

9. The Creation of Today's Middle East

I. Decline of the Ottoman Empire

After Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-66), the Ottoman Empire's days of glory were over.
1683 second siege of Vienna (first was 1529).
In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire began losing territory.

1830 Greece gained independence after its War of Independence (1821-32).

1882 British forces occupied Egypt and Sudan, to protect the Suez Canal (opened 1869), its route to India. Established the Khedivate of Egypt (1882-1914), *de jure* an autonomous province of Ottoman Empire, but *de facto* a British protectorate with no legal basis.
A revolt in Sudan, led by a self-proclaimed Mahdi, resulted in the death of Gen. Gordon in the fall of Khartoum, 1882.
In 1898 Kitchener reestablished British control, leading to Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (1899-1956), nominally a joint condominium but with full British control.

1912 Italy took the Tripolitania Vilayet, which became Libya, and the Dodecanese Islands (which it agreed to return in the Treaty of Ouchy, 1912, but avoided doing so; Turkey renounced its claim to these islands in the Treaty of Lausanne; they were finally ceded by Italy to Greece in 1947).

II. World War 1

The two parties to the war:

- Central Powers: Germany & Austria–Hungary (alliance 1879); Ottoman Empire & Bulgaria joined after war started.
- Allied Powers: the Triple Entente: UK, France, Russia (alliance 1907); USA joined 1917. Italy, Greece.

A. British Agreements

Britain made three contradictory agreements.

1. McMahon–Hussein Correspondence, 1915

In a series of letters between Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, the British promised Arab independence in return for an Arab revolt against the Turks. The British reserved territory in Syria west of the line between Aleppo, Homs, Damascus.
The Arab Revolt started (June 1916), and Hussein declared himself King of Hejaz.

2. Sykes–Picot Agreement, 1916

The British and French secretly carved up the Arab portion of the Ottoman Empire between themselves. Russia was included in the agreement; after the Revolution, the Bolsheviks revealed it, to much embarrassment.

3. Balfour Declaration, 1917

A letter from Lord Balfour, British Foreign Secretary to Lord Rothschild:

His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities

in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

The armistice of 1918.11.11 ended fighting. Peace negotiations lasted several years.

B. Paris Peace Conference, 1919

Primarily negotiated by The Big Four: Woodrow Wilson (President, USA), David Lloyd George (Prime Minister, UK), Georges Clemenceau (PM, France), Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (PM, Italy).

1. created League of Nations
2. Prepared 5 peace treaties, ending state of war:
 - a. Treaty of Versailles, signed 1919.06.28, Germany: full blame, costly reparations, disarmament, territorial concessions.
 - b. Treaty of Saint-Germain, 1919.10.10, Austria.
 - c. Treaty of Neuilly, 1919.11.27, Bulgaria.
 - d. Treaty of Trianon, 1920.06.04, Hungary.
 - e. Treaty of Sèvres, negotiated at San Remo Conference, 1920; signed 1920.08.10, Ottoman Empire; revised by Treaty of Lausanne 1923.07.24, Turkey.
3. awarded German and Ottoman possessions as mandates.

C. Treaty of Lausanne, 1923

Greco-Turkish War (1919-22). Greek forces occupied Smyrna 2019.05.15 (Smyrna had more Greeks than Athens). They advanced nearly to Ankara, where they were halted in 1921 by Mustafa Kemal, and driven back in 1922.

Treaty of Lausanne (signed July 1923)

1. Officially ended the state of war between Ottoman Empire/Turkey and the Allies.
2. Recognized independence of Turkey within its borders.
3. Turkey relinquished claims to remainder of Ottoman Empire, incl. Cyprus, Egypt, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Dodecanese.
4. Protection of Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey and Muslim minority in Greece, but this was too late.

Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, signed by Turkey & Greece Aug 1923. Ordered the simultaneous expulsion of 1.5 m Anatolian Greeks and 0.5 m Muslims in Greece. Identity established by religion not ethnicity.

D. Mandates

Britain and France were awarded most of the remaining Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire as Mandates under the League of Nations.

1. French Mandate of Syria: Faisal, another son of Hussein of the Hejaz, was proclaimed King by the Syrian National Congress in Damascus, March 1920. In July 1920 France deposed him. 1943 independence as two separate countries: Syria and Lebanon.
2. British Mandate of Palestine: Britain immediately divided the territory in two, east and west of the Jordan River:
 - a. Emirate of Transjordan: appointed a son of Hussein of the Hejaz as Emir. Independence in 1946; renamed Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan in 1948.
 - b. Palestine: direct rule.
3. British Mandate of Mesopotamia: combined three Ottoman vilayet into the Kingdom of Iraq, with Faisal as king. 1932 independence under King Faisal. 1958 coup overthrew the monarchy.