

## THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

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### Abstract

As the Balfour Declaration approaches its centennial, it remains one of the most significant and controversial documents in recent British foreign policy, for its lasting impact on the Middle East and British diplomatic relations. The decision to officially declare sympathy for the Zionist aspiration to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine was as divisive at the time as it is today; with detractors arguing against it as idealistic, anti-Semitic and strategically unwise. Yet, in the opposition's preoccupation with arguing against the publically espoused moral reasons for supporting Zionism, they invariably failed to comprehend the underlying pragmatic machinations behind Lloyd George's collaboration with the Zionists in the midst of the stalling war effort. This miscalculation rendered the opposition voices powerless, and British support of the Jewish settlement of Palestine quickly became a reality. Whilst the British Empire gradually declined in global influence in the years following the First World War, its influence lived on in the legacy of the war-time contingency policy for Palestine, which led the groundwork for the establishment of a Zionist state in 1947. This article discusses some of the competing claims made about Arthur Balfour's 'interesting experiment' in order to better understand the motivations of the British government at the time, why opposition to the plan failed, as well as understand the legacy of the Balfour Declaration for British foreign policy in the region today.

**Keywords:** Arthur Balfour, Zionizm, Middle East, Palestine

## BALFOUR DEKLARASYONU

### Özet

İngiltere'nin diplomatik ilişkileri ve Ortadoğu üzerindeki uzun süreli ilişkileri söz konusu olduğunda, Balfour Deklarasyonu aradan geçen 100 yıla rağmen hala önemini korumaktadır. Yahudi halkı için Filistin'de bir devlet kurulmasını resmen destekleyen bu deklarasyon, bugün olduğu gibi zamanında da bir dizi tartışma yaratmıştı. Muhalifler, bu deklarasyonun idealist, anti-Semitik ve stratejik olarak hatalı olduğunu ileri sürmüştü. Muhalefet Siyonizm'i desteklemenin ahlaki gerekçelerine karşı çıkmakla uğraşmaktan, Lloyd George'un savaş öncesi ortamda Siyonistlerle işbirliği yapmasının ardındaki pragmatik amaçları anlamakta aciz kalmıştı. Bu hatalı hesaplama muhalefetin sesini kısıtı ve Britanya'nın Filistin'deki Yahudi yerleşimine verdiği destek hızlı bir şekilde hayata geçti. Savaş zamanında Filistin için yapılan çalışmalar, 1947'de Siyonist bir devletin kurulmasının zeminini hazırladı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonrasındaki yıllarda İngiliz İmparatorluğu'nun dünyadaki öneminin azalmaya başlamaya başlamakla birlikte devam etmesini sağladı. Bu makale, zamanında İngiliz hükümetinin emellerini anlamak üzere Arthur Balfour'un 'ilginç deneyi' hakkında yapılan çeşitli iddialardan bazılarını ele almakta, muhalefetin neden başarısız olduğunu ve İngilizler için Balfour Beyannamesinin dış politikada devam eden önemini irdelemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Arthur Balfour, Siyonizm, Orta Doğu, Filistin

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## 1. Giriş

As the Balfour Declaration approaches its centennial, it remains one of the most significant and controversial documents in recent British foreign policy, for its lasting impact on the Middle East and British foreign policy. The significance of the decision to announce British ‘official sympathy’ for the plan to establish a ‘national home for the Jewish people’ in Palestine was not lost on the British war cabinet who had wrestled over the content of the declaration for months before it was approved 2nd November 1917, yet it would take several more years before the intent of the declaration became clear under the Palestinian Mandate. The lack of public attention given to the declaration when it was published belied the importance of the document and how it marked a change in British war strategy and foreign policy, renewing interest in imperialism, notably against the ‘Wilsonian’ spirit of the time (Mathew, 2011: 27). The reasons behind this shift in policy are manifold and largely conditional on the war-time environment, with subversion, anti-Semitism, general misunderstanding of the Bolshevik threat and Zionist opportunism all playing their part in creating fertile grounds for Zionist sympathies among the British ruling classes (Stork, 1972; Millman, 2001). It can be fair to say no one factor led to the declaration, but rather a chain of events and personalities convened to create a climate ripe for state-building experimentation, or as Arthur Balfour described it – “an interesting experiment to reconstruct a Jewish kingdom” (Mathew, 2011:26) The upcoming centennial of the Declaration has highlighted the ambivalence with which this war-time policy is still viewed; the repercussions of British support for the establishment of a Jewish Zionist state on Palestinian land continue to be felt to this day. As pro-Palestinian activists are calling on the British government to apologise for its role in supporting the occupation of Palestine (Middle East Eye, 2017), a sentiment echoed in the House of Lords by Lord Warner (BBC News, 2017), the British Prime Minister has chosen instead to reaffirm the importance of ties between the UK and Israel as defence and security partners (UK Gov, 2017). Whilst a national newspaper recounted this particular British-Israeli exchange as including Theresa May’s urging of British pride in the Balfour Declaration, this statement is notably absent from the official report (Independent, 2017). The British government’s dedication to maintaining close ties with its strategic partner, Israel, and relative silence on the topic of marking the centennial of the Balfour Declaration suggests a continuation of the unofficial policy, “to let sleeping dogs lie as much as possible” (Mathew, 2014).

This article will discuss some of the competing claims made about this ‘interesting experiment’ in order to better understand the motivations of the British government at the time, why opposition to the plan failed, as well as understand the legacy of the Balfour Declaration for British foreign policy in the region today.

## 2. Supporting Zionism: War-Time Pragmatism or Anti-Semitism?

The original concept for a homeland for Jewish people in Palestine was borne from the belief in ‘*ha-shiva la-historia*’ [return to history], which the Zionist cause used as the moral and ideological basis of justification for the mass settlement of Palestine, as the Promised Land and most importantly original homeland for a much persecuted people (Mathew, 2011: 26). This restorative argument claimed to overrule the Arab majority population’s right to the land, despite an absence of approximately 2,000 years, a fact not lost or the opponents of the Zionist argument. A key opponent to the declaration, Lord Curzon, unimpressed with the historical argument for Zionism commented, “On this principle...[the British] have a stronger claim to parts of France” (Gilmour, 1996: 65). The political Zionist movement had developed in the second half of the 19th century, through the writings of the French socialist Moses Hess and the Russian intellectual Leo Pinsker who made the case for the establishment of a Jewish nation-state. However, it wasn’t until Theodor Herzl that the political Zionist ideology was formulated in a way that it could be promoted to world leaders as a concept worthy of international backing, reassessing Jewish history and bringing Zionism to the mainstream (Avineri, 2013).

Among British political circles prominent figures such as Lord Walter Rothschild, Winston Churchill and David Lloyd George were won over to Zionism, yet others such as Lord Curzon and Edwin Montagu were decidedly against it. Prior to the Balfour Declaration, there was no unified view in the British cabinet on the topic of Zionism making the signing all the more surprising. In the context of the on-going war when resources were already stretched after more than three years of conflict, it was an unexpected twist in events as to how the

construction of a Jewish homeland in Palestine came to be seen as a necessary and viable plan for British foreign policy. This was a fundamental change in strategy, as under the Asquith led government the focus of the war had been the Western-front. Though the presence and personality of Chaim Weizman (a close friend of Rothschild) advocating for the Zionist cause undoubtedly influence events, British support for what Balfour called the 'interesting experiment' was a ultimately a pragmatic choice which had little to do with moral or ideologically sympathies for the restoration of the Jews. The shifting international political climate and regression from the internationalism which had defined the preceding decades, led to a change in outlook for the British establishment. As the war dragged on and the British became increasing aware of their diminishing influence and Empire, thus the Balfour Declaration became a pragmatic step to secure both through a highly unusual alliance with political Zionism.

Joe Stork notes that the Allied forces had stalled on the Western front and the British desired a victory to boost lagging morale at home, whilst also looking for a way to excuse themselves from the Sykes-Picot agreement with France internationalise Palestine after the war. Through the alliance with the Zionists, the British government hoped to insure their continued influence in the Middle East, "without the complications of direct annexation" (Stork, 1972: 11).

Johan Galtung describes, "the events that started with the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917 and ended with the UN Resolution of November 29, 1947, calling for 'partition' and the establishment of a Jewish (and an Arab) state, belong[ing] to the more tragic mistakes of recent his Whilst some have credited the Balfour Declaration as at best representing a pragmatic strategy to secure the Suez Canal and British security interests though friendly Zionist guardianship (Mathew, 2011; Stork, 1972; Friedman, 1973) others have suggested that British support for Zionism was bolstered by the somewhat darker motivations of endemic anti-Semitism in Europe (Montagu, 1916; Stork, 1972), with the author Arthur Balfour himself describing Zionism as, "a serious endeavour to mitigate the age long miseries created for Western civilization by the presence in its midst of a Body which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or to absorb." (Stork, 1972:10)

It appears that both war-time pragmatism and anti-Semitism, or at least an overestimation of Jewish international influence, played their part in winning the British establishment around to the Zionist plan for Palestine, with David Lloyd George supporting the idea of a Jewish buffer zone between France and the Suez as early as 1915 (Stork, 1972:11). As the war progressed, and the balance of power within the British war cabinet shifted with the resignation of Prime Minister Asquith in December 1916, British war strategies became increasingly fluid and Eastern focused. Brock Millman contends, "British operations in the Middle East...were generally intended less to secure territories important in themselves, than to limit the damage the central powers could do...British war aims in the Middle East, therefore, were either instrumental or contingent. They were in no sense permanent" (Millman, 2001: 242).

The British backed Zionist occupation of Palestine broke promises made in the earlier 1915 Arab-British agreement made with Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca, promising self-governance for the Arab populations within defined boundaries across the near East, in return for Arab assistance in driving back the Ottoman Empire on the Eastern front of the war. Although the British would later contend this was a misunderstanding as Palestine had never been specifically named in the communications. In fact the British promise to ensure self-governance for the Arab population of Palestine had begun to unravel much earlier, as with the signing of the Sykes-Picot agreement in March 1916 they had agreed to the divvying up of Ottoman lands in which Palestine was included in the Syrian territory controlled by France. This was a plan not of particular popularity with many on the British side as French hegemony in the area may threaten future lines of communication via the Suez Canal in the likelihood that the 'happy relations' with the French should not continue, an argument made by the cabinet minister Herbert Samuel (Stork, 1972; Barr, 2011), who also happened to be an ardent supporter of Zionism. Lord Curzon was also vocal in his opposition to the Sykes-Picot Agreement on the basis it was, "a millstone round our necks", likely to cause friction between the British, French and Arabs (Gilmour, 1996: 62).

Millman notes that the promises made to Zionists in 1917-18 were one outcome of the political warfare and subversion tactics used by the Allies - "the Jews being considered to have considerable clout in almost all

enemy societies, the Bolshevik Party, and the USA” - and also pre-emptive of a possible deal between the Zionists and the Germans (Millman, 2001, pg. 261; Gilmour, 1996; Renton; 2007). The Austrian Zionist Theodor Herzl had earlier attempted but failed to broker a deal with Constantinople, with the backing of Kaiser Wilhelm II, to establish a Jewish state in Ottoman controlled Palestine. Support from the Kaiser had likewise been rooted in anti-Semitic ideology believing, “the wealthy and hard-working nation of Israel...would produce a significant economic revival in Asia Minor”, helping to restore the prosperity of Turkey and diverting the European Jews from, “the sucking dry of the [Aussaugen] Christians” (Röhl, 1996: 204).

Both sides in the Great War flirted with Zionism as an answer to ‘the Jewish problem’, though it was the British who would eventually come out in support of the creation of a Jewish ‘homeland’, if not prepared to go so far as publically supporting a new ‘nation’. The imperialist tendencies of the British government under PM Lloyd George prepared the ground for, “Britain’s sponsorship of the Zionist project [which] stood in contradiction to the “Wilsonian” spirit of the time” (Mathew, 2011:27). Galtung describes the deal made through the Balfour Declaration as driven by politicians intent on exporting a, “‘European problem’ from East to West “well inside the house of the Arabs”, as only comprehensible, “...against a backdrop of century-long traditions of Western colonialism” (Galtung, 1971: 175).

From the perspective of Orientalism, there was little understanding or respect for Arab populations and political systems, which were seen as backward models of civilisation, in need of the guiding hand of European development. Unlike Mathew, Scott Atran has argued that the ‘Wilsonian’ doctrine in fact encouraged and gave licence to Western powers to create experimental projects in social and economic engineering on non-European cultures, routed as it was in a moralistic view of the development of man through free labour and liberal economies (Atran, 1989:720). It was from this ideological standpoint that the Zionist annexation of Palestinian lands was justified as an endeavour to liberate the Arab population, despite their savage nature.

In Orientalism’s racially biased modelling of nations and ethnicity, Jewish Zionists were afforded a higher place than the Arabs owing to a perception of the Jewish people having a heritage closer to that of the Europeans, yet were still viewed as second-class citizens who had infiltrated European society. The plan for Palestine would solve two problems; the Jewish problem in Europe and the need to stabilise the region after the Ottoman forces were routed. By supporting the Zionists British could export a people, “unwanted in Europe but steeped in European civilization; a people perceived as downtrodden, but with the intellectual industry and cultural commitment to secure the land”, in a form of surrogate colonization which would, according to the Oriental mind set, ultimately benefit the native population (Atran, 1989: 721).

### **3. Opponents of the ‘Experiment’**

Opposition to support for a ‘national home for the Jews’ came from many quarters, including some prominent figures of the cabinet, but they would ultimately fail to block the signing of the original declaration, or the later mandate for Jewish rule under British stewardship. It was the circumstances of a rapidly evolving war that shaped and reshaped British strategy, whilst under the influence of Lloyd George there was increasing adoption of realpolitik measures to secure trading routes for the Empire. It should be noted that the British war-time Cabinet was not a united entity as two rival factions wrestled for control of the agenda and direction of war strategy. The publishing of the Balfour Declaration had marked a significant victory for the radical faction against the reformists, clearing the way for an extension of Imperialism in the Middle East and partition of the Ottoman Empire (Gutwein, 2016). After the establishment of the small war council chaired by Lloyd George the voices of dissent were rendered powerless by the speed and force with which the radical faction could operate, making decisions intended to maintain imperial presence in the Levantine and secure trade from India via the Suez Canal, with little understanding or interest in Palestine beyond its strategic geographical importance (Mathew, 2016; Tuchman, 1982).

Even Lord Curzon, himself a member of the five person war council, and cited by many as the most vocal and best placed member of the cabinet in opposition to the plan for Palestine, was unable to convince his fellow politicians. He was much better informed than the rest of the council on the political landscape of the Middle and Far East, having travelled extensively in the area and held the position of Viceroy of India from

1899-1905. When the Zionist plan for Palestine was being actively debated in October 1917, Curzon warned that the plan for mass resettlement of Jews to Palestine was, “sentimental idealism, which would never be realised, and that His Majesty's Government should have nothing to do with it”, citing the inhospitable environment and questioning, “How was it proposed to get rid of the existing majority of Mussulman inhabitants...?” (Gilmour, 1996: 64). However, due to his onerous schedule as both Lord President of the Council and leader of the House of Lords, Curzon was late to fully realise the trajectory the Zionist discussions were taking within the government - “he seems to have been scarcely aware of those strange combinations of romanticism and strategic reasoning...that were converting so many of his colleagues into champions of the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine” (Gilmour, 1996: 63).

Two months earlier, Edwin Montagu had submitted a memorandum to the British Cabinet in protest to the correspondence between Lord Rothschild and Arthur Balfour advocating establishment of a Zionist nation in Palestine, fearing, “it may well be the Government were practically committed...for there has obviously been some correspondence or conversation before this letter” (Montagu, 1917). Montagu was the sole Jewish sitting MP and was perturbed by what he saw as an anti-Semitic policy which would result in Jewish people being forced out of their homelands and into exile in Palestine. He accused Zionism of being a “mischievous political creed...largely run...by men of enemy descent or birth” (Montagu, 1917). Fatefully, Montagu's assessment of the commitment of the British government to Zionism was correct, and his memorandum did little to change the minds of his colleagues in the war cabinet, though he found a supporter in Curzon, who agreed with, “the absurdity of shunting the Jews back into Palestine, a tiny country which has lost its fertility” (Gilmour, 1996: 63).

The warnings of Curzon and Montagu were not heeded, as unbeknownst to them many of their contemporaries had already been converted to the cause of Zionism, as a convenient way to install friendly guards to the Suez Canal, whilst dealing with the ‘Jewish problem’ at home. Curzon and Montagu had been effectively shut out from the key discussions, until the strategy had already been decided. The Balfour Declaration marked an early commitment within the Lloyd George led coalition government to securing the Eastern theatre of the war, even when key figures such as the chief of the Imperial General Staff in London, Sir William Robertson, vehemently argued resources should be concentrated on the Western Front (Mathew, 2011: 29). Robertson, like Curzon and Montagu before him was decisively side-lined on the matter, and later sacked in the spring of 1918.

A contemporary source writing soon after the declaration but before the mandate took effect summarised thus; “Palestine is one of the danger points of the world...The prospect of outsiders coming in, crowding out the natives, setting up schools where no language but Hebrew is allowed, has disturbed and incensed essentially the entire population.” The author goes on to prophetically warn that a lack of tactful diplomacy in Palestine is about more than just one country but could become, “a torch to the tinder of the entire Moslem world” (Unknown, 1922 : 245).

There were many voices who foretold the problems that British support of Zionism in Palestine would cause, but in the end the short-term benefits and fluid approach to war-time strategy would win out, as those in charge of the British government were fully prepared to double-deal in the name of realpolitik. William M. Mathew claims that the British not only went back on their earlier promise of self-governance for Palestinians, but did their utmost to erase the episode from the records noting that only partial copies of the infamous Jeffries translations of McMahon-Hussein correspondence are now available at the Public Records Office in Kew, as the most damning sections had been omitted from the confidential official records (Mathew, 2014).

In the end the opposing voices failed to prevent the Balfour Declaration coming into being as they were too slow to react and failed to comprehend the short-term priorities of the British government in the Middle East, arguing on ideological and moral grounds when they would have been better appealing for stronger British-Arab strategic alliances. Under this imperially-minded coalition government, and during a period of European-wide warfare and paranoia, British support for Zionism became almost inevitable.

### **3. Conclusion**

Mathew has described the signing of the Balfour Declaration as representing in British foreign policy, “more a regression than an advance, involving as it did the establishment of a European settler community in an already well-peopled and well-charted territory” (Mathew, 2011: 27). It was a return to colonialism, albeit surrogate colonialism, departing from the internationalism that had marked the years preceding the war. Whilst the British Empire gradually declined in global influence in the years following the First World War, its war-time contingency policy regarding the future of Palestine grew as it led the groundwork for extensive Jewish settlements culminating in the establishment of a Zionist state in 1947.

Galtung describes the policies of Britain and also the UN, in approving the settlements in British Mandated Palestine, as bilateral and multilateral colonialism respectively, defying the right to local self-determination and imposing settlements without consultation of the majority Arab population, representing 92% of the population in 1919 (Galtung, 1971:175). Balfour in response to Curzon’s protestations had stated, “we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country...The Four Great Powers are committed to Zionism...of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land” (Nutting, 1975:5), exhibiting the paternalistic attitude with which Palestine would be treated for much of the next century.

British confidence in the Orientalist remaking of Palestine continued despite the Arab nationalist uprising 1936-39, as seen in a journal article in *The World Today* in 1945 continuing to assert the developmental argument that, “There is no doubt that the majority of Arabs realize the immense benefits conferred on Palestine by an industrious, intelligent, and progressive Jewish community, and although the presence of some 500,000 Jews must of necessity impede the fulfilment of the Arab dream of an independent Arab Palestine” (G.S.H, 1945: 196).

With the benefit of hindsight and documentation making clear there were multiple acts of bad faith on the part of the British government in their dealings with Arab leaders during the war, it is difficult to commend the decision to support political Zionism in 1917, but that is to measure the policies made in an unprecedented internationally paranoid and hostile climate against that of today. In 1917 it appeared that the Allied forces may not win suffering defeat at Gallipoli, and it was in an atmosphere of desperation and only peripheral understanding of Palestine in which the war cabinet decided on the policy of supporting Zionism.

In his memoirs, Lloyd George listed nine reasons for the signing of the declaration including the desire to attract Jewish financing, and belief in the influence of Jews in communist Russia, whose goodwill they hoped would ensure Russia continued to fight - “it was part of our propagandist strategy for mobilising every opinion and force throughout the world which would weaken the enemy and improve the Allied chances” (Lloyd George in Gelvin, 2014: 83). Lloyd George’s correspondences reveal both a stark over-estimation of Jewish global power and influence, and a willingness to adopt controversial policies to secure the future of the Empire by any means necessary which defined British foreign policy of the time.

Isaiah Friedman has called Palestine ‘a Twice Promised Land’ (2000), but in fact it was used as a bargaining chip by the British on three occasions; first to the Arabs as marked for self-governance, second to France under the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and third to the Zionist movement. Each was an arrangement of convenience, to further British interests in the region, and be discarded when no longer auspicious a key feature of the fluid British war-time foreign policy.

The Balfour Declaration is undoubtedly one of the most influential British foreign policy documents of the 20th century, as it set in motion the events that would lead to the creation of the Israeli state, however, to many it was also the seed of political instability affecting the region to this day. Norman G. Finkelstein contends that, “Zionism did not come to use force despite itself”, as force was a natural part of Zionism; for how else would Palestine be transformed from an Arab to a Jewish state if not through ‘fire and blood’? (Finkelstein, 2003: 109) From the moment the Balfour Declaration was signed and settlement began, the course to conflict became inevitable.

The British establishment attempted to clarify and defend their position on the balance of power in Palestine in white papers issued in 1922 and 1939, denying that the 1917 declaration in anyway intends for the “disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language, or culture in Palestine” (The Avalon Project, 1922). Nonetheless, British interference in the Middle East has had lasting implications for the stability of the region, and though the existence of Israel is now an irreversible reality, the British government and the UN cannot now disregard their responsibility to protect, “the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine” (Balfour Declaration, 1917), as had originally been promised in 1917. The failure to do so has been a continual thorn in the side of British diplomacy in Palestine among the Arab (Christian and Muslim) population.

The Balfour Project, an independent charitable organisation, has proposed the UK government use the centennial year of the Balfour Declaration as an opportunity for learning, “acknowledging that whilst a homeland for the Jewish people has been achieved, the promise to protect the rights of the Palestinian people has not yet been fulfilled”, and urging the government to, “promote justice, security and peace for both peoples” (The Balfour Project).

Britain’s relationship with Israel and the continuing instability in Palestine were focal points of the 16th November 2016 House of Commons debate on the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, introduced by Conservative MP Caroline Ansell. Suggestions of official marking of the centenary are not without controversy with fellow Conservative MP, Bob Stewart, accusing the British government of the time as being, “either duplicitous or incompetent in 1917”, and Labour MP Andy Slaughter suggesting a priority of the centenary should be addressing the failure to ensure civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in the region (Hansard, 2016).

In the wake of the Brexit referendum and need to re-negotiate trade deals, Israel has been marked as a major economic partner for the United Kingdom, with bilateral trade reaching 6 billion in 2015 (Hansard, 2016). It is also a key security partner for the UK in the Middle East, so discussions in parliament over the legitimacy of the Balfour Declaration have consistently been metered against support for the Israeli administration and their partnership in combating terrorism and Islamic extremism, as noted in the House of Lords debate (Hansard, 2017), most especially since the installation of the Trump administration and the expected reduction in US international security involvement.

Since the debates in the House of Commons and House of Lords, there is yet to be an official response by the UK government as to how (or if) the centennial of the Balfour Declaration will be marked this year, and the only consensus found has been that any official marking of the declaration should include a focus on encouraging peace talks between the Palestinians and Israelis.

For the United Kingdom, 2017 has been a tumultuous year with multiple Islamic, Islamic-related and ‘retaliation’ terrorist attacks in London and Manchester resulting in the deaths of 36 victims, and injuring a further 224 people. 22nd March 2017 – Islamic-related terrorist attack on Westminster Bridge; 3rd June 2017 – London Bridge attack, IS claimed responsibility; 12th June 2017 – suicide bomb at Manchester Arena, IS claimed responsibility; 19th June 2017 – Finsbury Park attack, presumed ‘retaliation’ attack targeting Muslim worshippers.

As such, it is increasingly unlikely that the Balfour Declaration’s centennial will be publically marked by the British Government, being as it is a historic document with a contentious legacy for the Middle East today, and taking place at a time of significant social, economic and security based anxiety for the UK.

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