

A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST EXPLANATION OF THE BALFOUR DECLARATION AND THE ORIGINS OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN PALESTINE

İsmail EDİZ*

Öz

İngiltere'nin Filistin Dış Politikasının Kökenleri ve Balfour Deklarasyonu'nun Neoklasik Realist Bir Açıklaması

20. yüzyılın ilk çeyreğinde yaşanan bir takım gelişmeler Ortadoğu'nun şekillenmesinde önemli role sahiptir. Birinci Dünya savaşı sürecinde ortaya çıkan Şerif Hüseyin-Mc Mahon Müzakereleri, Sykes-Picot Anlaşması, Balfour Deklarasyonu, İngiltere ile Fransa arasındaki diğer gizli anlaşmalar Arap coğrafyasının sonraki dönemini derinden etkilemiştir. 1917'de ortaya çıkan Balfour Deklarasyonu İsrail'in kurucu metinlerinden biri olarak adlandırılabilir. Bu bakımdan deklarasyonun başta Filistin olmak üzere bütün Ortadoğu siyasetine etkileri son derece fazladır. Zaman içerisinde bölgenin en önemli sorunlarından birine dönüşen Filistin meselesinin köklerinin Balfour Deklarasyonuna dayandığını söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Bu nedenle Balfour Deklarasyonunu ve İngiltere'nin Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasındaki Filistin siyasetini anlamak, bölgenin sonraki tarihini anlamak açısından son derece önemlidir. Buradan hareketle, bu makale deklarasyon üzerinden İngiltere'nin bölge politikalarını irdelemeye ve deklarasyonun ortaya çıkışına bir nedensellik ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Balfour Deklarasyonunun ardındaki temel motivasyon nedir? İngiltere'de 1915 gibi erken bir tarihte gündeme gelmesine rağmen, deklarasyonun ancak 1917'de ortaya çıkışı nasıl açıklanabilir? Bu çalışma, İngiliz siyasetinde ortaya çıkan bir takım iç ve dış faktörlerin deklarasyonu ortaya çıkardığını iddia etmektedir. Makale, bu faktörleri neoklasik realist teori perspektifi ile incelemeyi ve Balfour Deklarasyonunu açıklamak için sistemik belirleyicileri ve birim düzey değişkenleri değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma özellikle Deklarasyonun arkasındaki karar alma sürecini sistematik ve bütünsel bir bakış açısıyla ele almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Balfour Deklarasyonu, Neoklasik Realizm, Filistin, Sykes-Picot, İngiltere'nin Ortadoğu Siyaseti*

Abstract

A number of developments in the first quarter of the 20th century have an important role in shaping the Middle East. The Sharif Hussein-Mc Mahon Negotiations, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration and other secret agreements between Britain and France that emerged during the First World War deeply affected the subsequent period of Arab geography. The Balfour Declaration in 1917 can be called one of the founding texts of Israel. In this respect, the declaration has a great impact on all the Middle Eastern politics, especially Palestine. It will not be wrong to say that the Palestine issue, which has become one of the most important problems of the region in time, has its roots in the Balfour Declaration. For this reason, cognizance of the Balfour Declaration and Britain's Palestinian politics after the First World War is crucial to understand the region's later history. From this point of view, this article attempts to examine the regional policies of Britain through the declaration and to provide a causality for the emergence of the declaration. What is the key motivation behind the Balfour Declaration? How can one explain the emergence of the declaration only in 1917, although it came to the agenda in Britain as early as 1915? This study claims that a particular set of internal and external factors associated with British politics gave rise to the declaration. The present article dissects these

* Doç. Dr., Sakarya Üniversitesi, Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü ve Ortadoğu Enstitüsü (ORMER), Sakarya.

E-mail: edizismail@hotmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3058-5305>

(Makale Gönderim Tarihi: 18.03.2019 - Makale Kabul Tarihi: 27.06.2019)

I thank Tuncay Kardaş for his helpful comments and criticisms.

factors from the perspective of neoclassical realist theory and evaluate the systemic modifiers and unit-level variables in order to explain the Balfour Declaration. Specifically, it examines decision-making process behind the declaration from a systematic and holistic perspective.

Key Words: *The Balfour Declaration, Neoclassical Realism, Palestine, Sykes-Picot, Britain's Middle East Policy.*

Introduction

This study examines the causes of the British policy of establishing a Jewish national state in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration in 1917. The reason why the Balfour Declaration arose is still unclear. While some consider it a triumph of the Zionists, others consider it the success of Weizmann alone. For many researchers the declaration was a step for protecting British interests in the Middle East. Although the Balfour Declaration has been evaluated in many studies, almost all of them approach this unique event only within the framework of History. However, having a cursory look at the international problems in the Middle East today, it would be a mistake to see the Balfour Declaration only as a matter of history. The declaration has brought up significant international and regional consternations and deeply influenced interstate relations in the region. In this sense, considering the declaration as a matter of International Relations will contribute understanding of significant systemic and local dynamics behind the event. From this vantage point, this article aims to discuss the emergence of the Declaration and the subsequent British Middle East policy both by using a theoretical framework of International Relations, namely the explanatory power of neoclassical realist theory and by using requirements of methodology of history. The overall aim is to provide the reader with a comprehensive reconsideration of the case.

The neoclassical realism opens up a wide gateway for students of international relations, who particularly wish to examine the historical facts and search for causal mechanism behind historical events with a high degree of research methodology and sound arguments. It combines systemic, unit level and intervening variables to explain states' foreign policy behaviours. According to the neoclassical realism, a state's foreign policy is shaped firstly by its relative power and position in the international system. Here relative material power is very effective on policy making process. The theory also argues that unit level variables are also influential in making foreign policy. The main argument of neoclassical realist is that the relative amount of material power will define states' foreign policy however relative power should also filter through unit level attributes. While their relative power increases, states begin to exert their influence on other states and when their relative material power decreases their influence on abroad shrink. The latter gives them less desire to interfere in the outside world. In other words, the more power they get the more influence they have. However, in addition to systemic variables in analysing foreign policy of states, the neoclassical realists also take into account how these systemic determinants interact with unit-level variables such as the perceptions of decision makers, leadership images of foreign policy executives (FPE) and domestic balance of power of a state, amongst other factors. Thus, considering that systemic and intervening variables are simultaneously effective on FPE, the neoclassical realists analyse foreign policy by combining these different dynamics in a systematic fashion. The question here stands as to how states behave according to rise or decline of material power they possess and what is the role of FPE in this process. So to understand a state's foreign policy, systemic, domestic and other relevant factors should be evaluated.

In this direction, this study aims to analyse both systemic and domestic dynamics that caused the emergence of the Balfour Declaration. Unlike other

studies, rather than explaining this decision taken by Britain with a single argument either by international or unit level determinants, in this article the declaration will be considered as a result of a combination of internal and external dynamics. In this sense, although it was raised by Herbert Samuel in 1915, the formalization of support for the Jewish national state would only be possible in October 1917, due to a combination of international and local developments. In other words, the British Empire's decision emerged in a limited time frame as a result of the international conditions of the time and the local dynamics of empire. In this way, the focus of the study is on the decision-making process of the British foreign policy executive regarding the Balfour Declaration. In particular, it seeks to answer the following questions: How did the changing international and local conditions in the period from 1915 to the end of 1917 affect the British Palestine policy and what were the dynamics that revealed the Balfour Declaration. This study claims that the declaration was not a consequence of a single independent variable but came out of a combination of systemic factors such as the significant geostrategic position of Palestine and British military position in the war theatre, anti-Tsarist idea of Jews, economic crisis in the Empire, need for Jewish-American finance, German attempts for gaining Jews on its side. On the other hand, it was also a product of some unit level variables such as the leadership images of Prime Minister Asquith and his successor Lloyd George and strategic culture of members of two different cabinets. As for the methodology, the use of primary sources such as the documents in the British National Archives is of great importance in understanding the motivation behind the Balfour Declaration and the present study examines the subject matter in the light of the British archival documents, cabinet papers and foreign office documents as well as outstanding literature on the subject.

Many Interpretations on the Britain's Mysterious Policy

What was the motive behind the Balfour Declaration? Many researchers have tried to find an answer to this question. In his memoirs, Lloyd George writes that Palestine was given to Weizmann because of his loyal services at the time of the war¹. However, the relevant literature and archival documents reveal a different causality for the emergence of the declaration. Since it was largely the result of verbal and confidential negotiations, finding too many documents on the Balfour Declaration in the British National Archives is impossible. On the other hand, disperse of Sykes' documents, a key figure in the emergence of the declaration, further exacerbated the problem of first-hand resource related to the declaration². Despite the scarcity of archival documents considered to be a *sine qua non* of historical research, many studies have been carried out on the Balfour Declaration.

“The Balfour Declaration and Its Makers”, written by Mayir Verete, can be considered as one of the most remarkable studies on this unique event³. Verete argued that the declaration emerged to establish the British interests in the region, but not by the only efforts of the Zionists and Weizmann. Verete only treats the issue in terms of British interest while ignoring local dynamics in London efficient in the emergence of the declaration. Like Mayir Verete, Isiah Friedman agreed that the declaration emerged in the direction of British imperial ambitions⁴. Friedman states that the competition between Britain and

¹ George 1938, pp. 348-349.

² CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and Balfour Declaration, January 1923.

³ Verete 1970, pp. 48-76.

⁴ Friedman 1991.

Germany and British desire to prevent Germany from receiving the support of the Jews were on the basis of the declaration. According to Friedmann, Britain did not want to see a French or German control in Palestine. He argues at the end that the aim of the declaration was to prevent possible cooperation between Germany and the Jews. George Antonious in his work, "The Arab Awakening"; Ben Halpern in "The Idea of the Jewish State" and Elizabeth Monroe in "Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1971" argues that imperial concerns were the Britain's main motivation and they defend the idea that Zionism was a tool for British policy makers to remove France from Palestine⁵. While most of these studies try to explain the declaration to a large extent through systemic variables, this study, by considering the fact that intervening variables were also influential in the declaration, argues that the internal conditions of British Empire must be taken into account.

Another comprehensive study on the subject is Mark Levene's "The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity"⁶. Levene does not accept the claim that the declaration came directly to protect Britain's colonial interests. He claimed that the British who seized Palestine in the war period wanted to use Zionism as a tool to stay in this region. On the other hand, the only reason behind the declaration was Britain's attempt to provide the support of the Jews in Russia. This thesis is based on the claim that there is a homogeneous team behind the declaration. However, each of the foreign policy executive had a different identity, personality and different strategic culture and their perceptions of environment was different from each other. Therefore, it is not possible to fully evaluate the declaration and achieve a satisfactory casualty without considering all these factors.

Leonard Stein's "The Balfour Declaration" is another comprehensive study on the Balfour Declaration⁷. Stein argues that the Russian Jews had a great share in the declaration and that the relations between Britain and America played an important role in the declaration. Although the study was based on archival documents, it cannot be said that the reason behind the declaration was fully revealed because, as with many other studies, Stein came to this conclusion without taking into account the variables arising from the internal dynamics of the British Empire. On the other hand, it has also not included in many other systemic factors.

Tom Segev and James Ranton argued that the declaration emerged to enable Britain with the support of Jews, especially American Jews to press their governments to support the Entente⁸. According to the Segev, Britain did not need Palestine to provide security for India and the declaration emerged only from the idea that the Jews was ruling the world and Britain wanted to gain their support. On the other hand, Huneidi claims that British leaders themselves accepted that Palestine had no strategic importance in defending the Suez Canal⁹. In this sense, the claims of Huneidi need to be proved since there are many studies and archival documents refuting this claim. In this sense, those who think like Huneidi completely ignore the strategic reasons. But Herbert Samuel and Mark Sykes both emphasized the strategic importance of Palestine and argued that it should be under British control. In addition to these, although few in number, researchers such as David Vital argue that the declaration emerged to solve the problems of the war¹⁰.

⁵ Antonious 1939; Halpern 1969; Monroe 1981.

⁶ Levene 1992.

⁷ Stein 1961.

⁸ Segev 2000; Renton 1998.

⁹ Huneidi 2019.

¹⁰ Vital 1987.

There are many studies on the The Balfour Declaration. But none of these studies considered the issue of the declaration as a problem of international relations and approached the matter methodologically within the framework of International Relations. Accordingly, there are no studies evaluating the issue with the explanatory arguments of the neoclassical realist theory. On the otherhand most of these studies have failed to give an integrated and systematic explanation to the question of why the declaration emerged. The main problem with these studies is their claim on that the declaration emerged due to a single independent variable. In other words, although these studies had different answers, they suggest only one reason for the question of why declaration emerged. Many authors who claim that the Declaration emerged in order to protect Britain's imperial interests or any other reason did not base their claims on a systematic analysis and provide enough evidence to support them. In any case, it is not possible to explain the declaration through a single reason. The emergence of such an important policy requires a more complex chain of reasons. At this point, the main purpose of this study is to evaluate the declaration from a more encompassing point of view in order to overcome this general deficiency and to show that there is a chain of causality consisting of the combination of international and intervening variables behind the declaration and the neoclassical realist theory would be an effective tool to achieve this.

Palestine: A Strategic Buffer Zone and Security Asset for the British Empire

Impressive and dominant role of international system and structural modifiers in making foreign policy can not be denied. They define the emergence of possible foreign policy preferences. Geography as a structural modifier is an explanatory variable in neoclassical realist theory¹¹. Spykman states that geography is the most effective factor in shaping national foreign policy since it is the most permanent¹². Geographical factors such as natural buffers, barriers make state's aggression easier or more difficult and they also reward offensive military strategies¹³. According to Lobell, geography effects states' war capability positively or vice versa. In land warfare, natural buffers and barriers often useful for the defence of states¹⁴. In this context, the geographical position of Palestine as a structural variable yielded emergence of the declaration. The British Empire made great effort to ensure security of India in the previous century and occupied Egypt in 1882. It continued to be sensitive to this issue at the beginning of the 20th century. Located in the eastern Mediterranean and as a buffer to Egypt and a gateway to Iraq, Palestine was perceived by British statesmen as a critical geography for the safety of the Suez and India¹⁵. The canal shortened the distance between London and Mumbai to 4400 miles, London and Kolkata to 3800 miles¹⁶. Having the largest trade volume in the world, the strategic value of the Suez as a military and a trade route was evident for the Britain. It was competing with Germany and France on the Middle East and so on Palestine. Germany was already an enemy in the war and if it was defeated, the threat would have been eliminated. But the main knotty hardness was how to leave France out as an ally. In Herbert Samuel's words, the dominance of France in the region was a threat to the integrity of the

¹¹ Ripsman et. al. 2006, pp. 38-42.

¹² Spykman 1938, pp. 27-50.

¹³ Hancock and Lobell 2010, pp. 143-165.

¹⁴ Lobell 2010, p. 14.

¹⁵ Long 2018, p. 18.

¹⁶ Mathew 2013, pp. 231-250.

Ottoman Empire and the connection of Britain to the Suez¹⁷. According to Samuel, Palestine, which would protect Egypt on the one hand, would also be one of the strongholds of Britain in the Middle East with a base to be established in Haifa¹⁸.

In this case, British policy-makers approached Palestine as a security issue. They thought that Palestine should not to be hold by another power and considered it necessary to control the region in terms of the security of the empire¹⁹. British FPE, seeing German expansionism and also French policies as a serious threat to British interests, considered that the protection of interests in India, the Mediterranean and the Pacific in the aftermath of the war depends on the absence of any other power in the seas of these regions and the continuation of territorial, air and maritime connections. Palestine, located in the southern part of the canal, had such a strategic position²⁰. Barbara Tuchman in his famous book “Bible and Sword” calls this region as “fatal geography”²¹. Any power to control the region after the war would have the opportunity to interfere the Britain’s path to India. For this reason, the need to control the land extending from Beersheba to Sinai was frequently emphasized by the British authorities. In this sense, Palestine was seen as a *cordon sanitaire*²².

Outbreak of the First World War increased the sensitivity of Britain to the Middle East and so to Palestine²³. It was forced to review its policy on the Middle East after the Ottoman Empire entered to the war since this brought the possibility of a change in the status of Palestine. In this case, Britain worried about the danger of another power’s especially Germany’s control on Palestine. Other states’ control on the region would damage the security of the Suez Canal and of the road to India²⁴. The subsequent Ottoman attack on the Suez showed how canal was important for the British security²⁵. This is why British policy makers’ perception of Palestine had changed with Ottoman entrance to the war. The commission created by the British Prime Minister Asquith after this new critical development, discussed the interests of the British Empire in the Middle East. Here, the ideas of Mark Sykes, who was appointed to the commission by Lord Kitchener’s advice, came to the fore. According to him, the region of Aqaba and Acre in the east and west of Palestine, which was the hinterland of Sinai, was irreplaceable for British interests. This region was particularly critical in the security of the Persian Gulf and in case of a possible Russian attack. On the other hand, a possible France domination in this region worried British foreign policy makers, especially Mark Sykes. For this reason, Sykes was of the opinion that a British control between the region dominated by Sharif Hussein and France was very important to protect interests²⁶. Despite the importance of the region, Britain had to wait. While states are seeking security, their relative standing position in international system is decisive in defining their interests²⁷. The bad course of the war in the first two years prevented the British strategy from being fully grounded. Britain had to accept

¹⁷ Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

¹⁸ Long 2018, p.18.

¹⁹ TNA.CAB 24/19/80, German War Aims, July 1917.

²⁰ Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

²¹ Tuchman 1956, p. 319.

²² Mathew 2013, pp. 231-250.

²³ Weltmann 1961, pp. 246-269.

²⁴ Mathew 2013, pp. 231-250.

²⁵ Weltmann 1961, pp. 246-269.

²⁶ Verete 1970, pp. 48-76.

²⁷ Hancock and Lobell 2010, pp.129-151.

internationalisation of this region in 1916 with Sykes-Picot which was mostly in favor of France.

The defeats in the war and the economic downturn caused cabinet change in Britain in December 1916. Palestine became one of the key issue for the new war cabinet under Lloyd George's prime ministry. This was also the period when the Zionists, who saw the war an opportunity, started to express their expectation clearly about Palestine²⁸. Being a security zone for the Indian road led Palestine remain the first agenda of the new cabinet²⁹. The new Prime Minister was of the opinion that British control over Palestine, which was of great importance for Egypt and the security of the Suez, should be accepted by France. Likewise to Prime Minister, Lord Curzon emphasized the strategic position of Palestine. In April 1917, a committee named "Subcommittee on Territorial Desiderata", led by Lord Curzon was formed. In the work of this committee, the Palestine was defined as a very important place for the future of the empire and it was stated that Palestine was vital to ensure security of empire. At this point, Curzon thought that the right path for Britain was direct control of Palestine³⁰. On the other hand, Bonar Law, leader of the Conservative Party, who was a partner of the cabinet, emphasized that it would be wrong to think that the Palestinian operation was purely morale or political and that this region had a very important position for India. Even though being outside the war cabinet, Winston Churchill also emphasized the importance of Palestine for the interests of the British Empire.

Senior military authorities also thought as civil policy makers about the future status of Palestine. General Smuts was of the opinion that Palestine was important for the connection with Egypt and the east and that the control of region by another power would damage the British interests. According to Smuts, the solution of the problems in Mesopotamia and Palestine was more important than all other problems with the East of Africa³¹. Almost all of Britain's top military officials saw Palestine as a buffer zone between the Suez and the French region and especially after the war they believed that it would be very important for protecting the interests of the British empire³². Therefore, by introducing such a declaration supporting Zionism, the British FPE would take the necessary step for the security of empire in the Middle East and thus also would find a way to be permanent in such a critical geography after the war. However, Britain's past engagements had been a serious obstacle to achieve this strategically important region. Apart from the promises given to the Arabs, the most important of these binding engagements was undoubtedly Sykes-Picot signed with France³³.

Sykes-Picot as an "Unfortunate Agreement" for the British Empire

Another systemic variable for the emergence of the Balfour Declaration was the competition with France and other belligerents in the Middle East on Palestine. Here, the constraints and opportunities that international conditions provide to London over time and the clarity of those options were the systemic determinants for the Palestinian policy. The signals given by international

²⁸ Weltmann 1961, pp. 246-269.

²⁹ Mathew 2013, pp. 231-250. For Lloyd George's expectations of Palestine Campaign and especially capture of Jerusalem see also Karakaş 2016.

³⁰ Gillon 1969, pp.131-150.

³¹ Gillon 1969, pp.131-150.

³² Long 2018, p. 21.

³³ F.O. 132187/2117/44A, No: 242, Balfour's Memorandum on Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, August 1919.

system to the decision makers and the clarity of the information are very decisive in making foreign policy³⁴. Clarity has some components such as situations where threats and opportunities can be easily distinguished; international system providing clear information about the threat/opportunity to the decision maker and clearly standing out of optimal policy options³⁵. Clear opportunities, providing states an advantage in a particular war theatre, require the emergence of significant increases in the capacities of states vis a vis other states. At this point it is important that there should be no alternative policy that the rival state can put into practice. Hence while increasing power is providing an advantage for counter-states, the weak position of the other state has a decisive role in the clarity of opportunity³⁶.

It can be asked here that although the idea of establishing a national state for the Jews in Palestine had long been discussed in the major states of Europe such as Britain, Germany and France, why the Zionists' attempts did not reach a conclusion until a certain moment of the First World War. This was mostly about the impositions and opportunities provided by the clarity of international system. British cabinet did not have a real agenda for the Zionism in the first two years of the war. Even the Sykes-Picot, which emerged in the then war conditions was against the interests of Britain and did not mention the Zionism. According to the status of this period, France had an advantage on an internationalized Palestine where was surrounded by French zone. Although an ally of Britain, British policymakers believed that France, which had the chance to control Palestine with Sykes-Picot, could be a threat to Egypt, the Suez and India³⁷. The strategy of keeping France and Germany away from Egypt was the main motivation of Britain's Palestine and the Middle East policy during the war. France to control Palestine was perceived as a threat by all British cabinet members. Lloyd George's first goal was to prevent France from controlling the region after the German threat in the Middle East was eliminated³⁸. These thoughts were not groundless. France had long based its foreign policy in the Middle East on controlling all of Syria³⁹. Therefore, a divided Syria, which Palestine would be excluded from this control, was against its foreign policy strategy in the Middle East. Having much more investment in the region compared to other states and continuing significant economic activities in regions such as Haifa, Jaffa and Tripoli, France had the chance to control Palestine with Sykes-Picot⁴⁰. Lord Curzon, in a correspondence to Lord Derby, exactly called Sykes-Picot as an "unfortunate agreement"⁴¹. Curzon was not wrong. While France was trying to politically claim the Palestine, it had also tried to secure the support of the Jews and to guarantee Palestine by using the advantage obtained by Sykes Picot⁴². In 1914, Paris sent the French Grand Rabbi and several people with him to the United States and sought the support of the Jews. However, the problem faced by Britain as a result of similar attempts was also reflected in France's attempts. The alliance with Tsarist Russia was a serious obstacle for France to gain the support of the Jews⁴³.

³⁴ Ripsman et. al. 2006, p. 47.

³⁵ Ripsman et. al. 2006, p. 47.

³⁶ Ripsman et. al. 2006, p. 47.

³⁷ TNA.CAB 24/1/12, Alexandretta and Mesopotamia, March 16, 1915.

³⁸ Mathew 2013, pp. 231-250.

³⁹ F.O. 129319/2117/44A, No:276, From Meinertzhagen to Curzon, September 12, 1919.

⁴⁰ Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

⁴¹ F.O. 88743/2117/44, No. 1814, Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby, June 11, 1919

⁴² John 1985, pp.1-52.

⁴³ Renton 1998, pp.109-128.

A Neoclassical Realist Explanation of the Balfour Declaration and the Origins of the British Foreign Policy in Palestine

The British cabinet was committed to the control of Palestine in the post-war period and the biggest obstacle to this was conflicting interests with France. This was a question mark in the minds of the British policy makers soon after the Sykes Picot was signed but although they worried about it, empire lacked the necessary military and economic conditions for changing the agreement at a certain time and it was not possible to make an amendment in Sykes-Picot for the British cabinet⁴⁴. This was related to the clarity of the international system and it was not possible to change the agreement without full emergence of necessary conditions in favor of Britain and their reflection on the diplomacy. During the first two years of the war, Britain's financial and economic problems and failed results on war fronts prevented the status quo of the region to be established in favor of Britain. As Geoffrey Blainey stated that "the conflicting aims of rival nations are always conflicts of power" and British power was not enough to set the status of Palestine in accordance with its interest⁴⁵. Therefore, although a national state for Jews was seen as a means to save Palestine from the French by many British policy makers, the issue of whether or not Zionism would be used as a tool had not been on the agenda of the British cabinet for a long time. Samuel and Mark Sykes were the people who considered Zionism for this purpose⁴⁶. In fact, Sykes had already explained his views to Asquith and Balfour and mentioned the importance of Palestine, but he later considered this idea unapproachable, because it was impossible to persuade France to do so at that time. As a matter of fact, it had to be almost a year before Britain took action to have Palestine through Zionism. Here changes in systemic structure were effective in the revisionist stance of British FPE. As Schweller states that nature of the states, its goals and interests, their status quo or revisionist approaches, their satisfaction with existing status, their search for prestige are very effective in a state's foreign policy making process. In case of a certain degree of improvement in the physical and military power of a state, this directly reflects on its foreign policy and ambitions in an expansionary direction and vice versa⁴⁷. By positive developments in the war theatre in favor of Britain and a growing number of opportunities on financial issues, Palestine had been discussed more in London after January 1917. From the beginning of 1917, a general offensive of British troops in the Middle East and positive results in negotiations with the United States, provided Britain a great advantage against France⁴⁸. By improving military and economic situation after the second half of 1917 and changing military situation in the Middle East in favor of Britain, it became possible for British cabinet to bring the Palestine issue back to the negotiating table.

Under new military and economic conditions, the first target was to take the region to the British control with an amendment in the Sykes-Picot⁴⁹. In particular, Sykes thought that it would be possible to remove France from Palestine by means of Zionism⁵⁰. In addition to these systemic changes, Zionists' opposition to France and to an international control as well as their consent to British supervision provided an important opportunity to change the Sykes-Picot for British FPE. The Committee established under the leadership of Lord Curzon emphasized that the Sykes-Picot should have been reviewed by

⁴⁴ Mathew 2013, pp. 231-250.

⁴⁵ Blainey 1998, pp. 150.

⁴⁶ Tibawi 1978, p. 196.

⁴⁷ Rose 1998, pp. 144-172.

⁴⁸ TNA. CAB 23/4/19, War Cabinet 245, October 4, 1917.

⁴⁹ Gillon 1969, pp.131-150.

⁵⁰ Bloom 2011, pp.141-157.

changing the status of Palestine. The Committee also stated that it was wrong to consider the internationalization of Palestine, adopted by St. Jean de Maurienne⁵¹. In this sense, all members of the committee thought about Palestine just like Curzon. From this period onwards, the negotiations taking place between Sykes and the Zionist leaders began to progress more quickly⁵². Even though it was not official, the high level of negotiations was an indication that the British policy makers were now very serious about the declaration. Weizmann, Lloyd George and Balfour frequently met and discussed the content of the policy at these meetings. On April 3rd Weizmann met with Lloyd George and said that Zionists did not want a French control or an international status in Palestine, but that they would agree to the British or American control⁵³. In fact, on the same day, the prime minister also told Sykes that some areas that were not in the Sykes-Picot agreement should be added to the British area so that Britain could achieve successful control over the region⁵⁴. But at that time the international system had not yet offered a full clarity that the relevant change could be made.

At the cabinet meeting on April 25th, the Sykes-Picot agreement was on the agenda and the cabinet members severely criticized agreement because the current status of Palestine was harmful to the British interests. The matter regarding the transformation of Palestine into an international region was seen to be absolutely impractical. Towards the end of April, Britain's stance on Zionism became clearer and Sykes received directives from Lloyd George and Balfour to take action⁵⁵. Meanwhile Curzon's committee's recommendations on Palestine were adopted in accordance with the report presented to the cabinet on May 1st. On the other hand, when Sykes returned from the Middle East on May 17th, he presented a report to the cabinet. The proposal for Palestine in this report were largely determined the Britain's policy in Palestine⁵⁶. London's policy of Zionism was largely shaped during this period, but British FPE still had some doubts in their mind. The fact that the British army had not yet arrived in Palestine during this period was a clear obstacle to the announcement of the policy. On the other hand, among British Jews, there were those who did not favor Zionism and in particular Edwin Montagu, the only Jewish member of the cabinet, opposed such a policy⁵⁷. Meanwhile Curzon, an important cabinet member who deal with the issue only in terms of British interests, was opposed to the conversion of Palestine into a Jewish national state⁵⁸. In spite of these dissenting thoughts on the future of Palestine, Britain had to make a preventive move on Zionism because it was not alone in demanding Jewish support. Germany where thousands of Jews were living was also looking for opportunities to get Jewish support.

Jews to be prevented from Joining the German Camp

While the clarification process of international and local conditions continued in favor of London after the summer of 1917, another systemic factor that paved the way for the Balfour Declaration was Germany's policy towards Jews. By following a similar policy to British Empire, Germany's efforts to win

⁵¹ Renton 1998, pp.109-128.

⁵² Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

⁵³ Gillon 1969, pp.131-150.

⁵⁴ Verete 1970, pp. 48-76.

⁵⁵ Gillon 1969, pp.131-150.

⁵⁶ Renton 1998, pp.109-128.

⁵⁷ TNA.CAB 24/27/93, from Edwin Montagu to Lord Robert Cecil, September 14, 1917.

⁵⁸ Gilmour 1996, pp. 60-68.

the support of the Jews also influenced British decision on declaration. Despite its passive position in the first years of the war, Germany became interested in Zionism after 1917. Jews' international influence, strong economic position and their pro-German tendencies had led Britain to take necessary steps on the Zionism before Germany. In the meantime, Berlin was making efforts to draw the Jews living in Russia to its side and to rouse them against the Tsarist regime. The senior Jews living in Germany openly supported Berlin's policy. German land was the centre of the world Jews. The centre of Inner Executive of the Zionist Organization was in Berlin in 1914. At the beginning of the war, most of the Zionist leaders wanted Germany to win⁵⁹. Even the German Jews were trying the Ottoman Empire's entrance to the war on the side of Germany, aiming to undermine Britain's goals in the Middle East⁶⁰. Germany mediated several times between the Ottoman Empire and the Jews before⁶¹.

After the Ottoman Empire entered to the war on the side of Germany, Samuel wrote to Edward Grey that under new circumstances it was better for the interests of the British Empire to establish a Jewish state than to establish an international region in Palestine⁶². With the German advancing towards the Russian borders to the east of Europe by 1915, the regions where Jews lived became under the control of Germany. After capturing these regions, they tried to provide the support of the Jews by making propaganda that the Tsar exiled the Jews. British FPE worried that such a move by Germany would affect Jews in America and Russia and increase anti-Entente feelings⁶³. On the other hand in the summer of 1917, the Zionists in Germany were forcing Berlin to take a stand for Palestine⁶⁴. On June 13rd, Weizmann met with Ronald Graham and informed him that the German government was acting to win Jews. Thus, the Germans trying to influence the Zionists in Russia would accelerate anti-Entente propaganda. For this reason, the British government had to declare to support Zionism as soon as possible and recognize the rights of Jews on Palestine. In fact, how accurate the Britain's decision was soon understood from the Central Powers' declaration of Zionism and Palestinian policies immediately after the Balfour Declaration⁶⁵. But the military uncertainty, the problems in Russia, Austrian victory against Italy, a possible danger of Russian-German peace⁶⁶ intensified the uncertainty about the international system and this hindered the clarification of Britain's Palestine policy.

The Economic and Military Crises Forcing the British Empire to Care for Zionism

Economic power is accepted as an indicator of states' material capacity effecting foreign policy. Realists generally agree that power should be measured by military capability and economic capacity⁶⁷. State's gross domestic product and annual defence spending are decisive in defining foreign policy⁶⁸. In the long run there is a link between the rise and fall of the economic power of a state and the rise and fall of military power⁶⁹. Increasing power seeks states to

⁵⁹ Weltmann 1961, pp. 246-269.

⁶⁰ John 1985, pp.1-52.

⁶¹ TNA.CAB 24/144/21, Eastern Report, December 13, 1917.

⁶² Long 2018, p.18.

⁶³ Friedman 1973, pp. 105-124.

⁶⁴ Weltmann 1961, pp. 246-269.

⁶⁵ Herrmann 1965, pp. 303-320.

⁶⁶ Roberts 2017, pp. 14-19.

⁶⁷ Hancock and Lobell 2010, pp.129-151.

⁶⁸ Ripsman et al 2006, pp.38-42.

⁶⁹ Rose 1998, pp.144-172.

extend its territorial and political influence⁷⁰. Although economic crisis especially in the first two years of the war seems as if a domestic problem of Britain, considering its results shows that it had a global impact and so a systemic effect in terms of the British policy abroad. Britain's negative course of economy also effected the policies of states such as France and Germany.

In the middle of the war theatre the bad economic outlook in the British economy and the search for new financial support appeared among the reasons for the Balfour Declaration. As Paul Kennedy argues there is a direct relationship between the changes occurring over time in the economy and the positions of states in the international system⁷¹. Britain's unexpected results in the first two years of the war forced him to make a choice. Failed results in Europe, Marne and in the Middle East, Iraq and Dardanelles showed a hopeless picture for the future of the economy and brought Britain to the brink of a financial bottleneck and reduced its credibility. On the other hand, the practice of compulsory military service, which was not seen before in the history of Britain, left the government in a difficult position and decreased its sympathy in public opinion. At the end of 1916, allied economies were about to hit bottom. It was a must for Britain to provide support of America and the Jews to win the war⁷². Lloyd George said that if the Zionists were supported in the establishment of a Jewish national state in Palestine, the Jews had promised to do their best for the Entente⁷³. On the other hand Britain's negative military results at the beginning of the First World War and the economic and financial problems had broken the negotiating power of the FPE against France with whom Britain was competing for Palestine. In other words, decline in the physical power of British Empire influenced the foreign policy and led an unfortunate agreement undermining its interests in the Middle East as well as military defeats⁷⁴. The empire had to find money, but there was no hope on the horizon for the creditors. In the Atlantic, submarine operations of the Germans sank the trade ships caused a large blow in market and this reflected negatively on economy. On the other hand, companies providing loans to Entente for financing the war had become unable to meet demand. Britain needed a fresh blood and this could be the Jews that British FPE believed in their legendary economic strength. Such a declaration would be used as a means of propaganda by British policymakers who believed that Jews in America were economically powerful and that many of them were also Zionists⁷⁵.

Since the beginning of First World War, Jewish capital had been a potential financial resource that the British government aims to achieve. With military defeats and economic crises, the need for America and Jews increased and it became an indispensable necessity for British Empire to attract Jews to their side. For this, in a sense, it was necessary to deal with the Zionists, who were the political pillars of the Jews. The British government had sought the ways to contact the Zionists in order to overcome its financial problems. Such a deal would bring Britain more than one gain. Germany also aimed to take Jewish support in its own side. Jews conversion to the German camp could have been the beginning of the end for the British Empire. In this case, it would be difficult for America to enter the war on the side of the Allies and the financial support from the Jews would be completely lost. Moreover, this would mean

⁷⁰ Lobell 2010.

⁷¹ Kennedy 2002, p. 21.

⁷² Levene 1992, pp. 54-57.

⁷³ Long 2018, p.19.

⁷⁴ Rose 1998, pp.144-172.

⁷⁵ Renton 1998, pp.109-128.

that Jewish financial sources would be in the hands of Germany. Also the possibility that the Jews in Tsarist Russia mobilized against the regime would have negative consequences for the British Empire.

As the war continued, America was the only power that could change the bad course of the war and economy in favor of Britain. Britain had reached a critical threshold for especially in 1917 and it needed America both for economic and military aid. The allies of Britain forced Germany to fight on east and west front at the same time. Especially after 1917, the possibility of Russia making a separate agreement with Germany started to worry Britain. In this case, Germany could transfer its military forces from east to west. For this reason, Britain was likely to need a fresh power that could be also an alternative to Russia and the most appropriate candidate was America⁷⁶. To achieve this, it is necessary to persuade the American president about the idea of annexation to hold in Palestine. To convince Wilson and the Zionists for Britain was like two different pillars of the same work⁷⁷. At this point, Empire would achieve to gain the support of the Zionists in the United States and this also required to take an important step to persuade the president Wilson. London had already found a formula to attract President. Thus, Britain, by taking the mandate administration to be established in Palestine, would help the Jews to found a national state in accordance with the principle of self-determination which was the most important of Wilson's 14 principles.

With in the developments in the war in favor of Britain, the idea of declaration had become more on the agenda of the cabinet from the beginning of 1917. London made a series of initiatives to learn about the views of other states on this issue. The fact that most of the Jews were anti-Allied due to the policies of Tsarist Russia was the biggest obstacle to Britain's access to Jewish capital⁷⁸. Indeed, the Rothschilds and other Jews in Britain refrained from lending to Tsarist Russia who was persecuting Jews⁷⁹. London, trying to keep Russia on the side of the Allies, cared about Petrograd's thought and believed that such a declaration would prevent the anti-war Jews in Russia. Nevertheless, On April 24, 1917, Hamilton, a British official, recommended to send a Zionist delegation to Russia for making propaganda to break the anti-Entente feelings of Jews. It was important for Britain to keep Russia within the Entente camp and so Britain's main strategy against Russia in this period was to keep it in the war. But London also had to find a formula that would minimize the reactions of the Jews in Russia against the regime. It was extremely difficult to perform both of these aims at the same time. At the end of April, London asked the British ambassador in Petrograd how the idea of Jewish national state would be able to influence the Jews in Russia. The response was positive⁸⁰. Despite the weak administration of Kerensky, who was in power after the March revolution in Russia, a pro-Zionist declaration to win the sympathy of the Jews could lead to the end of Russian Jews' support for the left and thus end the possibility of Russia's becoming out of war. In the summer of 1917, the situation in Russia worsened. The idea that the Jews in Russia were near the Bolsheviks was reinforcing British policymakers to take a step on Zionism as soon as possible⁸¹. But despite all efforts, London was unable to prevent the Bolshevik revolution

⁷⁶ Levene 1992, pp. 54-57.

⁷⁷ Fishman 2017, pp. 45-50.

⁷⁸ Weltmann 1961, pp. 246-269.

⁷⁹ Levene 1992, pp. 54-57.

⁸⁰ TNA.CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and the Balfour Declaration, January 1923.

⁸¹ Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

and by the withdrawal of Russia from the war, this problem had also been temporarily ended.

On the other hand, although America entered in the war in April 1917, the expectations of the Britain in economic issues had not yet fully met. Of course, the question here is that why London still needed such propaganda at a time when America entered war and Tsarist regime was destroyed in Russia. This is why Britain still needed American and Jewish capital. In 1917, America provided \$ 7.5 billion to the Allies. In this sense, Britain was weak against the United States and was often forced to accept its wishes. Even Britain's acceptance of American proposal for the establishment of the Inter-Ally Council and also allowing it to co-ordinate this commission was an indication that how Britain had to pay attention to America. On the other hand, by the successful negotiations with United States, the problem of the Jews in America as well as financial problems were solved to a large extent. During Balfour's visit to America in April 1917, the details of British Palestine policy became clearer⁸². Guarantees from the United States during the visit were effective in resolving the British policy makers' doubts about the declaration. One of the important agenda items of the Balfour mission was the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine⁸³. During this visit, President Wilson and Balfour agreed on the Jewish state in Palestine⁸⁴. After a conference it was announced that plans had been perfected for making loan to Allies. The first loan will be made to Britain⁸⁵. Balfour's visit was perceived as the end of a long-standing American policy of isolation⁸⁶. During this visit, a number of guarantees received from America on credit increased the clarity of the international system for British FPE and encouraged them to take a more concrete step. In the cabinet meeting on October 31, 1917, Balfour stated that a serious step in making a homeland for Jews in Palestine would have positive effects on the Jews in America. This indicates that the idea of providing America's support was very effective in the emergence of the declaration⁸⁷. War Cabinet confirmed Balfour Declaration at the next meeting

Perceptions of the Leaders: Lloyd George versus Herbert Asquith

According to Neoclassical Realists, the beliefs and images of the individuals in decision-making mechanism are effective in foreign policy preferences of states as intervening variables. This policy making team is called as foreign policy executive (FPE). It may be including prime minister or head of state, key cabinet members, advisors or any other individuals who charged with state's foreign policy. Previous experiences and values of FPE are closely related to the way in which they perceive the outside world. At this point, for instance some deep beliefs of FPE cannot be easily changed⁸⁸. This mental structure determines what decision-makers would prioritize and what they ignore and also how they detect incoming information. In this sense, while analysing foreign policy of states and the factors affecting this processes, evaluating the unique characteristics and operational code of FPE is essential for making a systematic analyse of foreign policy⁸⁹. Thus Neoclassical Realists

⁸² TNA.CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and the Balfour Declaration, January 1923.

⁸³ Goldbatt 1968, pp. 455-515.

⁸⁴ Lebow 1968, pp. 501-523.

⁸⁵ The Times (London, England), Wednesday, April 25, 1917, Issue 41461, p. 5.

⁸⁶ The Times (London, England), Tuesday, April 24, 1917, Issue 41460, p. 6.

⁸⁷ The Times (London, England), Tuesday, April 24, 1917, Issue 41460, p. 6.

⁸⁸ Ripsman et. al. 2006, pp. 61-62.

⁸⁹ Ripsman et. al. 2006, pp. 63.

first begin their analysis at systemic level and try to determine how these systemic determinants affect the operational codes of decision-makers and how they transform their behaviour⁹⁰. From this point of view, perceptions of the two different cabinet members especially prime ministers in London before and after December 1916 were decisive in the emergence of the Balfour Declaration. In this sense, unit level variables such as leadership images of prime ministers and domestic political situation in Britain had also an effect on the declaration when considering their different opinion on Zionism.

At this point, the perceptions of the two Prime Ministers who served during the war in Britain should be included in the analysis of the Balfour Declaration. When two prime ministers' and other FPE members' opinions about Zionism and such a declaration are evaluated, two different policies on Zionism actually can be seen during the war in London. In the course of the First World War, the Liberal Party in Britain was in power and established two different cabinets. The first was founded by Herbert Asquith, relatively favoured a softer foreign policy especially on the partition of Ottoman Empire. Edward Grey was Secretary of State in Asquith's cabinet. The second was found by Prime Minister Lloyd George after December 1916 and Arthur Balfour was Secretary of State in that cabinet which preferred some kind of radical policy on the future of the Middle East. Considering that foreign policy decisions in Britain are largely determined by the prime minister and secretary of state, Lloyd George and Balfour are automatically included into the foreign policy executive in Britain which took the decision of supporting Zionism. Besides those two men, another effective person to be included in FPE was Mark Sykes, the person who was an expert on the Middle East⁹¹. Finally Lord Curzon, distinguished among the members of the cabinet through his experience on India and the Middle East can be included into FPE. In addition to these Englishmen, Weizmann who was a Zionist Jew, should be mentioned as a foreigner who had guided and penetrated the British foreign policy during this period.

The idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine was first introduced in Britain in 1915 by Herbert Samuel, a Jewish member of the Asquith's cabinet⁹². He emphasized the importance of Palestine especially for Britain when he proposed the idea of a national state for the Jews⁹³. Parallel to this idea, he prepared a memorandum on Zionism in January 1915 after his meetings with Weizmann and Lloyd George⁹⁴. Although Samuel had previously submitted such a proposal to then Prime Minister Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George, who had many dealings with Jews more interested in Zionism at that time⁹⁵. Hence at this point, FPE's experience and their some personal relationships affect their way of adapting a structural change in the world politics⁹⁶. On the other hand also the intellectual capacity of decision-makers and the internal political dynamics can closely influence the foreign policy processes⁹⁷.

Prime Minister Asquith considered a national home for Jews as a result of an emotional and lyrical thought. He saw Jewish irredentism as fantastic and

⁹⁰ Rose 1998, pp. 144-172.

⁹¹ Bloom 2011, pp. 141-157.

⁹² Wasserstein 1990, p. 1.

⁹³ Mathew 2013, pp. 231-250.

⁹⁴ John 1985, pp.1-52.

⁹⁵ Long 2018, p. 18.

⁹⁶ Schweller 2003, pp. 319-20.

⁹⁷ Rose 1998, pp. 144-172; for a detailed study on relation between internal structure and foreign policy see Kissenger 1966.

outside all practical policy. On the other hand, Edward Grey thought that it was more useful for the British interest in the region not direct control but an internationalized Palestine⁹⁸. Whereas most ardent defender of the Zionist policy in Asquith's cabinet was Lloyd George who wanted a direct British control on Palestine. Despite Samuel's initiative, the idea of Zionism was not widely supported by British policy makers during the first two years of the war. It can be said that among the members of the cabinet, Lloyd George was the only person who looked very positive to the idea of supporting Zionism politically.

The dismissal of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith in December 1916 was a turning point for the Zionism and the future of Palestine. It was Lloyd George, who was an opponent of Asquith and competed with him for the presidency of the Liberal Party, replaced Asquith. While Danny Gutwein described Asquith as a reformist for his foreign policy decisions, Lloyd George was a radical figure. In this period, Gutwein mentions that there were two centres of foreign political thought in the Britain namely, the "Easterners" and the "Westerners"⁹⁹. These two opposing groups had different opinions especially in the post-war position of the Ottoman Empire. While the reformist group was in favour of integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but saw some reforms were necessary in terms of the regime and administration, the radical group was in favour of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in context of the protection of British interests and the division among the Entente powers. The military strategy of Lloyd George, who represented the radical wing, was largely shaped by this idea. Accordingly, without a definite victory, it was not possible to share Ottoman lands and the British government wanted to achieve this goal by opening new military fronts. In this sense, while the reformist wing avoided such a policy, the radicals saw Zionism as an important tool for this aim. Radicals also believed that this policy would be useful to convince Wilson, who opposed the partition of the Ottoman Empire in the way Britain intended¹⁰⁰.

The issue of Palestine came to the agenda of Britain after the change of the cabinet in 1916¹⁰¹. The new government was not extremely satisfied with the Sykes-Picot. The status of Palestine determined by this agreement contradicted the interests of Britain. Then how did this pest agreement emerge? It was partly by the military failure in the Western front, Dardanelles and Iraq and economic crises in Britain. This adversely reflected on Britain's international relations and destroyed its advantage in the Middle East and also brought London closer to his ally France for winning the war¹⁰². Thus concessions in the Sykes-Picot emerged and Palestine remained out of a total British control. However, these systemic factors are not enough to explain foreign policy preferences of the leaders or foreign policy executives. Ignoring their perceptions of outside world while analysing the emergence of a critic decision prevents understanding of all aspects of this process. Here, FPE's perceptions are very effective in decision process¹⁰³. While conducting the foreign policy analysis of states, it would be appropriate to discuss the impact of the international structure on the one hand, but how statesmen react to this structural environment is one of other important determinants that should be under consideration. In this respect Lloyd George's perception was an effective intervening variable in the emergence of declaration as decision makers

⁹⁸ Long 2018, p. 19.

⁹⁹ Gutwein 2016, pp. 117-152.

¹⁰⁰ Gutwein 2016, pp. 117-152.

¹⁰¹ Gilmour 1996, pp. 60-68.

¹⁰² Husan 2014, pp. 967-974.

¹⁰³ Schweller 2003, pp. 319-20.

evaluate the systemic pressure according to their own perceptions and decide in the final stage. Therefore, material capacity combine with the perceptions of the decision makers and other intervening variables totally reveal state's foreign policy in the minds of FPE¹⁰⁴. Parallel to this idea Lloyd George followed a very different route from his predecessor in the foreign policy and the Balfour Declaration emerged in this new understanding. After the presidency of Lloyd George, there were a series of changes in British foreign policy in the Middle East.

Among these preferences, perhaps the most effective one was the opinion of the Prime Minister and his team to ensure a direct British control in Palestine. Lloyd George was dissatisfied with the Sykes-Picot and was opposed to a French control in Palestine. Behind Lloyd George's desire to have Palestine lies religious beliefs, prestige and imperial aspirations¹⁰⁵. According to the British Prime Minister, the occupation of Palestine by the British army was the shortest way to abandon France's share of the region. His close relation with Weizmann was another reason for his positive views on such a policy. In this sense, the behaviours of decision makers against the structure may be far from being rational due to his personal situation and this may affect the international position of the state. Lloyd George once said that acetone, a chemical produced by Weizmann, made himself a Zionist¹⁰⁶.

In this sense, although not all members of the new cabinet agreed on the content of declaration, Lloyd George's team was more hawkish and intrusive than Asquith's cabinet about the British interests in the Middle East and the majority of government circles believed that Zionist policy was essential to protect imperial interests in the region. Balfour was of the view that such a policy would strengthen propaganda in favour of Britain in America and Russia. On the other hand, Mark Sykes, who was regarded as an authority on the Turkish and Arab geography, changed his mind after the Ottoman Empire entered the war and joined the radical wing's idea of disintegration of Ottoman Empire, thought that it would serve the Britain's interests in the region. He was the architect of Britain's Middle East policy and believed that Britain could accomplish its imperial aims through a policy of supporting the establishment of national Jewish state in Palestine. He, with the support of Weizmann and other radical Zionists, aimed to change the Sykes-Picot¹⁰⁷. Graham, another official in secretary of state department, thought that while such a declaration could prevent Germany's effort to get support from the Jews, it would also allow Jewish support to be in favour of Britain. According to Cecil, the idea of making a homeland of Jews in Palestine was a unique propaganda material to convince the Jews of Russia and America. It would also be a good material to stop Russia, which planned to make a separate peace with Germany¹⁰⁸. Although the British FPE mostly agreed on using Zionism as an instrument to protect interest, it can be said that there was a division in the war cabinet about sympathy for Zionists. Divided structure of the war cabinet was evident especially in the idea of a national state for Jews in Palestine. There was no common goal for the British foreign policy executives on the content of the declaration and this refutes the thesis that the declaration emerged due to a single cause.

¹⁰⁴ Rose 1998, pp.144-172.

¹⁰⁵ Verete 1970, pp. 48-76.

¹⁰⁶ Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

¹⁰⁷ Gutwein 2016, pp. 117-152.

¹⁰⁸ Verete 1970, pp. 48-76.

Although Lloyd George was a pro-Zionist, the Balfour Declaration did not appear as a result of all British decision-makers' pro-Zionist ideas. While Lloyd George was a Jewish sympathizer, Balfour and Sykes, influential figures in the declaration, had no sympathy for the Jews¹⁰⁹. Especially Prime Minister's close relationship with Weizmann, who had a reputation for war chemicals, led him to think positively about Zionism. On the contrary, Balfour had anti-Semitic tendencies¹¹⁰. However, some sources claim that Balfour's idea of the Jewish state stems from altruism, idealism and respect for justice¹¹¹. On the other hand, Sykes had contacts with the Zionists, but this contact was not due to pro-Zionist ideas. Only the pro-British stance of the Zionist leaders made Sykes think that Jews could be used to achieve the Britain's strategic goals¹¹². Other figures who knew the region well like Lord Curzon and Edwin Montagu were against the idea of a fully national state for Jews in Palestine and they were not also pro-Zionist¹¹³. Lord Curzon, in his report of October 26, 1917, made it clear that he did not want to be involved in the discussions on Zionism. For Curzon, however, the responsibilities of the British Empire in such a situation and the success of its realization were scarce and population structure of Palestine was a serious obstacle to the transformation of there into a Jewish national state¹¹⁴. Curzon thought that the results of such a declaration would be too heavy to be compared to the Sykes-Picot¹¹⁵.

Apart from these British men who were effective in the declaration, Weizmann, a Zionist Jew, can be included in to British FPE. At this point, it is possible to talk about a foreign penetration that had an impact on the British politics¹¹⁶. Foreign penetration, a concept Waltz uses to examine the formation of alliances, is considered an intervening variable that influences the decision-making process of FPE¹¹⁷. Unlike the Zionists who supported the Central Powers, Weizmann wanted the Entente forces to win since the beginning of the war and believed that this would have more positive consequences for Zionism¹¹⁸. Among Zionist leaders, especially Weizmann, who believed that a Jewish Palestine would serve British interests, was a close friend of Lloyd George and had often opportunities to present his own ideas about the Zionism directly to Prime Minister¹¹⁹. With the outbreak of the war, there was a close relation between Lloyd George and Zionists. Zionist leaders perceived such a declaration as an important step for a national home for Jews in Palestine. Seeing First World War as an opportunity, the Zionists wanted Palestine to be controlled by a western power, preferably the Britain. Meanwhile the British government tried to understand what would be the effect of such a policy on the Zionists. Thus, the draft of declaration text was sent to ten leading Zionist leaders and their views were taken¹²⁰. This was an indication of to what degree Britain took account of Jews and also to what degree they penetrated in the British foreign policy. Among these leading Zionists such as Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, expressed their views on the draft and this removed some of

¹⁰⁹ Levene 1992, pp. 54-57.

¹¹⁰ Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

¹¹¹ Lord Balfour's Personal Position on the Balfour Declaration 1968, pp. 340-345.

¹¹² Stork 1972, pp. 9-13.

¹¹³ TNA. CAB 24/24/71, The Anti-Semitism of Present Government, August 23, 1917.

¹¹⁴ TNA. CAB 24/30/6, The Future of Palestine, October 1917.

¹¹⁵ Gilmour 1996, pp. 60-68.

¹¹⁶ Reinharz 1992, pp. 225-242.

¹¹⁷ Balci et. al. 2018, pp. 1-28; Walt 1987.

¹¹⁸ Weltmann 1961, pp. 246-269.

¹¹⁹ Fishman 2017, pp. 45-50.

¹²⁰ TNA. CAB 24/4/14, The Zionist Movement, October 1917.

the questions in the minds of the British cabinet member¹²¹. By the way, Lloyd George was trying to get economic advisors from the Rothschilds as a solution to the economic difficulties of Britain during the war¹²². This relationship with the Zionists facilitated Weizmann's close relationship with Lloyd George. Although Weizmann's efforts to influence Britain's Middle East policy were not possible during the Prime Ministry of Asquith, after Lloyd George being prime minister, he tried to influence the British foreign policy in various ways. In this period, Weizmann joined the team directing the Middle East policy of Britain. Especially after the Ottoman Empire entered the war, Weizmann, with the help of Samuel, tried to penetrate British policy. During this period, he was conducting a serious propaganda campaign to spread the idea of Zionism among British politicians. He was trying to influence the people around him by introducing Jewish capital into the service of British imperialism.

A Happy Ending for the British Empire or Zionism?

As a result of concrete developments inside and outside, the issue of declaration had been discussed frequently in cabinet meetings after August 1917. On August 21nd, Prime Minister's chief of staff, Philip Kerr, sent a special note to the Foreign Office informing him that a formal step towards Zionist goals was on the agenda. Kerr's note arose after the Jewish congress in Thessaloniki asked the British government to send a message to the congress. The pressure of the Zionists on the British government was increasing during the summer of 1917, however the cabinet was still cautious. In response to the cabinet's hesitant stance on the declaration, Weizmann decided to take action. He had a meeting with Lloyd George on September 28th, and pressured the Prime Minister to reveal the declaration as soon as possible. On the other hand, the pressure on the British politicians also increased¹²³. According to Weizmann, this announcement would not be a new thing for the British political cycles, as his meetings with the British authorities for the past three years were already a sign that this idea was supported by many political parties in Britain. Weizmann's remarks were indicative of the fact that Zionism had long been spoken behind closed doors in London. While the Zionists' pressure continued, Ronald Graham advised that Britain should give the necessary assurance to the Zionists without delay¹²⁴. At this point, Balfour wanted Weizmann to produce a formula for this assurance¹²⁵. Foreign Office wrote a note on Kerr's paper that "Rothschild message should suffice for all purposes". Thus it became clear that the declaration would be in the form of a letter to Rothschild¹²⁶. On the other hand on October 2nd, the British consul in Bern, reported to London a meeting attended by Her von Kühlmann, Cemal Pasha and Jewish representatives. During the meeting, the Palestinian issue was discussed and it was decided to make some commitments in order to provide a new amount of credit from the Jews for the financing of the war¹²⁷. At the cabinet meeting on October 4th, Balfour said that Germany was about to draw the Jews to its side unless it is rushed. He presented three arguments on the issue of Zionism:

- The Germans were making great efforts to ensure the support of the Zionists.

¹²¹ TNA.CAB 24/4/14, The Zionist Movement, October 17, 1917.

¹²² Gutwein 2016, pp. 117-152.

¹²³ Gutwein 2016, pp. 117-152.

¹²⁴ TNA.CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and the Balfour Declaration, January 1923.

¹²⁵ Fishman 2017, pp. 45-50.

¹²⁶ TNA.CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and the Balfour Declaration, January 1923.

¹²⁷ TNA. CAB 24/144/12, Eastern Report, October 17, 1917.

- Although Zionism had not received the support of some rich Jews in the Britain, it was backed by the vast majority of the world's Jews, including Russia and the United States.

-It was based on the dense national ideas of the Jews, who regarded themselves as one of the most important races in the world and aimed to reclaim their old land in Palestine.

At the end of his speech, Balfour read the declaration draft and said that America would support it¹²⁸. Those who oppose Balfour's offer were Montagu and Lord Curzon. Curzon, in particular, insisted that taking measures to improve the situation of Jews living in Palestine would be a better choice than allocating large territories to them¹²⁹. The issue came to the cabinet's agenda again on October 31st, this time with a more detailed memorandum, Curzon opposed the idea of turning Palestine into a Jewish state. On the other hand, Balfour considered such a declaration that most of the Jews in the world would support and that in America and Russia this could be used as a very useful propaganda tool. Despite the broad consensus on the declaration, occupation of Palestine by the British army was an important development for the clarity of international system. Jerusalem was occupied by the British army in November 1917. In this case, the imposition of this region on French control would prevent it from being recovered in the future. Therefore, Sykes demanded that the region should be under the control of Britain and that it should be declared martial law in Jerusalem. Indeed, the French government has ordered General Allenby to take action on the establishment of a British-French joint administration in Jerusalem¹³⁰. On this issue, Lord Derby warned London that Britain should take more serious steps on Palestine¹³¹.

Finally, there was no obstacle for Britain to declare its support for Zionism. All of the systemic determinants were largely clarified. Now, military operation was successful and eventually Palestine was occupied by British army, economic guarantees from the United States were received and finally the Prime Minister's and Secretary of State's support was fully provided. The rest was to declare it. On November 2 , 1917, declaration text prepared by British parliament member Colonel L.S. Amery was adopted by the cabinet¹³².

Conclusion

Although more than a hundred years passed since the Balfour Declaration, it still continues to maintain its value for the students of history and international relations as a phenomenon of recent political history. To be sure, the most distinctive feature that makes it important is its continuing impact on contemporary regional and international affairs. The Balfour Declaration was arguably the starting point for the Arab-Israeli conflict. Particularly, with the countless political developments in the region over the past decades, it has been transformed into a typical issue of the Middle Eastern studies. The core finding of this study is that the Balfour Declaration was a product of systemic and unit level variables that deeply influenced the subsequent British foreign policy decisions. While geographical position of Palestine, competition with other states, its international military and economic situation formed systemic determinants in this decision, as war continued, cabinet change in London, the foreign policy perceptions of the former and new prime ministers, strategic culture foreign policy executive formed the unit level dynamics that functioned

¹²⁸ TNA.CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and the Balfour Declaration, January 1923.

¹²⁹ TNA.CAB 24/28/63, Zionism, 9 October 1917.

¹³⁰ Renton 1998, pp. 109-128.

¹³¹ TNA.CAB 24/23/20, British Policy in Palestine, August 14, 1917.

¹³² TNA.CAB/24/158, Palestine and Balfour Declaration, January 1923.

A Neoclassical Realist Explanation of the Balfour Declaration and the Origins of the British Foreign Policy in Palestine

as intervening variables between the decision makers and the systemic determinants in the emergence of the declaration.

As a structural modifier, the geographic location of Palestine had a strategic significance for the British Empire and FPE perceived it as a security issue. Therefore, although it had signed the Sykes-Picot under certain conditions, Britain wanted to redefine the status of Palestine in accordance with its own interests at a time when the clarity of international system was mostly favourable and local conditions were appropriate. The clarity had given Britain the opportunity to change the status quo. As a systemic variable, the impact of military failures in the first two years of war on British foreign policy was negative. Under these circumstances, the British Empire, which lost its capability to negotiate due to military defeats and economic crises, was obliged to accept a number of agreements that were in contradiction with its interests. Sykes-Picot was signed in such an environment. On the other hand, the economic crisis during the war was so big that it undermined Britain's international position. From the summer of 1917 onwards, although the uncertainty that Britain would win the war continues, positive economic and military developments had a direct impact on British foreign policy and increased the clarity of the international system. It is hence possible to claim that there is a causal relationship between the Sykes-Picot and Balfour Declaration. Britain tried to compensate for the foreign political loss against France with the Sykes-Picot, through Zionism and Balfour Declaration. In other words, one important reason behind the political support for Zionism was to destroy the negative results of the Sykes-Picot.

In addition to redressing the international balance of power against France, another systematic determinant forcing Britain to take steps on Zionism was the attempt of Germany to attract Jews. Passing of Jews to the German camp would cause a great economic loss for the British Empire and strengthen its enemy as well as being a serious loss of prestige. Another key factor behind the declaration was the British attempt to calm the anti-Tsarist Jews living in Russia and thus prevent the collapse of the Russian regime. Britain's alliance with a regime of persecuting Jews was triggering anti-Entente feelings among the Jews. British FPE believed that if the policy of establishing a national state in Palestine was supported by Britain, the opposition to the Entente in Russia and America would be prevented and the sympathy of the Jews could be secured. In addition to such systemic determinants, a number of unit level and intervening factors were influential in the emergence of the declaration. Cabinet change as a result of adverse economic conditions and unsuccessful military campaigns had been a turning point for the future of the Palestine. Different leadership styles, politics and lines of thought between former Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and his successor Lloyd George were also key in shaping the British policy on the Middle East. In particular, Lloyd George's positioning of Palestine in terms of Britain's international security and his close relations with Weizmann influenced the decision-making process. It can be asserted that Weizmann was a foreigner who successfully penetrated the British cabinet. It is therefore obvious that there was also a foreign penetration on the decision of the Balfour Declaration. On the other hand, disagreements within the new cabinet showed that this important foreign policy decision was not a product of a homogeneous line of thought and politics. The British FPE had a divided structure and the decision for the declaration was made by majority vote.

As this article has shown through the study on the Balfour Declaration, to explain the causes behind important international affairs and historical developments, it is necessary to have academic collaboration and interface between the disciplines of History and International Relations. Rather than speaking exclusively to its own theoretical frameworks and communities, a potential division of labour between these two disciplines have a lot to offer to the students of social sciences.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

a. Archival Documents

- TNA.CAB 24/30/6, The Future of Palestine, October 1917.
TNA.CAB 24/4/14, The Zionist Movement, 17 October 1917.
TNA.CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and the Balfour Declaration, January 1923.
TNA.CAB 24/28/63, Zionism, 9 October 1917.
TNA.CAB 24/23/20, British Policy in Palestine, 14 August 1917.
TNA.CAB 24/158/61, Palestine and the Balfour Declaration, January 1923.
TNA.CAB 24/1/12, Alexandretta and Mesopotamia, March 16, 1915.
TNA. CAB 24/19/80, German War Aims, July 1917.
TNA.CAB 24/27/93, from Edwin Montagu to Lord Robert Cecil, 14 September 1917.
TNA. CAB 24/144/12, Eastern Report, 17 October 1917.
TNA.CAB 23/4/19, War Cabinet 245, October 4, 1917.
TNA. CAB 24/24/71, The Anti-Semitism of Present Government, 23 August 1917.
TNA.CAB 24/144/21, Eastern Report, 13December 1917.
TNA.F.O. 132187/2117/44A, No: 242, Balfour's Memorandum on Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, August 1919.
TNA.F.O. 129319/2117/44A, No:276, Albay Meinertzhagen'den Curzon'a, 12 Eylül 1919.
TNA.F.O. 88743/2117/44, No. 1814, Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby, June 11, 1919.

b. Books and Articles

- Antonius 1939 George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.
- Balcı et.al. 2018 Ali Balcı, Tuncay Kardeş, İsmail Ediz, Yıldırım Turan, "War Decision and Neoclassical Realism: The Entry of the Ottoman Empire into the First World War", *War in History*, Online First.
- Balfour 1968 "Documents: Lord Balfour's Personal Position of the Balfour Declaration", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 340-345.
- Blainey 1998 Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 3rd ed. New York: Free Press.
- Bloom 2011 Cecil Bloom, "Sir Mark Sykes: British Diplomat and a Convert to Zionism", *Jewish Historical Studies*, Vol. 43, pp. 141-157.
- Fishman 2017 Joel Fishman, "Chaim Weizmann and the Balfour Declaration: A Unique Act of World Moral Conscience", *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1/2, 100 Years Since the Balfour Declaration, pp. 45-50.
- Friedman 1991 Isiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine, British-Jewish-Arab Relations: 1914-1918*, Routledge.
- Friedman 1973 Isaiah Friedman, "The Response to the Balfour Declaration", *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 105-124.
- George 1938 David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, Vol. 1 (London, 2nd ed.).
- Gillon 1969 D.Z Gillon, "The Antecedent of the Balfour Declaration", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5, pp. 131-150.
- Gilmour 1996 David Gilmour, "The Unregarded Prophet: Lord Curzon and the Palestine Question", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 25, No.3, pp. 60-68.
- Goldbatt 1968 Charles Israel Goldbatt, "The Impact of the Balfour Declaration in America", *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 4, pp. 455-515.
- Gutwein 2016 Danny Gutwein, "The Politics of the Balfour Declaration: Nationalism, Imperialism and the Limits of Zionist-British Cooperation", *Journal of Israeli History*, Vol. 35, No.2, pp. 117-152.

A Neoclassical Realist Explanation of the Balfour Declaration and the Origins of the British Foreign Policy in Palestine

- Halpern 1969 Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State*, Harvard University Press.
- Hancock and Lobel 2010 Kathleen J. Hancock and Steven Lobel, "Realism and the Changing International Systems: Will China and Russia Challenge the Status Quo?", *The China and Euroasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 143-165.
- Herrmann 1965 Klaus J. Herrmann, "Political Response to the Balfour Declaration in Imperial Germany: German Judaism", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 303-320.
- Huneidi 2019 Sahar Huneidi, *The Hidden History of Balfour Declaration*, New York, London: OR Books.
- Husan 2014 Shamir Husan, "The Zionist Project and The British Mandate in Palestine", *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 75, Platinum Jubilee, pp. 967-974.
- John 1985 Robert John, "Behind the Balfour Declaration", *The Journal of Historical Review*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 389-450.
- Karakaş 2016 Nuri Karakaş, "Hedef Kudüs: İngiliz Askeri ve Siyasi Stratejisinde Filistin Harekâtı", *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, Vol. XXXI/2, pp. 471-487.
- Kennedy 2002 Paul Kennedy, *Büyük Güçlerin Yükseliş ve Çöküşleri*. Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür yayınları, İstanbul.
- Kissinger 1966 Henry A. Kissinger, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy", *Daedalus*, Vol. 95, No. 2, Conditions of World Order, pp. 503-529.
- Lebow 1968 Richard Ned Lebow, "Woodrow Wilson and the Balfour Declaration", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 501-532.
- Levene 1992 Mark Levene, "The Balfour Declaration: A case of Mistaken Identity", *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 422, pp. 54-77.
- Lobell 2010 Steven Lobell, "Structural Realism/Offensive and Defensive Realism", in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, pp. 6651-6669.
- Long 2018 C.W.R. Long, *The Palestinians and British Perfidy The Tragic Aftermath of Balfour Declaration of 1917*, Sussex Academic Press.
- Mathew 2013 William M. Mathew, "The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate, 1917-1923: British Imperialist Imperatives", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 231-250.
- Reinharz 1992 Jehuda Reinharz, "Chaim Weizmann: Statesman without a State", *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 225-242.
- Renton 1998 James Edward Renton, "The Historiography of the Balfour Declaration: Toward a Multi-Casual Framework", *The Journal of Israeli History*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 109-128.
- Ripsman et.al.2006 Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, Oxford University Press.
- Roberts 2017 Andrew Roberts, "The Historical Paths to the Balfour Declaration", *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 28, No.1/2, 100 Years Since the Balfour Declaration, pp. 14-19.
- Rose 1998 Giddon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy", *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 14-19.
- Segev 2000 Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate*, Metropolitan Books, United States.
- Spykman 1938 Nicholas J. Spykman, "Geography and Foreign Policy I", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 27-50.

- Stein 1961 Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, London.
- Stork 1972 Joe Stork, Understanding the Balfour Declaration, *MERIP Reports*, No. 13, pp. 9-13.
- Schweller 2003 Randall L. Schweller, "The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism", in Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (eds), *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United State, pp. 311-347.
- The Times 1917 (London, England), Wednesday, April 25, Issue 41461.
- The Times 1917 (London, England), Tuesday, April 24, Issue 41460.
- Tibawi 1978 Abdul Latif Tiwabi, *Anglo-Arab Relations and The Question of Palestine 1914-1921*, London.
- Tuchman 1956 Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword. How the British Came to Palestine* (London & Basingstoke: Papermac).
- Walt 1987 Stephan M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca, NY.
- Wasserstein 1990 Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel and Partition of Palestine*, Oxfordshire
- Weltman 1961 Saadia E. Weltmann, "Germany, Turkey, and the Zionist Movement, 1914-1918", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 246-269.
- Verete 1970 Mayir Verete, "The Balfour Declaration and Its Makers", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 6, No.1, pp. 48-76.