

Promises...

Allied Diplomacy and the Middle East

Ottoman Empire Enters WWI

- Though many nations fought over the Ottoman Empire, it had remained neutral
- Early in the war the Ottoman Empire decided to side with the Central Powers and declare a jihad – holy war– on the Allies
- This threatened the Allies in two ways:
 - The Dardanelle Straits were in the OE & threatened Russian supply lines
 - Brought Germany too close to British interests in India and Persia (Iran)

Ottoman Empire



1913

The Negotiating Table

- The Allies knew the risk in spreading their troops too thin—the Ottoman Empire entering the war meant this was possible
- Started negotiating and making promises to secure support for the Allies:
 - Russia, Italy, France, the Jews and Arabs

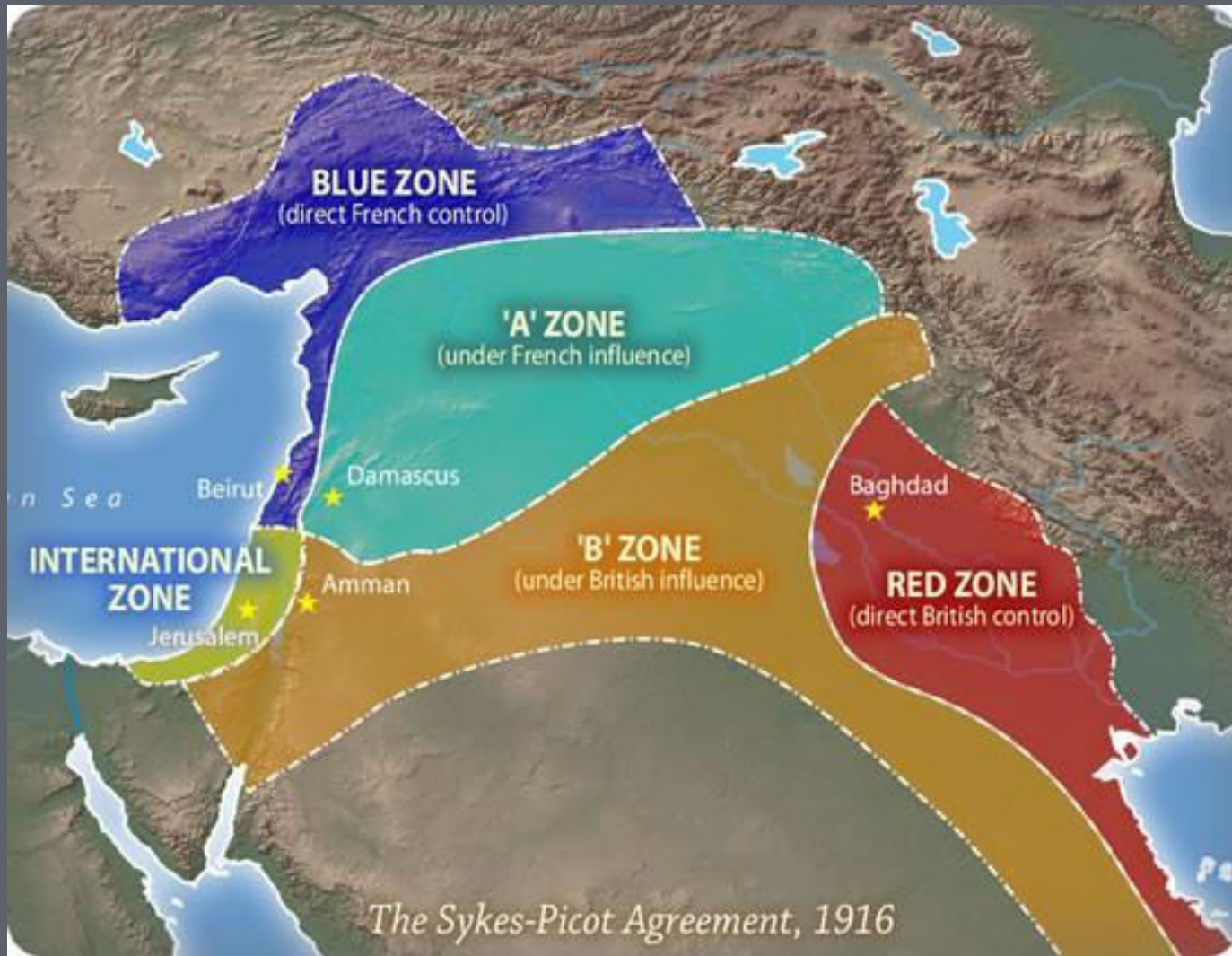
Promises to Russia

- Since Russia was experiencing unrest at home, Britain tried hard to keep them in the war (keeping 2 fronts for Germany)
- Treaty of Constantinople 1915:
 - Offered Russia control of the Dardanelles
 - In return, Russia would recognize that post-war, the rest of the Ottoman Empire belonged to Britain and France

Promises to France

- Sykes-Picot Agreement: future partitions of the Ottoman Empire
 - Led by George Picot (French diplomat) and Sir Mark Sykes (English member of Parliament)
 - Regions of OE would be either “direct control” or “indirect control”
 - Under “direct” control they could rule “as they saw fit” and “indirect” meant the area was a future Arab state
 - The “indirect” areas would have Arab rulers that got support from Britain or France as needed

Sykes-Picot Agreement



Promises to Italy

- A sub-plot to the Sykes-Picot Agreement mostly because Italy found out about it and wanted some land, too..
- If Italy supported the Entente, they'd get some small pieces of Ottoman land
- Libya and some islands

Promises to the Jews...

- The Zionist movement had gained strength since the late 1800s, pressing for a Jewish homeland in Palestine (the “Promised Land”)
- British policy makers had discussed it, but the Sykes-Picot Agreement had put Palestine into International hands
- Towards the end of 1916, the British felt more sympathetic to the Jewish cause for a couple reasons:
 - It would gain support of Russian Jews and keep them in the war
 - A Jewish homeland cause would attract U.S. support
 - Britain could “protect” the area, giving them ports on the Mediterranean and keep the Suez Canal close by
- This led to... The Balfour Declaration

Balfour Declaration

- From British Foreign Secretary Balfour to Rothschild, a British Jewish leader who was to pass it on to the Zionists
- Notice the word “home” is used rather than “state” or “country”
- This letter is a diversion from the Sykes-Picot Agreement because Britain would have direct control of Palestine

Promises to the Arabs

○ For your chart:

- The British needed the support of the Arabs to win WWI—needed them to go against the Ottoman Empire—basically revolt
- A series of letters between Henry McMahon and Sharif Hussein said that Britain had no plans for the Ottoman Empire after the war and, if the Arabs rebelled, Britain would help them establish Arab independence “without any intervention in your internal affairs.”
- These promises were never honored.

Promises to the Arabs...

- A series of letters between Britain and an Arab leader: the Hussein-McMahon correspondence
- 10 letters that center around a huge controversy: Did Britain promise to support an independent Arab state and then renege on that pledge?
- Some of the problem was over who was “purely Arab” and what states should be formed

Broken Promises?

- Britain sought to protect its future interests in the region (the farther west areas of Palestine) saying those people were not “purely Arab”
- Some of that region was actually claimed by France under the Sykes-Picot Agreement
- They postponed the argument till after the war
- The Arabs did revolt against the Ottomans—more on that later
- Meanwhile, Britain was busy making other promises using the same territory (see chart)

Hussein-McMahon Correspondence

- With a partner, complete the activity using the Hussein-McMahon letters.
- Use one letter at a time to find the answers to the questions.

Hussein-McMahon Correspondence

- What is Hussein asking of Great Britain?
 - Land—Arab Khalifate of Islam (an independent Arab Nation)
 - Britain should be economically tied and give preferential treatment to this Arab nation
 - Mutual assistance (alliance...)
- What does McMahon REALLY say back?
 - Some “Arabs” are supporting Germany and the Turks (Ottomans)
 - So while an Arab nation is a good idea, they aren’t all behaving, so we’ll talk after the war

Hussein-McMahon Correspondence

- What is Hussein's impression of Letter #2?
 - “ambiguity”, “tone of coldness and hesitation” (x3 in the original)
 - “estrangement”
 - Refers to Britain's “perfectness”
- McMahon's explanation in return?
 - You misunderstood. I talked to the King, and here's what we'll do:
 - We'll give you parts of the Middle East as long as it doesn't conflict with things we've already given to France
 - We'll protect Holy Lands
 - We'll protect you from foreign aggression

Hussein-McMahon Correspondence

- Get back with your partner from yesterday. Complete Question # 6 together.
 - 5 minutes

Quiz Time!

- ◎ 1. Early in WWI the Ottoman Empire decided to join the:
 - A. Central Powers
 - B. Allies
 - C. They stayed neutral in WWI

Quiz Time!

- ◎ 2. The Ottomans in the Central Powers concerned the Allies because...
- A. it would spread their troops too thin
 - B. it would endanger Russia's access to the Dardanelles
 - C. it would bring Germany too close to British interests in the Middle East
 - D. all of the above are correct
 - E. only B and C are correct

Quiz Time!

◎ 3. Which is NOT true about Britain's treaty with Russia?

- A. Russia would get to rule Serbia
- B. Russia would get access to the Dardanelles
- C. Russia would recognize British and French territories in the new Mid East
- D. It was called the Treaty of Constantinople

Quiz Time!

- ◎ 4. Britain and France divided up the future Middle East into zones of influence in the
 - A. Treaty of Constantinople
 - B. Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
 - C. Balfour Declaration
 - D. Sykes-Picot Agreement
 - E. Hussein-McMahon correspondence

Quiz Time!

◎ 5. Which of the following is NOT true about the Balfour Declaration?

- A. It agreed to a national home for Jewish people
- B. It declared protection for non-Jewish Palestinians
- C. It promised the Jews access to their Holy sites in Jerusalem
- D. It was written after the Sykes-Picot Agreement

Quiz Time!

6. In the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which of the following was true?
- A. Britain agreed to a future Arab state according to the specifications Hussein wanted
 - B. Arabs promised they would revolt against the Ottoman Empire
 - C. Britain promised to guarantee all Holy Places would be protected from external aggression
 - D. Arabs claimed all Muslims were acting as one