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Special Report

The Hidden History of the Balfour Declaration

By John Cornelius

IN THIS article the author relates what he believes to be the true story of how the British government came to issue what has come to be known as the Balfour Declaration.

The Balfour Declaration took the form of a letter, dated Nov. 2, 1917, from Arthur Balfour, foreign secretary of the British government, to Lord Walter Rothschild, head of the organization of British Zionists. This letter promised that the British government would work to bring about "a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine." (See box.)

I have written three earlier articles in the *Washington Report* on this subject, and my views have evolved with the passage of time.^{1,2,3} What has not changed is my belief in a British-Zionist trade whereby the Zionists assisted in bringing America into the war and, in return, the British promised them Palestine.

Among the things that have changed is my concept of the timing of the agreement. The earliest article contained a chronology showing that the British received a plain-language copy of the Zimmermann telegram (ZT) a few days after it was sent, encoded, from Berlin to Washington, on Jan. 16, 1917, and that the first formal meeting between British Zionists and the British government took place on Feb. 7, 1917. It now appears that the basic agreement was made several months before that time and what was betrayed to the British was not the text of the ZT, but rather the code in which it was sent.

Autumn 1916

The story can begin about halfway through the First World War, in the autumn of 1916. We will examine three components of the situation at that time: the military and naval positions and the status of British Zionist negotiations.

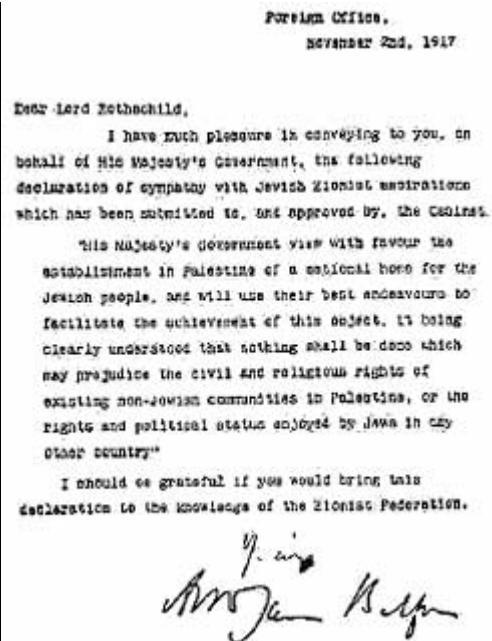
On land, the war began in August 1914 with the German army facing enemies on two fronts. In accordance with a long-standing plan, the Schlieffen plan, Germany attacked France first, hoping for a quick victory there, after which it could turn its full attention to the Russian front. Events did not work out that way. The Germans did advance, through Belgium, deep into France, but they did not succeed in enveloping Paris from the west, as had been the intention. By the end of 1914 a sort of stalemate had developed. A year and a half later the location of the front had not changed greatly, and a continuous line of trenches ran from the Swiss border almost to the North Sea. Both sides mounted offensives from time to time, with heavy loss of life, but the location of the front changed by only a few miles.

The Germans fared better on the Russian front, but that does not concern us here.

By the middle of 1916 the French army was largely exhausted, and the next big Allied offensive was undertaken primarily by the British. The battle of the Somme began on July 1, 1916 and was one of the bloodiest in history. The British suffered 60,000 casualties (19,000 dead) on the first day alone. Total casualties were over a million, more or less equally divided between the two sides. The location of the front shifted by a few miles.

Well before the battle ended, the British must have concluded that they would not be able to drive the Germans out of France by frontal assault.

At sea, the situation was delicate. Early in the war, on Nov. 3, 1914, Britain had declared the whole of the North Sea a theater of war and instituted an illegal blockade of the adjoining neutral coasts and ports. The purpose of the blockade was to starve Germany into submission. The American government protested but took no action.⁴



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On Feb. 4, 1915 the German ambassador informed the American government that from Feb. 18 a counter blockade would be in force, and the territorial waters of Great Britain and Ireland, including the whole of the English Channel, were declared a war area.

On May 7, 1915 the British liner *Lusitania*, traveling from New York to Liverpool, was struck off the Irish coast by a single torpedo, which provoked a much larger secondary explosion. The ship sank quickly, with the loss of almost 1,200 lives, 128 of them American.

There was strong American reaction to the sinking of the *Lusitania*, both popular and diplomatic, and the U.S. came close to breaking off diplomatic relations with Germany. A meeting between the German ambassador and President Woodrow Wilson on June 2 had the effect of calming matters for a time, but an exchange of diplomatic notes occurred. The second American note, of June 10, led to the resignation of the American secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, who believed that neutrality required that American citizens be forbidden from traveling on ships bearing the flag of any belligerent nation. And, in fact, Americans could perfectly well have traveled on American, Dutch, or Scandinavian vessels.

Although there had been no settlement of the *Lusitania* case, feeling died down for a time. Then on Aug. 19, 1915 the British passenger steamer *Arabic* was sunk off the coast of Ireland, with the loss of two American lives. Once again the possibility of war between the U.S. and Germany loomed. In this case, however, Germany revealed that, following the *Lusitania* sinking, German submarine commanders had been ordered not to sink liners without warning, and apologized and offered compensation. Although the *Lusitania* matter still was not settled, following the *Arabic* apology German-American relations remained tranquil for several months.

The next cloud on the horizon was the "*Sussex* incident." On March 24, 1916 the French trans-channel steamer *Sussex* was reported torpedoed and sunk in the English Channel, with the loss of several American lives. There seems to be some question as to whether the *Sussex* was in fact torpedoed and sunk at all, but in any case, the American government issued an ultimatum, and the German government was forced to acknowledge that the *Sussex* had been sunk by a German submarine and to agree that henceforth German submarines would abide by the rules of "cruiser warfare," a severe restriction which seriously handicapped the submarine as a strategic weapon.

Throughout the war, there were two schools of thought within the German government. One held that the submarine was a major strategic weapon, with the potential of winning the war for Germany. The other held that the continued use of submarines against merchant shipping would lead to continual incidents and ultimately bring America into the war on the side of the Allies, and that therefore the use of submarines against merchant shipping was against Germany's interest. By the fall of 1916 this issue had not been resolved.

British-Zionist negotiations date back at least to 1903. In that year the sixth Zionist congress took place in Basel. It is referred to as the "Uganda" congress because it dealt with an offer by the British government to make available land in Uganda for Jewish settlement. The offer was seriously considered and was, in fact, approved by a majority of the delegates, but the debate proved to be very divisive, and ultimately the offer was not taken up.

During that period Arthur Balfour was British prime minister, and the Zionists had retained the London law firm of Lloyd George, Roberts and Co. This firm was chosen because one of the partners, David Lloyd George, was an MP and thus in touch with Foreign Office thinking.⁵ Both Balfour and Lloyd George must have given serious thought at that time to the question of what the British government and the Zionists could do for each other.

That Balfour continued to think about this is shown by his statement at what Chaim Weizmann calls their second meeting in 1915 (the first was in 1906): "You know, I was thinking of that conversation of ours, and I believe that after the guns stop firing you may get your Jerusalem."⁶

British-Zionist negotiations date back at least to 1903.

On the other hand, in her 1983 book, *Dear Lord Rothschild*, Rothschild's niece, Miriam Rothschild, states that Balfour and Weizmann had met on several occasions between 1905 and 1915 and had established an excellent rapport.⁷

In any case, it would seem that a pattern of British-Zionist negotiations, and in particular of Balfour-Weizmann negotiations, had been established well before the fall of 1916.

It is interesting to note that the *Encyclopedia Britannica* states that Balfour succeeded Winston Churchill as first lord of the admiralty in May 1915, whereas in *Trial and Error* Weizmann states that in March 1916 he was summoned to the British admiralty in connection with a chemical process he had developed and was subsequently brought into the presence of "the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was at that time Mr. Winston Churchill."

Whatever the truth of the timing may be, Weizmann established a pattern of frequent visits to the admiralty, ostensibly in connection with his chemical process, but which would also have provided the opportunity for frequent, prolonged and secret negotiations between Weizmann and Balfour.

What Happened Next

Once it became clear, in the fall of 1916, that the battle of the Somme would not result in the German army's being forced out of France, the British, with their resources approaching

exhaustion, had to consider what to do next.

Herbert Asquith, who had been prime minister since 1908, had begun, reluctantly, to consider a negotiated peace, but negotiations with the Zionists, through Weizmann and Balfour, provided another option for Britain, although not for Asquith. That option was the possibility of a formal, but secret, alliance between the Zionists and the Monarchy, whereby the British Monarchy would undertake to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and the Zionists would undertake to help bring America into the war on the side of the Allies, thus assuring an Allied victory. An agreement with a British government would certainly be necessary, but British governments come and go, and a commitment from something less ephemeral than a British government would have been required by the Zionists.

It is proposed that such a secret agreement took place. There seems to be no way to date it accurately, but it seems likely to have occurred sometime in October 1916.

Once a formal agreement was in place, the next step was to arrange for several changes in personnel—on both the British and the German sides.

- The first change was in the leadership of Room 40, the name given the British codebreaking organization. Room 40 was destined to play a key role in the vast deception to follow, and it was necessary to have a trusted actor at its head. Room 40 was first set up in the fall of 1914 under the direction of Alfred Ewing, who retained that position until October 1916. At that time Ewing was replaced by Captain Reginald Hall, director of naval intelligence. Balfour found a suitable position for Ewing in academia. See "Five Books," p. 47.
- In Germany, Gottlieb von Jagow, who had been foreign minister since 1913, resigned in November 1916 over the issue of unrestricted submarine warfare, which he opposed. Speaking of the situation in Berlin at that time, the then German ambassador to the U.S. stated, "the unrestricted submarine campaign was only made possible by the resignation of Herr von Jagow, who was the chief opponent of the submarine campaign," and "as long as Herr von Jagow remained secretary of state, a breach with the United States was regarded as impossible."⁸
- Von Jagow was replaced by Arthur Zimmermann, undersecretary for foreign affairs since 1911. Before 1914, Berlin was the center of Zionist activity, and in 1912 the organization which was to become the Technion, or Israel Institute of Technology, in Haifa had placed itself under the protection of Germany, and Zimmermann had arranged with the Turkish government for the purchase of land and the erection of a building.⁹ Zimmermann clearly enjoyed good relations with German Zionists and was thus susceptible to Zionist influence.
- In November 1916, Woodrow Wilson was re-elected to a second term as U.S. president with the slogan, "He kept us out of war." It was understood that Wilson's aim was to bring about a negotiated end to the war without victory for either side.
- In early December 1916, a political crisis, probably engineered, occurred in Britain, and Herbert Asquith, who had been prime minister since 1908, was forced to resign. The denouement came on Dec. 6, 1916. That afternoon King George V summoned several prominent political figures, including Balfour and Lloyd George, to a conference at Buckingham Palace. Later that same evening, Balfour received a small political delegation, which proposed that the difficult political situation could be resolved with Lloyd George as prime minister, provided Balfour would agree to accept the position of foreign minister, which he did.¹⁰
- Lloyd George then quickly imposed a war dictatorship, and direction of the war was entrusted to a "War Cabinet" of five members, including himself as prime minister and Balfour as foreign minister. Mark Sykes was named secretary.

At that point, all necessary changes in personnel had been accomplished.

- On Dec. 18, 1916, the American ambassador to Britain conveyed an "offer of peace" on behalf of the Central Powers to the Allies.
- On the following day, David Lloyd George, in his first speech to Parliament as prime minister, heaped scorn on the peace proposal and vowed that Britain and its allies would fight on until victory.

In retrospect, it seems clear that this speech was a bluff and was meant to goad the Germans into resuming unrestricted submarine warfare.

That this was indeed the case is indicated by a series of messages from the U.S. ambassador to Britain, Walter Page, to President Wilson and the secretary of state, written in June 1917.¹¹ These messages make it clear that Britain was on the verge of financial collapse, and that only American support could avert disaster." These messages were made public only in 1925 and are, in my opinion, too little known.

- On Jan. 9, 1917 the German government made the fateful decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare at the beginning of the following month.
- Date unknown—What would come to be known as the Zimmermann telegram was concocted in London. My source for this information is a letter to the *Washington Report* written in response to my first (1997) article, by author Russell Warren Howe.¹² Howe stated that he had been taught at Cambridge that the ZT was "concocted in London to encourage Washington to join the Allies against the Central Powers." My first reaction to this letter was doubt—because Zimmermann subsequently accepted responsibility for the ZT. But of course he had to, because he was responsible, even if the idea came from someone else.
- Date unknown, possibly before the previous two entries—The key to German code 7500 (in

which the ZT was to be sent) was provided to Room 40 by an informant. Howe states that Britain broke code 7500 (he calls it 0075) “a few weeks before the ZT.” By “broke,” he presumably means “acquired.”

- Date unknown—One Herr von Kemnitz, an East Asia expert in the German foreign office and presumably a Zionist agent, presented Zimmermann with the text of a proposed telegram, the ZT, that he had supposedly drafted but had more likely received from London.¹³ Against the opposition of some of his colleagues, he persuaded Foreign Minister Zimmermann to send it.
- On Jan. 16, 1917, two telegrams were sent sequentially, by cable, from Foreign Minister Zimmermann, in Berlin, to the German ambassador in Washington, Count Bernstorff. The first, which both Zimmermann and Bernstorff considered to be by far the more important, informed Bernstorff of the decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare on Feb. 1, 1917, and gave him instructions on when and how to inform the American government. The second was what has come to be known as the Zimmermann telegram. (See box on facing page.) This second telegram was relayed to the German Embassy in Mexico City on Jan. 19, 1917.
- The British intercepted the ZT on the day it was sent and promptly decoded it.

It should be noted that Zimmermann sent the ZT on his own authority. Neither the Kaiser nor Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg knew anything of it until it was made public in America.

After seeing these cables, Bernstorff attempted to have the German government rescind the unrestricted submarine warfare decision, but was unsuccessful.

- Jan. 31, 1917—Bernstorff informed the U.S. government that unrestricted submarine warfare would commence the following day.
- Feb. 3, 1917—The U.S. broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, and Bernstorff was told to leave the U.S.
- Feb. 7, 1917—The secretary of the War Cabinet, Mark Sykes, met with Weizmann and other Zionist leaders in London, in what is widely, but incorrectly, believed to have been the first contact between the British government and the Zionists during the war. It is doubtful that Sykes himself had any knowledge of the October 1916 British-Zionist agreement.
- Feb. 14, 1917—Bernstorff left New York on the Danish steamer *Friedrich VIII* to return to Germany. Safe conduct had been granted by the British.
- Feb. 16, 1917—The *Friedrich VIII* entered Halifax, Nova Scotia harbor. Bernstorff remained incommunicado for almost two weeks.
- Feb. 26, 1917—The State Department received a telegram from the American ambassador in London containing the plain language text of the ZT.
- Feb. 27, 1917—*Friedrich VIII* permitted to sail from Halifax.
- March 1, 1917 —Text of ZT published in U.S.
- March 15, 1917—Czar Nicholas II abdicated, following the first of two 1917 revolutions in Russia. A provisional government was formed, later headed by Alexander Kerensky. Democracy appeared to have taken hold in Russia.
- April 2, 1917—President Wilson addressed Congress. He spoke of the “wonderful and heartening” events in Russia, stated that “the world needs to be made safe for democracy,” and asked Congress to declare war on Germany.
- April 6, 1917—Congress declared war on Germany.
- Aug. 6, 1917—Zimmermann replaced as foreign minister in Germany.
- Early November 1917—The Bolshevik revolution took place in Russia. The promise of democracy disappeared. The ex-Czar and his family were subsequently put to death. Kerensky was removed from power but came to no harm.
- Nov. 2, 1917—Arthur Balfour sent a letter, including what has come to be known as the Balfour Declaration (BD), to Lord Walter Rothschild. For a number of years it was not known that the BD took this form. Lord Balfour’s obituary in *The New York Times* of March 20, 1930 stated that the BD was the text of a speech delivered by Balfour on Nov. 4, 1917. See box p. 44.
- March 8, 1918—Weizmann had a private and secret audience with King George V. According to Weizmann’s account in *Trial and Error*, the meeting consisted of an exchange of pleasantries, and one must wonder whether the meeting did not have some unstated purpose. One wonders, for example, if Weizmann did not emerge from the meeting in possession of a document signed by the King of England, possibly committing to more than did the BD.
- Nov. 11, 1918—World War I ended.

Five Books: How the Betrayal of German Code 7500 to the British Was Covered Up

To establish that German Code 7500 was obtained by the British in 1917 by means other than codebreaking, it is instructive briefly to review five publications. These will be examined in the order in which they were published, which—because book three was first published classified and later declassified—is different from the order in which they were made public.

Our first book is *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* by Burton J. Hendrick.¹⁴ Walter Page was a long-time (since 1881) friend of President Woodrow Wilson and was appointed by him to be U.S. ambassador to Great Britain, serving from 1913 until his death in 1918.

Volumes I and II of this three-volume work have a common index and were both published in 1922. Volume III deals largely with Page’s correspondence with President Wilson and Secretary of State Robert Lansing and was published in 1925, after Wilson’s death. It is important to remember that these volumes were written not by Page himself, who died in 1918—less than two months

after the end of World War I—but by his biographer, Hendrick, who assembled the letters from many sources. We are concerned here only with Volume III.

Hendrick relates that in late February 1917 Balfour personally handed Page a copy of the document which has come to be known as the Zimmermann telegram. This document can be found in the box at right, and is referred to there as ZT-2. It is the version of the telegram that was forwarded by the German Embassy in Washington to the German Embassy in Mexico City on Jan. 19, 1917. Balfour stated that the telegram had not been obtained in Washington but had been bought in Mexico City.

Two other versions of the Zimmermann telegram may also be found in the box at right. These are ZT-1, the original telegram as cabled from Berlin to Washington on Jan. 16, 1917, and what we may call ZT-Hendrick. ZT-Hendrick appears nowhere else than in Hendrick's book. It seems to be something the British gave Page, with an indication that it was an early, partial, decipherment of ZT-2 made sometime before Page was given the completely deciphered version. It is evident, however, that ZT-Hendrick is derived from ZT-1, not ZT-2.

ZT-1 and ZT-2 are, of course, English translations of German originals. There is no German original of ZT-H.

Some people in the U.S. government must have learned in early 1917 that ZT-1 and ZT-2 were sent encrypted in two different and unrelated codes. This did not become public knowledge, however, until F&M (see Book 3, below) was declassified in 1965.

It is difficult to see how the national interest was served by hiding from public knowledge for 48 years the simple fact that ZT-1 and ZT-2 were encrypted in different codes.

It was fortunate for the British that Page died when he did in 1918. Page was clearly an anglophile and eagerly accepted everything Balfour told him. Nevertheless, had he learned that the two versions of the ZT had been sent in different codes and that ZT-Hendrick could only have been derived from ZT-1, he would surely have realized that he had been deceived.

The second book is *Arthur James Balfour* by Lord Balfour's niece, Blanche Dugdale, published in two volumes in 1936 (London) and 1937 (NY).¹⁵ This is a lengthy work, covering Lord Balfour's entire life and political career. We are concerned here only with Chapter 10 of the second volume, in which the following significant paragraphs appear. The year referred to is 1917.

Ever since the middle of January, however, a piece of information had been in the possession of the British Government, which would move, if anything could, the vast populations behind the Atlantic seaboard States, who still read of the European War with as much detachment as if it had been raging on the moon. This was the famous telegram from Zimmermann, the German Foreign Minister, to the German Minister in Mexico, instructing him, if and when the United States should enter the War on the Allied side, to propose to Mexico an alliance which would restore to her, when peace came, her "lost territories in Texas, Arizona and New Mexico."

The method by which this information had reached the British Intelligence Service made it impossible for some time to communicate it to the United States Government. Therefore for over a month Balfour read his dispatches from Washington of the slow wakening of the American will to war, but could do nothing to hasten the process. Till—at last—information about the Mexican plot reached London through channels which enabled the Intelligence Service to cover up the traces of how it had first been got.

This appears to open the possibility that the British government obtained either the Zimmermann telegram or the code in which it was sent from an informant, rather than by code-breaking, and in any case indicates that the British possessed the full text of ZT-1 shortly after it was sent.

The third work to be examined is a U.S. Army Signal Corps Bulletin, *The Zimmermann Telegram of January 16, 1917 and its Cryptographic Background*, by William F. Friedman and Charles J. Mendelsohn (F&M).¹⁶ This work was published, classified, in 1937 and was declassified in 1965. The senior author was born Wolfe Friedmann in Kishinev, Russia in 1891 and ultimately became known as the Father of American Cryptanalysis.

Friedman and Mendelsohn (F&M) undertake to determine how the British were able to intercept the Zimmermann telegram and how they were able to decipher it.

They reveal that the ZT (ZT-1) was first transmitted by submarine cable from Berlin to the German ambassador in Washington, Count Bernstorff, on Jan. 16, 1917, encrypted in German code 7500, and that Bernstorff then relayed it (ZT-2) as a Western Union telegram encrypted in German code 13042, to the German legation in Mexico City on Jan. 19. Two different codes were used because the German legation in Mexico did not possess code 7500, and the ZT had to be relayed to them in an older and less secure code.

The texts of the two versions of the ZT, the Berlin-to-Washington (7500) version and the Washington-to-Mexico City (13042) version, were identical, but they had different preambles. The preamble of the 7500 version was "For your Excellency's personal information and to be forwarded to the Imperial Minister in Mexico by a safe route." The preamble of the 13042 version was simply "The foreign office telegraphs on January 16." (See "Three Versions" box on previous page.)

Code 7500 was a new and difficult code, only recently delivered by submarine to the U.S., and it is the professional judgment of F&M that the British would have been able to make, at best, a very rudimentary decipherment of the ZT by the time they made the verbatim text of the ZT available to the U.S.

F&M's explanation of how the British obtained the text of the ZT is that, after making a meager beginning in deciphering the 7500 version, they were able to obtain a copy of the 13042 version, after which decipherment was soon accomplished. This fails to explain, however, how the British were able to obtain the text of the preamble of the 7500 version of the ZT, which they did.

The more likely explanation of how the British were able to obtain a verbatim copy of the original 7500 version of the ZT is that, at the time the ZT was sent, the British already possessed the key to that code.

Although F&M reproduce the Dugdale quotation given above, they are remiss in having failed even to consider the obvious possibility that the British might have obtained the text of ZT-1 (or code 7500) through an informant rather than by code-breaking. The possibility must be considered that this failure was by design rather than through oversight.

The fourth book to be considered is *The Zimmermann Telegram*, by Barbara Tuchman.¹⁷ This work first appeared in 1958, and a second edition appeared in 1966, i.e., after F&M was declassified in 1965.

The first edition of Tuchman's book states that the British picked up the encoded ZT by wireless on Jan. 16, 1917, and found it to be in code 13042, which was related to codes the British already had deciphered. They were thus able, in short order, to produce a nearly complete copy of the decoded ZT.

In fact, the ZT was transmitted by cable, not radio, and encrypted in code 7500, not 13042.

Normally, the second edition of a book provides an opportunity, and also the duty, for the author to correct errors in the first edition. That did not happen with this book. The text is unchanged, but a "Preface to New Edition" has been added. In it, Tuchman reports the declassification of F&M and acknowledges that it "appears to modify my account"—a gross understatement. She acknowledges having been aware of the existence of F&M and acknowledges having been in contact with Friedman but professes to have been unaware of the content of the book.

The heart of Tuchman's book is the de-tailed story in Chapter 1 of how the British deciphered the ZT in code 13042 on Jan. 16, 1917. A reading of F&M makes it clear that this story is false. It is conceivable that Tuchman believed this story when she first wrote it, but it is not possible that she still believed it when the second edition of her book was issued. It is the belief of this writer that Tuchman fabricated a false story of how the British obtained the text of the ZT in order to conceal the fact that they obtained it by betrayal rather than by codebreaking.

It is remarkable that Tuchman's book continues to be read and believed more than 30 years after hard evidence has become available that the story is false.

The fifth and final book on our list is *The Codebreakers*, by David Kahn, published in 1967.¹⁸ This a lengthy work of 26 chapters and over 1,000 pages. We are interested primarily in Chapter 9, entitled "Room 40." About half of that chapter is devoted to the ZT. A second edition appeared in 1996, but it does not alter Chapter 9.

Kahn's explanation of how the British were able to decipher the ZT in code 7500 (which, like Tuchman but unlike F&M, he calls 0075) is that "somehow" the British obtained enough material in code 7500 to make a start at breaking it. Kahn quotes an incomplete version of the ZT as being what the British were able to produce. This same incomplete version is referred to by F&M as the "Hendrick version," of which they say: "When all is said and done, the decipherment of the 7500 version of the Zimmermann telegram, even to the degree given in the Hendrick version, approaches the unbelievable." Note that, unlike Kahn, who is a writer on cryptography, F&M were professional cryptographers.

One's confidence in Kahn is eroded by the fact that, in discussing the question of why, after the ZT was made public, Zimmermann admitted authorship of it, Kahn states, "to this day no one knows why Zimmermann admitted it" (p. 297). This is disingenuous. Anyone who has looked into the matter knows exactly why he admitted it. The Germans were as much taken by surprise by the publication of the ZT as anyone else and wanted to know if it was genuine. Zimmermann was called on to testify before the Reichstag and had no choice but to admit it.

As an aside, note that Room 40 was the name given to the cryptoanalytic bureau set up in the British admiralty early in the war under the direction of Sir Alfred Ewing. Kahn reveals that Ewing remained the head of Room 40 from the fall of 1914 until October 1916, when he returned to academia, whence he had come. His departure was facilitated by Lord Balfour, and his replacement was Captain Reginald Hall, R.N., director of naval intelligence. We may infer that at this time British-Zionist negotiations were well under way and that Room 40's role was being broadened from cracking German codes to include pretending to crack German code 7500.

We have examined our five books one-by-one. Let us now relate them to each other.

It is the unproven belief of the present writer that German code 7500, in which the original ZT was sent in January 1917, was obtained by a Zionist agent inside the German government, possibly either by means of photography or a photographic memory, and provided to the British government.

The second book cited, by Blanche Dugdale, is consistent with this belief in that it contains a veiled hint that the British might have obtained the plain language text of the ZT by means other than codebreaking, whereas the three following books totally ignore this possibility. Interestingly, the other three books give different, and incompatible, stories of how the British did obtain the text of

the ZT.

It is clear that the authors of books three, four and five were acquainted with each other.

Since it was the first of these three books, F&M, of course, make no mention of Tuchman or Kahn.

In her "Preface to New Edition," written after the declassification of F&M, Tuchman acknowledges having known of the existence of F&M, though not its content, and having spoken to Friedman. (There was no mention of either of these facts in the first edition.) Also in the same preface, Tuchman states that decipherment of code 7500 (which she calls 0075) will be analyzed in Kahn's, at that time forthcoming, book. This implies contact between them.

Interestingly, Kahn makes no mention of Tuchman, nor does her name appear in the index, although Kahn's account of the historical circumstance of the ZT seems to be largely borrowed from her book. Kahn does, however, mention Friedman. In the preface to *The Codebreakers*, Kahn mysteriously thanks Friedman for "a gift made in 1947, upon my graduation from high school, that was a major step in my cryptographic education." One wonders if that "gift" might not have been the secret of how the British first obtained German code 7500 and of the need to protect that secret in perpetuity.

"Services Rendered"

In his seminal work, *Arab Awakening* (1938), George Antonius points out that in early 1917 three major obstacles stood in the way of Zionist efforts to obtain a commitment from the British government in support of their goals in Palestine.¹⁹ First was the bargain concluded in 1915 with Sharif Husain of Arabia for an independent Arab state whose territory included Palestine. Second was the Sykes-Picot agreement, dividing the Middle East between Britain and France and placing the Holy Land under some sort of international administration. And third was the hostility toward political Zionism of an influential group of British Jews.

Antonius then continues:

"Undeterred, however, by those obstacles, Mr. Lloyd George appointed Sir Mark Sykes to open negotiations with the Zionists. What his motives were in wishing to come to an understanding with the Zionist leaders, and what the considerations were which induced the British Government eventually to issue the Balfour Declaration are questions to which the answers have been obscured by a smoke-screen of legend and propaganda. It is alleged, for instance, that the Jews used their financial and political influence to bring the United States into the War on the side of the Entente and that the Balfour Declaration was a reward for actual services rendered. All published evidence goes to disprove that allegation, and one can only infer either that it does not rest on any foundation or, if it does, that the services rendered by international Jewry in that connection were of so occult a nature that they have hitherto escaped the scrutiny of all the historians of America's intervention."

The initial meeting between Sykes and the Zionists took place on Feb. 7, 1917, and we can now see why the "services rendered" toward bringing America into the war have hitherto escaped the scrutiny of all the historians of America's intervention. One would expect that Zionist actions aimed at bringing America into the war would have taken place sometime after the first British-Zionist meeting, but the first acknowledged contact between the British Government and Zionists was the Sykes meeting of Feb. 7, 1917. Yet by that time the Zionist contributions toward bringing America into the war already had largely been accomplished, although it is likely that Sykes himself was unaware of that.

The Balfour-Weizmann agreement of October 1916 was and remains entirely secret.

The Sykes meeting served as a sort of decoy.

In the few months between these two events, the following had taken place:

- The civilian head of codebreaking "Room 40" in London had been replaced by the director of Naval Intelligence.
- Von Jagow, who had served since 1913, was replaced by Zimmermann as German foreign secretary.
- Asquith, who had served as British prime minister since 1908, was removed from power, and a new War Cabinet was formed, in which Lloyd George was prime minister and Balfour foreign minister—both friends of Zionism since 1903.
- The key to German code 7500 was betrayed to Room 40.
- A draft of the ZT was concocted in London and presented to Zimmermann by one of his subordinates in Berlin.
- The ZT was transmitted by cable from Berlin to Washington on Jan. 16, 1917. It was copied by Room 40 and promptly de-coded. Note that this is incompatible with Tuchman's story but entirely consistent with Dugdale's account.

Thus, by the time of the Sykes-Zionist meeting of Feb. 7, 1917, the Zionist part of the bargain had been accomplished, and America was as good as at war. All that remained was for the British to find the best time and method for revealing the contents of the ZT to President Wilson and for him to convince Congress and the American people to go to war.

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John Cornelius is the nom de plume of an American with long-standing interest in the Middle East.

SIDEBAR

Three Versions of the Zimmermann Telegram

ZT-1 as sent in code 7500 from Berlin to Washington on Jan. 16, 1917
Source: German Hearings

Telegram No. 158.

Strictly confidential.

For your Excellency's exclusively personal information and transmission to the Imperial Minister at Mexico by safe hands:

Telegram No. 1.

Absolutely confidential.

To be personally deciphered.

It is our purpose on the 1st of February to commence the unrestricted U-boat war. The attempt will be made to keep America neutral in spite of it all.

In case we should not be successful in this, we propose Mexico an alliance upon the following terms: Joint conduct of war. Joint conclusion of peace. Ample financial support and an agreement on our part that Mexico shall gain back by conquest the territory lost by her at a prior period in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Arrangement as to detail is entrusted to your Excellency.

Your Excellency will make the above known to the President in strict confidence at the moment that war breaks out with the United States, and you will add the suggestion that Japan be requested to take part at once and that he simultaneously mediate between ourselves and Japan.

Please inform the President that the unrestricted use of our U-boats now offers the prospect of forcing England to sue for peace in the course of a few months.

Confirm receipt.

ZIMMERMANN

ZT-2 as sent in code 13042 from Washington to Mexico City on Jan. 19, 1917

Source: Friedman and Mendelsohn, translated from the German version

The Foreign Office wires (telegraphiert) January 16:

No. 1.

Absolutely confidential.

To be personally deciphered.

It is our purpose on the 1st of February to commence the unrestricted U-boat

war. The attempt will be made to keep America neutral in spite of it all.

In case we should not be successful in this, we propose Mexico an alliance upon the following terms: Joint conduct of war. Joint conclusion of peace. Ample financial support and an agreement on our part that Mexico shall gain back by conquest the territory lost by her at a prior period in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Arrangement as to detail is entrusted to your Excellency.

Your Excellency will make the above known to the President in strict confidence at the moment that war breaks out with the United States, and you will add the suggestion that Japan be requested to take part at once and that he simultaneously mediate between ourselves and Japan.

Please inform the President that the unrestricted use of our U-boats now offers the prospect of forcing England to sue for peace in the course of a few months.

Confirm receipt.

ZIMMERMANN

ZT-Hendrick, date unknown

Source: Hendrick found among Ambassador Page's papers

Zimmermann to Bernstorff for Eckhardt W. 158.

16th January, 1917

Most secret for your Excellency's personal information and to be handed on to the Imperial Minister in ? Mexico with Tel. No. 1...by a safe route.

We purpose to begin on 1st February unrestricted submarine warfare. In doing so, however, we shall endeavor to keep America neutral...? If we do not (succeed in doing so) we propose to (? Mexico) an alliance upon the following basis:

(joint) conduct of the war

(joint) conclusion of peace

Your Excellency should for the present inform the President secretly (that we expect) war with the U.S.A. (possibly) (...Japan) and at the same time to negotiate between us and Japan...(indecipherable sentence meaning please tell the President) that...our submarines...will compel England to peace in a few months.

Acknowledge receipt.

ZIMMERMANN

SIDEBAR 2

Mr. Morgenthau Doesn't Go to Istanbul

A little known historical incident took place in the spring of 1917, shortly after the U.S. entered World War I on the side of the Allies. President Woodrow Wilson devised a plan for bringing about an early end to the war by detaching Turkey from the Central Powers. To this end, he sent a mission to Europe, where it was to meet with representatives of Britain and France in Switzerland and then make its way to Turkey. The mission was headed by Henry Morgenthau, Sr., who had been American ambassador to Turkey from 1912 to 1915 and had many contacts there. This story is related in Chapter 17 of Chaim Weizmann's 1949 autobiography, *Trial and Error*.

The American mission never arrived in Switzerland, let alone Turkey. In early June of 1917, Weizmann, who was then in London, received a cable from Louis Brandeis in the U.S., informing him of the mission and suggesting that he contact it. Weizmann immediately contacted members of the British government and learned the nature of the mission. Weizmann was concerned that the Morgenthau mission might result in the war ending with the Ottoman Empire still intact, eliminating the possibility of a Jewish state in Palestine.

A subsequent conference with Lord Balfour led to Weizmann's being sent as the official British representative to meet with the American mission and a French representative. This meeting took place at Gibraltar after the American mission disembarked at Cadiz on July 4, 1917.

Weizmann reports that he had no difficulty persuading Morgenthau to drop the whole matter, so instead of proceeding to Switzerland and Istanbul, Morgenthau went to Biarritz, in the South of France, where, he said, he would

communicate with General Pershing and await further instructions from President Wilson.

The Morgenthau mission was apparently secret, for Weizmann says he does not know how the story got out. He also says that in 1922, when Congress was looking into the merits of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, a senator stated that the leaders of the Zionist movement were unworthy men and that Weizmann, in particular, had prolonged the war for two years by scuttling the Morgenthau mission.

Morgenthau seems to have shown more loyalty to Zionism than to his president or his country.

Interestingly, author Barbara Tuchman was Morgenthau's granddaughter.—**J.C.**