingly, Allenby could not have been greeted by better news than that which was brought to him in Cairo by an exhausted Lawrence himself on 12 July 1917. Immediately upon completing a hurried two-day trek across the desert, and still attired in his distinctive Arab dress, Lawrence arrived at the new commander-in-chief's headquarters as the bearer of good news. He was there, he said, to report on a stunning Arab victory over the Ottomans that had occurred just a few days earlier at the strategically important Red Sea port of Aqaba. Moreover, Lawrence himself had conceived the plan of attack. He had then proceeded to lead the successful assault on Aqaba at the head of a collection of Arab irregulars, the most prominent of whom was the fierce Howeitat chieftain, Auda Abu Tayeh. Now, drained physically but elated emotionally – and looking nothing like a British officer might be expected to appear – the physically unimpressive 5' 5" Lawrence stood before the commanding 6' 2" Allenby and recounted his tale of an unlikely Arab triumph of two days earlier.

Allenby, known as the 'Bull', and taciturn at the best of times, was even more reserved than usual that day as the oddly dressed Lawrence began to recite to him the events of the preceding week. The Arab defeat of the Ottoman garrison at Aqaba had been total, its defenders having been chased almost literally into the sea. The only account of their seminal meeting on that July day at British headquarters is from Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. But it is hard to imagine how it might have been improved upon – or Lawrence's gift for descriptive prose exceeded – by anyone else. To the 'large and confident' Allenby my

'littleness came slow to him', it begins. Nor, given the way that Lawrence was dressed, could the general 'make out how much was genuine performer and how much was charlatan'. Still, there was no doubting that a singular victory had been won, and, regardless of Lawrence's evident unorthodoxy of dress, more of the same might be expected if the British were to offer their unreserved assistance to the Arabs in the field. Allenby concurred, and his readily offered support would end the meeting, a promise, Lawrence wrote, that was more than 'enough for his very greediest servant'. As Allenby had told him, 'I will do for you what I can', and with that assurance Lawrence would go directly back to Arabia to continue the fight.⁴⁰ 'Lawrence's activities among the Arabs', as Allenby informed the chief of the Imperial General Staff in London, William Robertson, 'promise great things'.⁴¹ And so they did.

Meanwhile, Allenby's own campaign that autumn would take him directly across to Palestine. After General Murray's two earlier failures, a victory at Gaza was to be had at last and then another at Beersheba before Allenby turned northwards and began to march across the rugged Judean Hills to Jerusalem. As winter in the Holy Land approached the campaign would become a tough and tenacious slog for his Allied troops against an Ottoman enemy that was determined to hold out against them for as long as possible.⁴² 'The rocky and mountainous country they fought over is indescribable', Allenby wrote wearily to his wife.⁴³ Still, by early December it was clear that Jerusalem was indeed going to be won by the Allies in time for Christmas. A last stand for the Holy City was made by the Ottomans, but on the ninth day of the month they were finally dislodged and sent fleeing north-eastwards in a rapid retreat into neighbouring Syria.⁴⁴ Formal Allied occupation of Jerusalem would come two days later on 11 December when Allenby strode purposefully through the Old City's Jaffa Gate. Standing at the Citadel beneath the ancient Tower of David, he read out a proclamation guaranteeing civil and religious freedom to all of the city's residents for as long as it lay under British occupation.⁴⁵

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First Gaza, then Beersheba, now Jerusalem: the military dominoes had fallen fast and hard for Allenby in the hot pace he had set in 1917 against the Ottomans to secure Palestine and Syria for Britain and the Allies. Meanwhile, on his right flank, having rolled up from Arabia through southern Palestine and into Syria, was Faisal's resurgent Northern Arab Army. Under his inspirational leadership and with Lawrence playing an imaginative and decisive role in guerilla operations that would disrupt and damage the ability of the Ottomans to operate effectively – especially via the Hejaz Railway – the Allies were poised now for imminent victory. 'It is all such sport', Lawrence was known to say to his fellow officers. But to the Bedouin, according to Pierce Joyce, Lawrence very soon became 'a byword [*sic*] in the desert' owing to his 'individual bravery and endurance'.⁴⁶ Throughout the winter and spring of 1918 this powerful and determined combined force of Allies and Arabs would continue to push back the Ottomans, who nevertheless fought desperately under the command of their resilient and canny German general, Otto Liman von Sanders. Steadily however, they were forced to retreat north as well as east across the Jordan River to the city of Amman and then well beyond.

The decisive victory in this latter stage of the Palestine campaign would come in September at historic Megiddo – known for its designation as the Bible's apocalyptic site of 'Armageddon' – which cleared the way for a final Allied move against Damascus, achieved not many days later at the beginning of October. For Allenby and the EEF the campaign would prove to be a ringing success. To the winning of serial victories with comparatively light Allied casualties was added the surrender of some 75,000 Ottoman soldiers, almost the full number of troops that Liman had at his disposal.⁴⁷ Indeed, by the end of October all that was left of the Ottoman Army was a small remnant of men who had fallen back on the northern Syrian city of Aleppo. Defeated subsequently there too by Allenby, the Ottomans made a last desperate stand at nearby Mouslimmiye under the command of

their charismatic hero of Gallipoli, Mustafa Kemal (later to be known as Atatürk). Following their defeat the Ottomans would make a complete surrender according to the terms of the Armistice of Mudros, which was signed on 30 October.⁴⁸ Accordingly, after almost half a millennium of rule over the lands of the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist. The terms governing its epic demise would now be consigned to the diplomatic deliberations to come at the post-war Paris Peace Conference.

In the aftermath of the successful Arab Revolt and the comprehensive Allied victory over the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, Britain and France would be left, however, with a geopolitical situation scarcely less complicated than what they had encountered in the region prior to the war. In 1916, in anticipation of an eventual Allied victory in the Middle East, the two countries had negotiated an unofficial agreement between them which had taken the combined surnames of its chief negotiators, Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot. Indeed, although the Sykes–Picot Agreement had been ratified just a few weeks prior to the start of the Arab Revolt, its negotiation and ratification had been carried out in secret. Very few people, therefore, knew about the scope of its provisions, least of all the leading Hashemite royals, Hussein and Faisal. Its provisions would privilege Anglo-French interests in the Middle East over the granting of Arab independence after the war.

The progenitor of the Sykes–Picot Agreement was a thirty-six-year-old titled aristocrat from Yorkshire. Sir Mark Sykes, 6th baronet, was rich, much-travelled in the Middle East and strongly opinionated, although to some observers – both during the 1910s and afterwards – he amounted nonetheless to little more than a self-serving opportunist. Such was certainly the view of Lawrence, who later wrote scornfully that Sykes had been nothing but ‘a bundle of prejudices, intuitions, [and] half-sciences’. Still, in 1915–16 all three of these attributes were highly persuasive in the febrile atmosphere of

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the wartime Middle East.⁴⁹ Initially brought into government service by Kitchener to act as his personal adviser on Arab affairs, Sykes had quickly become the moving spirit behind Britain's determination to be a decisive presence in shaping what it was assumed would be a post-war Middle East freed from Ottoman rule. Initiated by the Asquith government's creation of a parliamentary committee chaired by Sir Maurice de Bunsen of the Foreign Office, by late 1915 a grand diplomatic plan had begun to gain traction in London and Paris to divide Ottoman-controlled Mesopotamia and Syria between Britain and France once the Ottomans had been ousted.⁵⁰ The irrepressible Sykes was in the vanguard of this plan, which he had begun to construct in minute detail along with his French diplomatic counterpart, Georges-Picot. Together, at a series of meetings held mostly at the French Embassy in London, they had worked out the parameters of what such a redrawn regional map might look like. A grid which contained a red (British) 'A' Zone and a blue (French) 'B' Zone was the result, a territorial division that placed Mesopotamia and what would become Transjordan under British control, with Syria going to France. In essence, Sykes–Picot was a pointed exercise in Anglo-French geopolitics without regard for local autonomy. But neither was Sykes–Picot created with the idea of Great Power mandatory supervision in mind, something that would come to pass only with the convening of the Paris Peace Conference. The future of Palestine, however, could not be agreed upon by Sykes and Georges-Picot, nor could clarity of thinking be found over that of Lebanon, although it was assumed that it would fall to France. But the essential plan was agreed nonetheless, and on 3 January 1916 Sykes and Georges-Picot shook hands on the deal.⁵¹

Soon one more state was to be added to the Sykes–Picot Agreement in the form of late-imperial Russia. By 1916, the 300-year-old Romanov dynasty had begun to totter under the weak leadership of Tsar Nicholas II in advance of its crumbling altogether in the successive revolutions of 1917. For now, however, Britain and the Allies

were desperate to keep the ailing Russian bear in the fight against the Central Powers and this strategy included making the Russians party to the Sykes–Picot Agreement.⁵² The intricate diplomacy required to do so was completed in May. The potential territorial delimitation represented by Sykes–Picot, however, had not been made according to what McMahon had effectively promised to Hussein in their recently concluded exchange of letters. Nor had it anticipated the Mandate System created at Paris. Rather, McMahon had endorsed an undefined Arab independence to come. And therein lay the rub. Promises made – or not made – to the Arabs would become a persistently thorny issue for Britain and France over the next five years. In particular, McMahon’s promise of Arab independence as understood by Hussein would be described later as having been mere ‘lip service’. Still, there is little doubt that the tripartite Sykes–Picot Agreement’s chief motivation was to secure British, French and – to a lesser extent – Russian geopolitical interests in the region once the Ottoman Empire had been defeated. This calculation was made with little regard as to the place occupied within it by the Arabs.

Meanwhile, for the British, a secondary issue was also at hand. But it was one of increasing urgency. The longstanding demand of Zionists – made by the head of the London-based Zionist Organization, Chaim Weizmann – for a Jewish national homeland to be created in Palestine was reaching its climax.⁵³ British diplomatic representation in Palestine stretched all the way back to 1838, when a consulate had been established at the urging of the Anglican evangelical social reformer Lord Shaftesbury.⁵⁴ Indeed, throughout the last years of the nineteenth century, and into the early years of the twentieth, culminating in the First World War, international Zionism had become a political lobby of first-order importance in Britain. In December of 1916, after over eight years in office, Herbert Asquith had succumbed to the intense political pressures of a catastrophically costly war, as well as to the accompanying Fleet Street machinations, and resigned from office. Into the resultant breach at 10 Downing Street stepped the charis-

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matic and canny figure of David Lloyd George. And in the person of the new prime minister Zionism had found a determined political champion. Raised in the chapel-based Baptist evangelical Christianity of his native Wales, Lloyd George was accepting of the imminent end-times view of Zionism held by a great many millenarian Christians. They understood the return of diasporic Jews to Palestine to be a harbinger of the apocalyptic second coming of Christ.⁵⁵ This firm belief, however, sat uncomfortably beside the protracted persistence Weizmann had maintained of eschewing any British territorial offer other than Palestine (such had included Uganda or Saskatchewan) for a Zionist homeland. The Zionist demand would open up yet another avenue for British influence to be exercised in the Middle East beyond its putative alliance with the Hejazi Arabs.

The year 1917 proved to be a watershed for Britain's public commitment to international Zionism. Weizmann's protracted championing of the Zionist cause led him to undertake a journey of political advocacy during which he held a series of interviews with important British policymakers. He met with the former home secretary Sir Herbert Samuel, the future high commissioner for Palestine. Samuel was both Jewish and a strong Zionist. Sykes, the subject of a subsequent interview, was easily convinced of the geopolitical advantage to Britain of helping to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The zoologist and politician Lord Rothschild became another key ally. Decisively, Arthur Balfour, even though years removed from his brief premiership, continued to hold high office as foreign secretary, and was a long-time acquaintance of Weizmann's. Altogether, the many years of having pressed the Zionist cause would pay off for Weizmann. His dream was about to become a reality. On 2 November 1917 Balfour sent a letter – henceforward called the 'Balfour Declaration' – to Rothschild in which he made it clear that the British government would support the creation of 'a national home for the Jewish people' in Palestine.⁵⁶ The letter was careful to state 'that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities

in Palestine'. But its promulgation was evidence nonetheless that the British government had staked a claim to post-Ottoman Palestine, as well as to the necessary presence within it of a Jewish homeland. For their part the French simply would have to be made to accept that Palestine was a special British case. To the Arabs, however – and to their key supporters amongst the British, most notably Lawrence – the Balfour Declaration would be an infinitely more challenging commitment to square against the angular geopolitical and sociological reality of the post-war Middle East.

Indeed, once news reached Lawrence of the Balfour Declaration he regarded it as evidence of a further betrayal of the Arab cause. If the Sykes–Picot Agreement had offered a blueprint for the achievement of Anglo–French paramountcy in the Middle East – and concomitant Arab subordination – then to Lawrence the Balfour Declaration was a regrettable addition. Altogether, both policies would cause 'great strain' to the Anglo–Arab alliance, as well as to Lawrence's own mind, as his authorized biographer Jeremy Wilson later put it, rather too mildly. Because Lawrence during this period of time remained fighting in the field and was thus far from the halls of political power, there was little that he could do about his situation other than to carry on with completing the campaign in the desert. His abiding hope was that an ultimate Allied victory over the Ottomans would lead to a fair result for the fighting Arabs, on whose behalf he was daily risking his life.

Allenby's victory in the Middle East – his 'great exploit', as King George called it in a breathless telegram sent to him in September of 1918 – would be celebrated by Britain and its Allies.⁵⁷ The triumph over the Ottomans brought him a peerage as 1st Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and Felixstowe, as well as sustained personal popularity. To be sure, in both territorial and symbolic terms, Allenby's victory had been complete. But geopolitically the victory had been disjointed in what it had delivered to its various combatants. If expectations for the post-Ottoman Middle East were high among the Arabs, they were scarcely

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less lofty, if differently conceived, in London and Paris. The Allied wartime diplomacy that had delivered the McMahon–Hussein correspondence, the Sykes–Picot Agreement, and the Balfour Declaration would now be forced by the victories of the preceding year to yield a new and potentially comprehensive settlement across the broad and varied territory of the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire was gone but a large and unruly diplomatic lacuna existed in its place. Of this state of affairs Lawrence in particular had been left in no doubt. From Cairo on 14 October 1918, on his way home to London following his precipitous departure from Damascus, he would sum up in a letter his time spent fighting in the desert. Written to Major R.H. Scott, the base commandant at Aqaba, in it Lawrence adopted a nostalgic air. His Arab Bureau and British military colleagues were, he wrote, ‘an odd little set and we have, I expect, changed History in the near East. I wonder how the Powers will let the Arabs get on’.⁵⁸ As Lawrence would very soon find out, at precisely the same time a great number of other people were asking exactly the same question.

NOTES to pp. 2–10

Preface

1. See Aaron S. Klieman, *Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World: The Cairo Conference of 1921*, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970. It is a good but dated and less than comprehensive study of the Conference. The history of the Cairo Conference – examined in greater or lesser detail – is taken up in a large number of studies of the post-First World War Middle East, including Scott Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, New York, 2013; James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle That Shaped the Middle East*, London, Simon & Schuster, 2012; Christopher Catherwood, *Churchill's Folly: How Winston Churchill Created Modern Iraq*, New York, Carroll & Graf, 2004; Warren Dockter, *Churchill and the Islamic World*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2015; David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East, 1914–1922*, New York, Henry Holt, 1989; Roger Hardy, *The Poisoned Well: Empire and Its Legacy in the Middle East*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016; Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-American Labyrinth: The McMahon–Husayn Correspondence and Its Interpretations 1914–1939*, London, Frank Cass, 2000; Peter Mangold, *What the British Did: Two Centuries in the Middle East*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2016; and Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Kingmakers: The Invention of the Modern Middle East*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2009.
2. C. Brad Faught, *Allenby: Making the Modern Middle East*, London, Bloomsbury, 2020.
3. Edmund Allenby to Catherine Allenby, 24 February 1921, AP 1/12/13. CHAR 17/19.
4. Barr, *A Line in the Sand*, p. 121.
5. See Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015.
6. John Darwin, 'An Undeclared Empire: The British in the Middle East, 1918–39', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 27, no. 2 (May 1999), pp. 159–76, p. 173.
7. Gertrude Bell to Florence Bell, 24 February and 25 March 1921, GBA.
8. T.E. Lawrence to Sarah Lawrence, 20 March 1921, *TEL Letters*, p. 197.
9. See Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World*, New York, Random House, 2003. See also Pedersen, *The Guardians*.

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1. The order of entry into the city would later be disputed. See Matthew Hughes, 'Elie Kedourie and the Capture of Damascus, 1 October 1918: A Reassessment', *War & Society*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2005), pp. 87–106.
2. Neil Faulkner, *Lawrence of Arabia's War: The Arabs, the British and the Remaking of the Middle East in WWI*, New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press, 2016, p. 449. Quoted in Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography*, New York, Atheneum, 1990, p. 561.
3. 'The dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act out their dream with open eyes, to make it possible. This I did.' T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*, Toronto, Penguin, 1990, frontispiece.
4. Edmund Allenby to Mabel Allenby, 3 October 1918, AP 1/9/12 and 17 October 1918, AP 1/9/15.
5. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 683.
6. Lt-Gen Harry Chauvel, 'Meeting of Sir [sic] Edmund Allenby and the Emir Feisal at the Hotel Victoria, Damascus, on Oct. 3rd, 1918', AP 2/5/17.
7. Pierce Joyce, 'Reminiscences of T.E. Lawrence for the BBC, 14 July 1941', JP 2/19/1–4.
8. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 683.
9. Joyce, 'Reminiscences', JP 2/19/1–4.

NOTES to pp. 10–22

10. See, among many other titles, Corelli Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power*, Stroud, Sutton, 1997, ch. 1.
11. Rudyard Kipling, 'The Lesson' (1901). See Denis Judd and Keith Surridge, *The Boer War: A History*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2013, chs 1–2.
12. See Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East*, New York, Basic Books, 2015, chs 1–2. See Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia*, London, John Murray, 1990.
13. Chauvel, 'Meeting', AP 2/5/17.
14. Glen Balfour-Paul, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East', in Judith M. Brown and Wm Roger Louis, eds, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV, The Twentieth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 490–514. See also Rob Johnson, *The Great War and the Middle East*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, ch. 1.
15. See C. Brad Faught, *Gordon: Victorian Hero*, Washington, DC, Potomac Books, 2008, ch. 7.
16. See Nicholas J. Saunders, *Desert Insurgency: Archaeology, T.E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, ch. 4.
17. Richard A. Atkins, 'The Origins of the Anglo-French Condominium in Egypt, 1875–1876', *The Historian*, vol. 36, no. 2 (February 1974), pp. 264–82.
18. Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life*, London, Heinemann, 1991, pp. 260–61.
19. See T.G. Otte, *Statesman of Europe: A Life of Sir Edward Grey*, London, Allen Lane, 2020.
20. C. Brad Faught, *Kitchener: Hero and Anti-Hero*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 190–91.
21. Quoted in Michael D. Berdine, *Redrawing the Middle East: Sir Mark Sykes, Imperialism and the Sykes-Picot Agreement*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2018, p. 19. Kitchener's understanding of contemporary Arabian geography was inaccurate as Kerbala (today's Karbala) is located in central Iraq about 60 miles south of Baghdad.
22. Ali A. Allawi, *Faisal I of Iraq*, New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press, 2014, p. 60.
23. Otte, *Statesman of Europe*, pp. 474, 55. See also Eliezer Tauber, *The Arab Movements in World War I*, London, Routledge, 1993.
24. For example, as Victor Kattan argues in *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 1891–1949*, London, Pluto Press, 2009. For an opposing view, see Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*.
25. *Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca, July 1915–March 1916*, London, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd 5957, Miscellaneous No. 3 (1939).
26. Allawi, *Faisal*, p. 74.
27. Studies of Lawrence's life are many. For this sketch of his formative years I have relied mainly on Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, chs 1–4, and quoted in Anthony Sattin, *Young Lawrence: A Portrait of the Legend as a Young Man*, London, John Murray, 2015, p. 79.
28. See Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power*, Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press, 2013.
29. See Saunders, *Desert Insurgency*, p. 52. See also Rob Johnson, *Lawrence of Arabia on War: The Campaign in the Desert*, Oxford, Osprey, 2020, ch. 14.
30. Gertrude Bell to her family, 18 May 1911, Lady Bell, ed., *The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume 1*, London, Ernest Benn, 1927, p. 305.
31. Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*, ch. 1.
32. On the vulnerability of the Ottomans at this time see Sean McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908–1923*, London, Penguin, 2015.
33. T.E. Lawrence to Emily Rieder, 5 April 1913, David Garnett, ed., *The Letters of T.E. Lawrence*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1938, p. 152. T.E. Lawrence to anonymous, n.d., *ibid.*, p. 181.

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34. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 661.
35. Malcolm Brown, ed., *The Letters of T.E. Lawrence*, London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1988, p. 75.
36. T.E. Lawrence to his family, 5 October 1916, M.R. Lawrence, ed., *The Home Letters of T.E. Lawrence and his Brothers*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1954, p. 115.
37. Quoted in Ronald Storrs, *The Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storrs*, New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1937, p. 204.
38. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 92. See Faulkner, *Lawrence of Arabia's War*, chs 9–10.
39. Pierce Joyce, 'Notes on Arab Tactics etc.', n.d., JP 2/17.
40. Faught, *Allenby*, p. 42. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 330.
41. Edmund Allenby to William Robertson, 19 July 1917, RP 8/1/64.
42. See Stuart Hadaway, *From Gaza to Jerusalem: The Campaign for Southern Palestine 1917*, London, The History Press, 2015.
43. Edmund Allenby to Mabel Allenby, 11 December 1917, AP 1/8/32.
44. Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*, pp. 350–53. See also Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, pp. 305–14.
45. See Shimon Lev, ed., *A General and a Gentleman: Allenby at the Gates of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem, Tower of David/Museum of the History of Jerusalem, 2017.
46. Joyce, 'Reminiscences', JP 2/19/1–4.
47. Michael Korda, *The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia*, New York, HarperCollins, 2010, ch. 7. B.H. Liddell Hart, *History of the First World War*, London, Pan Books, 1970, p. 439.
48. Philip Mansel, *Aleppo: The Rise and Fall of Syria's Great Merchant City*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2018, p. 52.
49. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, p. 57. See Christopher Simon Sykes, *The Man Who Created the Middle East: A Story of Empire, Conflict and the Sykes–Picot Agreement*, London, HarperCollins, 2016.
50. See Berdine, *Redrawing the Middle East*, p. 20.
51. Faught, *Kitchener*, pp. 237–38. Barr, *A Line in the Sand*, p. 31.
52. Later, the victorious revolutionary Bolsheviks under Lenin would expose the Sykes–Picot Agreement to public criticism and then act to remove the new Soviet Union from being bound by its provisions.
53. Barr, *A Line in the Sand*, p. 33. Robert H. Lieshout, *Britain and the Arab Middle East: World War I and Its Aftermath*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 198–99.
54. Donald M. Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 380. Christian Zionism grew steadily as a public cause during the Victorian era, as would be foreshadowed by the *Colonial Times* of Hobart, Tasmania, for example, in an article published on 23 February 1841 entitled 'Memorandum to the Protestant Monarchs of Europe for the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine'.
55. Roy Jenkins, *Asquith*, London, Collins, 1964, ch. 27. Don M. Cregier, *Bounder from Wales: Lloyd George's Career Before the First World War*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1976, p. 13.
56. Norman Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography*, London, Penguin, 1989, pp. 320–21. Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, London, Magnes Press, 1983, frontispiece. See also James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance, 1914–1918*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
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