

form of a letter from Arthur James Balfour, the foreign secretary, to Lord Rothschild, a prominent British Zionist leader. Substantial effort by the Zionist organization, with a special role played by Chaim Weizmann, preceded the government's decision, after lengthy discussion and some division. The declaration was vague and sought to assuage the concerns and fears of prominent Jews in England as well as those of the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine. Nevertheless, it engendered much controversy, then and since. Among the problems was the Balfour Declaration's apparent conflict with arrangements made by the British with the French in the Sykes-Picot Agreement and with the Arabs primarily in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence concerning the future of the Middle East after the termination of hostilities. The declaration provided a basis for Zionist claims to Palestine.

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet:

"His majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

FEISAL-WEIZMANN AGREEMENT (JANUARY 3, 1919)

Chaim Weizmann went to Aqaba in May 1918 to meet Feisal ibn Hussein and to seek closer cooperation between the Zionists and the Arabs under the leadership of Sherif Hussein and his son Feisal. Feisal assured Weizmann of his good will toward Zionist aspirations and attributed past misunderstandings between the Arabs and the Jews to the machinations of the Ottoman Turks. On a number of subsequent occasions Feisal claimed that he shared Weizmann's objectives. These exchanges of sentiment and perspective were formalized in a document signed on January 3, 1919 in which Feisal and Weizmann pledged to work with each other to achieve the goals of both the Zionists and the Arabs. Feisal renounced any claim to Palestine which would become the territory of the Jews and would be separate from the new Arab state. He appended a statement that this agreement would be valid only if the Arabs obtained their independence as formulated by him in an earlier memorandum for the British. Relations between the two deteriorated thereafter and effectively ended by the end of the year.