

GEOSTRATEGIC PULSE

MONTHLY BILINGUAL PUBLICATION OF GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS

Motto: "OPINIONS ARE FREE, BUT NOT MANDATORY" I. L. CARAGIALE

We Are NATO

The Near-Middle and far West

#WEARENATO

THE MODERNIZATION OF INTELLIGENCE
IN WWI: MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IN
THE CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE, 1917

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EDITORIAL

From the Editor

Constantin IACOBÎȚĂ



On April 1, 2019 a debate dedicated to “Contemporary Israel between History and Geopolitics” was hosted by the National School of Political and Administrative Studies (NSPAS) in Bucharest.

The event was organized by the “Theodor Hertzl” Center for Israeli Studies from the Faculty of Political Sciences/ NSPAS and had, as keynote speaker, HE David Saranga, the Israeli Ambassador to Romania. The speaker list also included Mr. Cristian Parvulescu (PhD), the Dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPS), Professor Liviu Rotman, director of “Theodor Hertzl” and Mr. Dan Korn (PhD), Honorary Professor at NSPAS and former member of the Knesset. The Audience included specialists in the field, students and so on.

Ms. Liliana Popescu (PhD), the FPS Pro-Rector, moderated the discussions and played an active, important role.

HE Ambassador David SARANGA, who spoke Romanian perfectly during his speech as well as the dialogue with the other speakers and the audience, set the stage by presenting the regional context and main threats from an Israeli perspective.

And, relevant for the entire debate, the Ambassador was keen to underline that any discussion on Israel should definitely go beyond the “Palestinian problem”.

Nevertheless, as Mr. Saranga himself later admitted and Professor Rotman warned in the beginning of his intervention, the “Palestinian problem” rose and stood as main subject (of debate). Moreover, it fuelled lively exchanges of ideas and opinions.

From an observer’s perspective and prone to inherent personal subjectivity the debate highlighted, among other:

- remarkable openness and honesty, especially from an Israeli Ambassador who undoubtedly spoke not only professionally, including on the “Palestinian problem”;
- unanimous recognition of the need and urgency of a commonly agreed solution. Starting, among other, from the truth that history cannot be changed, the speakers discussed a range of eventual options/ solutions – two states, one state, confederation, status quo and so on.

A two state solution prevailed in level of stated support, even if most speakers agreed on the complexity and difficulty of any effort to describe its content, and disagreement on the timing (for such a solution) was high. On the opposite side of the scale were mentioned opinions, on the Israeli side, ranging from postponing a solution to a “non-solution”;

- any solution to the “Palestinian problem” offered by the Trump administration was credited with few chances, even if details were still to be known. And the reasons for this scepticism related to each of the three sides. As for the American side, most speakers expressed distrust in the current leadership as well as its ability to formulate and promote a viable solution. The Palestinian camp was described as opposed in principle to any initiative from the current American administration, divided and with no real/ positive prospect of succession to the current Palestinian Authority leadership (a successor to Mahmoud Abbas). As far as the Israeli camp, the following were added to the divisions enumerated above: the likely negative results (from a two state perspective) of the April 9 elections for the 21st Knesset; lack of activism from the Arab component of the Israeli society (reduced polling turnout, with direct effects on chances to determine a larger government, eventually – and ideally – one of national union).

The elections for the 21st Knesset have once again reconfirmed the strong position of Netanyahu’s party in any negotiations for a new government. Moreover, it reconfirmed the low level of participation of the Arab minority (around 50%, 13 points lower than in the last elections) which translates in fewer seats in the Knesset.

These given, and as Ambassador Saranga forecasted (while underlying that the opinion was personal), chances for a change in the status quo are slim and the prospects distant.

While not necessarily ending with conclusions, the debate offered to participants and especially to students in audience at least two main thoughts/ desiderates otherwise directly and clearly exposed by Dr Cristian Parvulescu and Ambassador David Saranga respectively:

- identifying and developing a partner (of dialogue) where none exist apparently, but there is sufficient desire to overcome the impasse;
- activism/ civic and political participation, individually and collectively, as way and instrument to promote and achieve desired freedoms and rights.

EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY



WE ARE NATO

***Dorel-Gheorghe CĂPRAR,
Chairman of the Committee for
Defence, Public Order, and National Security,
Chamber of Deputies, Romanian Parliament***

In the current, dynamic global security situation, Romania acts as an important regional actor, as well as an ally. It stands out as a geopolitical and geostrategic stronghold, devoted to maintaining the stability, security and prosperity of the region. Once it joined NATO, Romania made a commitment to follow the Alliance's principles. Today Romania plays an important part in the regional and transatlantic security situation by contributing to the military missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq, by maintaining the stability of the Black Sea region, and by giving to defence 2% of its GDP (a major part is dedicated to military capabilities), thus demonstrating its commitment to the Alliance.

Romania keeps on developing its relationship with the organization, an essential step towards maintaining the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. The Romanian Parliament, through its Committee for Defence, Public Order, and National Security, contributes to the promotion of the US-Romanian bilateral relations. An example of the fruitful relationship between the two countries is the recent conference that took place this April. The conference, named "Eastern European Security Threats. The Romanian Strategic Outpost", was organised by the Romanian Parliament's Committee for Defence, Public Order, and National Security in cooperation with the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security

Studies and the George C. Marshall Romanian Alumni Association.

The George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies is a successful project of the American-German partnership, supported by the US Department of Defence and the German Federal Ministry of Defence. Its mission is "to create a more stable security environment by advancing democratic institutions and relationships, by promoting active, peaceful, whole-of-government approaches to address transnational and regional security challenges, and by creating and enhancing enduring partnerships worldwide."

The George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies is dedicated to educating and shaping experts in the fields of security and international relations, major components that ensure the proper function of its client nations, as well as the allied space. Romania has over 600 graduates of various courses offered by the Centre and is the second largest country to do so. And as James Mattis, the former US Secretary of Defence, said on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, one of the main benefits of this Centre is its network of expert alumni. They share their resources globally and offer support to decision makers





worldwide, for the sake of security.

The conference "Eastern European Security Threats. The Romanian Strategic Outpost" was organized in order to revive the 20 year old George C. Marshall Romanian Alumni Association, as well as to support its status as a platform for debate. This can benefit both from the vast network of national experts, made of people who served their country in defence and diplomatic institutions, as well as from its current students, who are likely to become future leaders of security institutions. In a world full of insecurities, we have created a space dedicated to strategic debates. The conference covered relevant topics, such as EU and NATO's defence policies, challenges to the Eastern Flank, resilience by means of cyber-security etc.

The debates were an excellent opportunity for security and international relations experts to share various points of view, to build relationships and start inter-institutional cooperation. Confronting security challenges in a debate-friendly, neutral and politics free environment – following the steps of George C. Marshall – proved that ideas, when supported by arguments, can become solutions and can

bring people together.

The event proved to be a re-confirmation of the transatlantic relationship and the Strategic Partnership between Romania and the USA, a key element in defining our country's status as one of NATO's allies. A close look at the regional threats and the understanding of the eastern flank emphasised the importance of planning and preparation of Romania's strategic future mostly based on the Romanian –American partnership, with shared developments and responsibilities.

Romania has grown as regional leader due to its ability to contribute to security and stability beyond the borders of the Alliance. However, only with together with NATO member countries will we be able to build a stable and strong security environment, as well as a safe future.

INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

THE NEAR-MIDDLE AND FAR WEST



**Ambassador Professor
Dumitru CHICAN**

On the 24th-25th February 2019, the Egyptian resort Sharm El-Sheikh hosted the first “historical” summit that brought together the heads of state and governments of the European Union and the leaders of the League of Arab States. The event, that took place under the motto “Investing in Stability”, was more likely an occasion for each of the present sides – European and Arab, to bring forth their main concerns and worries not regarding their internal issues – which aren’t scarce, but those concerning the relationship between the two neighbouring regions situated on the northern and southern sides of the Mediterranean Sea. The endless issue of the conflict, or rather “conflicts” wearing out the Middle East was one of the summit’s points of discussion.

The fact that the Arab-European summit took place shortly after the Munich security conference, and in the context of the dynamic cooperation and steps taken towards strengthening the European and Euro-Atlantic security, gave birth

to a rhetoric where the words “Middle East” kept on surfacing, in all kinds of circumstances. Moreover, it made analysts and observers ask themselves, and others, why the words “Middle East” keep coming up (accompanied by either “greater” or “new”) and why nobody even think of discussing about the concept of a “Near-Middle or Far West” – paradigms that from the Arab geopolitical point of view represent today’s reality.

Raising such concerns and posing such questions isn’t just the exercise of our imagination, if they can be answered by the plain picture the West shows to the world today – a West where the pillars/walls that strengthen and hold it together are starting to shake and break, not only creating a geopolitical rift in the whole but also disrupting the function and structure of its concepts, which, when compared to the geography of the Middle East, enable us to talk about the existence of the three ideas included in the title of this article. We are, in fact, facing major changes in the structure and balance of the world’s greatest powers in general, and of the western world in particular. The details of these changes are caught in a process of deterioration; they are not mere breaks in the compact structure



of the West that supports the idea of at least having a “Middle West” and a “Far West”. The Middle East can relate to these two concepts based on the position it has gained in the global dynamics following World War II, and, more accurately after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The concept of “Extreme” or “Far West”, included in this geopolitical framework, relates to the USA tendency to separate itself from the rest or, to what

we call “Trump’s protectionism”, a part of the notion “America First”. It would be wrong to believe that this concept is a passing symptom or a fit of temper. On the contrary, the road the Trump Administration has taken is the mirror image of a broad political vision whose philosophical concepts are deeply rooted in the American culture.



On the other hand, when referring to the “Middle West”, we think of Western Europe, or, more accurately, a formation lead by Germany, France and somewhat Italy – a new “Mittleuropa”. This concept is, first of all, characterized by the deep divergences between the Paris-Berlin alliance on one side, and the USA on the other side, divergences that include various and important issues concerning the present day modern world, such as: climate changes, commercial trade embargos, the relationship with the Russian Federation, or the Iranian nuclear treaty. Relevant, for the above, is the recent treaty signed between the German chancellor, Angela MERKEL, and the French president, Emmanuel MACRON, as a reaction to the attitude of Trump administration on the matter of NATO financing (pressures for increased defence budgets), not only towards France and Germany but towards the whole European Union.

The Sharm El-Sheikh summit, which, as I was saying, was preceded by the Warsaw and Munich reunions – initiated and led by the “Far West” represented by the USA – was a “historical” meeting that took place, one can say, between the Middle East and the “Middle West” represented by the members of the European Union.

It is worth thinking about the real possibility of US troops leaving the Middle East, and, most of all Syria. Will the “Middle West” wish to fill the “gap” left by the US, or will there be something more than just “filling these gaps”, namely

the start of a strategic competition between the two “Wests” over the management and influence of the global development in the Middle East, and its Mashreq and Maghreb? There are signs that point to the latter – I give you Libya’s example, whose control and resources are disputed by France and Italy, as well as Great Britain and the Russian Federation (an older and longer dispute). I would like to remind of the statement released by Federica MOGHERINI, the head of EU foreign affairs, in Brussels, on the 4th February 2019, during the ministerial (reunion) preceding the European-Arab summit: “if we work together (both Arabic countries and the EU) we will be able to move towards reconciliation in Syria, Yemen, Libya and the entire Middle East”. The High Representative didn’t miss the opportunity to talk about a solution to the Palestinian problem based on “two states”. Nevertheless, such a solution is not supported by the Trump administration, who has been promoting its own, still confusing “deal of the century”.

Will the Arab Middle East and its diplomacy be able to exploit smartly the existent rifts in the Far and Middle Wests?

Lost Malaysian Hopes and the Pakatan Catch 22



Murray HUNTER

It took the Malaysian opposition more than a generation to topple the *UMNO* led *Barisan Nasional* (BN) Govern-

ment.

Throughout mosques, coffee shops and markets in Malaysia, there has been an atmosphere of hope and anticipation by many for change ever since Dr. Mahathir Mohamed dismissed Anwar Ibrahim as deputy Prime Minister back in 1998.

Demonstrations organized by Anwar Ibrahim and his supporters after his sacking led to the *Reformasi* movement. The *Reformasi* movement initially called for Dr. Mahathir's resignation, the end of corruption and cronyism, but later widened its scope to include popular policies for change. This show of defiance by Anwar Ibrahim ended in his commando style arrest in September 1998 after a massive demonstration on the streets of Kuala Lumpur. From that day on Anwar Ibrahim became synonymous for reform in Malaysia.

This led to the "free Anwar" campaign and formation of Parti Keadilan Rakyat (Peoples Justice Party).

Anwar managed to unite a wide diversity of NGOs and most of the opposition parties against the Mahathir led *BN* Government in time for the 1999 election. The election was bitterly fought, where people began to actually believe that the opposition could one day topple the *BN* Government, which had held power since independence in 1957.

This *Reformasi* movement was not without its setbacks. The retirement of Dr. Mahathir in 2003, led to his successor Ahmad Badawi having a resounding win in the 2004 election. Badawi promised to embrace change, clamp down on corruption, and framed *Islam Hadhari*

(moderate Islam) as a platform for social reform. The initially resounding support from an electorate with renewed hope in the *BN* almost decimated the opposition in the election.

With a popular Badawi, opposition supporters were depressed and temporarily gave up the cause.

However this honeymoon period Badawi received from the people, soon faded with continual blunders, and scandals. This was fuelled by bloggers poking fun at Badawi and the emerging alternative media exposing his extravagant lifestyle.

With great disappointment in Malaysia, a rekindled opposition was able to take over a number of state governments and dramatically increased their representation in the Federal parliament in the 2008 election. The opposition winning the states of Kedah, Penang, Perak, and Selangor, led many to believe the opposition could win the federal government in the next election.

With excuses of Badawi's poor performance as Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed spearheaded moves to dispose of Badawi as Prime Minister in 2009, supporting Najib Razak to the position. Najib Razak "sold" the concept of *7Malaysia*, emphasising ethnic harmony, national unity, and efficient governance, which was initially very positively received.

However the *7Malaysia* concept was soon seen as being strong on rhetoric but weak in substance. The skeletons in Najib's closet which included the Scorpion Submarine deal and the murder of Shaariibuugiin Altantuyaa, soon reemerged weakening his position of respect and authority.

The 2013 election led by Najib Razak for the *BN* and Anwar Ibrahim for the then opposition coalition *Pakatan Harapan* was another bitterly fought campaign. The then opposition actually received a higher popular vote than the incumbent *BN*.

There was a strong feeling for change in the community during this election. Anwar played on this feeling with his public statements and accusations. His claims about phantom Air Asia flights from Sabah of foreign workers to vote for the BN in the peninsula at the time enraged voters, led to attacks on suspected phantom voters. These claims until today could never be substantiated, but the claim was used to convince the people the opposition was cheated. Anwar Ibrahim also declared victory before the results were announced, in a manner to construe that the election had been stolen from the opposition.

Then in 2015, the *Sarawak Report* and *The Sunday Times*, exposed what is now known as the 1MDB scandal. These revelations tainted Najib Razak as a complete crook. Najib shut down critical parts of the local media and sacked the Attorney General before charges could be laid against him.

Mahathir once again mobilized forces to remove Najib out of office. Mahathir created *Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM)* with the help of defectors from UMNO and joined the *Pakatan Harapan* coalition led by his nemesis Anwar Ibrahim.

The 2018 election became a Mahathir verses Najib contest, where both political commentators and the public expected Najib to just hold onto power. There seemed to be an air of disillusionment with the electoral process and apathy during the campaign. However voter turnout was more than 82%, almost as high as the 2013 election.

Pakatan Harapan defeated the incumbent Najib Razak. The surprised public instantaneously became euphoric, celebrating on the streets. Many Malaysians believed they would now get the reform and change they had long hoped for.

The Pakatan Catch 88

The defeat of the *BN* Government had exposed a very complex electorate in Malaysia.

Different groups of voters made their decisions to desert the *BN* for different reasons. The non-Malays saw the removal of the *BN* as the end of the dark 'apartheid' era of Malaysia, where every

citizen would be seen as an equal, as was promised by sections of the *PH* during the campaign. In contrast, many urban, professional and middle class Malays hoped that Dr. Mahathir would clean up the mess the country was in. Yet voters in Rural Malaysia, particularly in Kelantan and Terengganu didn't switch to *PH* at all. They went to PAS. The small Northern state of Perlis remained staunchly *BN*.

There is now a deep polarization in the Malaysian electorate; those who want a "*Malaysian Malaysia*" and those who want a "*Malay Malaysia*". This is a massive dilemma for the *PH* Government.

A major part of the electorate sees reform as a threat to special privileges that they have been receiving. Three generations of education and political narrative has created this sense of privilege, which is deeply engrained within rural Malays. These sentiments are being played upon politically to the point where the *PH* Government had to stall any decisions about child marriage, and reverse its decision to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

In addition, the *PH* Government is being subjected to pressure from sections of Malaysian Royalty, which led to the reversal in ratifying the Rome Statute and resignation of Johor Chief Minister Osman Sapian.

The *PH* Government now faces the situation where any future policy decisions and reforms must be framed from a "*Bumiputera perspective*", and agreed upon in Royal circles.

This is particularly the case as the government is extremely slow with any electoral reform, which would effectively weaken opposition to policy reform, through adopting the principle of 'one vote one value'.

Without electoral reform, any policy reversals will favour the newly formed UNMO-PAS alliance with its narratives pandering to the rural Malay electorate.

The *PH* Government needs to very quickly undertake electoral reform to counter the strength of the conservative electorate. Currently a rural vote can be worth anything up to 4 times an ur-

ban vote. It's this imbalance that is providing UMNO-PAS with a powerful base from which will prevent the PH Government pushing through any reform agenda.

However the latest news on electoral reform is that the Election Commission and UNDP will only make a joint study about the electoral system in the coming months, far too long for something that is threatening the very long-term livelihood of the government.

More of the same

With this inaction on electoral reform, it could be argued that GE14 was not about vital reform needed in the country, but rather replacing one leadership group with another. In many respects the PH Government is acting just like its predecessor. The reform report handed down by the Council of Eminent Persons (CEP) has been suppressed by the Official Secrets Act, indicating the new government doesn't place a high priority on transparency. The sedition Act has not been repealed and is being used to prosecute political opponents. The Anti-Corruption Agency (MACC) still cannot decide who to prosecute independently. Cabinet Ministers had corruption charges quickly dismissed against them. Political appointees are still being appointed to GLCs and statutory bodies.

PPBM and PKR are both political parties which strongly resemble UMNO right down to the internal politics and squabbles. With defectors from UMNO freely running across to PPBM, the parties are looking more like a new UMNO.

In defence of the PH Government, Dr. Mahathir has worked hard to form an operational government from a broad group of parties. However many within the cabinet are very inexperienced, and there is a strong sense of inertia and apathy coming from the civil service, with stories of sabotage against the new government.

Even with Dr. Mahathir back in power, changing institutions that have been inefficiently built and harbouring wasteful cronies of the previous government is very difficult. However what is sad to see is that many of these cronies are still

being reappointed to positions of power.

The old guard still are very clearly in charge of the new government, which has a '*back to the future*' quality about it. Old rivalries still continue. The Anwar-Mahathir power struggle still continues from the 1990s. Gamesmanship seems to be a trademark of the new government. There are many disappointed with not being given plumb jobs and important positions within the new administration.

Consequently, the PH Ministry is more a transition than reform one. The country must mark time until Anwar Ibrahim becomes the Prime Minister.

The country is waiting for someone who currently has no position in government. The country is waiting for someone they don't really know very well. Anwar Ibrahim was the education minister who introduced Malay medium at schools which many claimed was a major setback to the country's education system. Anwar advocated IMF intervention in the 1997 Asian Financial crisis. Anwar is well known for saying different things to different audiences.

From Anwar's actions and stands taken over the years, he seems to be more a pragmatist rather than a visionary leader. Most of the policies he has advocated are *populist*, even though they may not be in Malaysia's best interests such as the abolition of GST and maintenance of fuel subsidies. Anwar's politics have been high in gamesmanship at a time the country really needs to get down and focus on the social, economic, financial, and institutional problems facing it.

As a sideshow, Najib is looking for a political solution to his problems rather than a legal one. Current electoral demographics favour him. The UMNO-Pas alliance will enable Najib to skilfully exploit the '*insular side*' of the electorate. The PH Government is making mistakes, and this has shown up electorally in the last two bi-election results. Najib also knows he will not be facing Mahathir in the next election. Most probably he will be facing Anwar who has made many strategy blunders over the years in election campaigns.



<https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/my.htm>

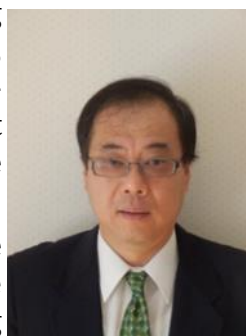
Malaysians are very quickly losing hope in their new government, especially with the Malay-Malaysian narratives that are creeping into the arena. With the PH Government waiting for its new leader and its current leader going back to his old policies of the 1980s and 90s with flying cars, the Singapore aggravation, looking East, privatisation, and a secret executive government, real economic and market reforms are not on the agenda yet, even though some of these reforms are very doable.

Institutionalized discrimination appears to be strengthening rather than being eliminated. The new narratives PH members talked about during the election have all disappeared. The 'national mindset' is going back to an insular view of the world.

The hopes of Malaysian are low again.

About the author: Murray HUNTER: Innovator and entrepreneur. Notable author, thinker and Visiting Professor at HatYai University in Hat Yai, Songkhla Province, Thailand.

Japan - A quiet geo-economic giant



Masahiro MATSUMURA

In the turbulent world politics involving extensive international coverage, stable and humdrum Japan does not have much of a presence. Yet, Japan

is the world's largest

creditor nation while continuously playing significant roles in trade, direct investment and economic assistance. Japan in the background has reinforced itself as a leading geo-economic power while having almost thoroughly eliminated its huge non-performing loans in the banking sector and other structural vulnerabilities over the so-called "lost two decades" consequent on its bubble burst in the early 1990s.

Let us examine it by deploying the famous 5 Es of prof. Djawed Sangdel. Emphasizing Japan's

world-largest public debts that amount to nearly 240% of its GDP is misleading given that its public assets amount to nearly 200% and that the holding of the government bonds by the Bank of Japan, practically, a part of the government, amount to more than 80%. This is consistent with the good stability of a strong yen and very low long-term prime rates.

On the other hand, the U.S. faces deepening structural vulnerabilities in stocks that have resulted from the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in 2008 and the ensuing financial crisis, while experiencing a transitory booming in flows. Also, the E.U. remains mired not only in serious structural vulnerabilities but also in a persistent recession. Consequently, both the U.S. and the E.U. have a significantly less free hand in foreign economic policy, while keeping themselves busy to obtain or retain comparative gains through their strategic interaction, most notably in trade.

With the quantitative tightening of the U.S., the E.U., and, finally, the Japanese central banks, BRICS and other major developing economies encounter increasing difficulties in financing for investment and growth, compounded by the shrinking of their U.S. and European export outlets.

Particularly, the Chinese yuan is effectively pegged with the U.S. dollar, while China's money supply in yuan is in fact based on its dollar reserves. Consequently, China is sliding into a serious recession, aggravated by the intense trade war with the U.S. No wonder that, last October, China made an abrupt about-face on its persistent anti-Japan policy, and concluded the currency swap agreement with Japan that would surely furnish China with 3 trillion Japanese yen (or less than 270 billion U.S. dollars) in the event of an acute liquidity crisis.

Looking closely at the recent Japan-China interaction, Japan's quiet rise is more conspicuous. For several years prior to the official reconciliation of October 2018, the two countries appeared to geo-economically compete head-to-head, centered on aid and development according to China's "One Belt One Road Strategy" and Japan's counter-strategy, or "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy".

China is undergoing serious setbacks because many recipient/investee states have cancelled, cut down or postponed China-sponsored development projects. These states have suffered China's "debt trap", and many of the projects have turned out to be financially, environmentally, and socially unsustainable. China is increasingly constrained to finance development projects due to the hardly discernible yet significant dwindling of its dollar reserves that is statistically covered up by its foreign borrowings.

Certainly, China has succeeded in luring more than ninety developing and developed countries with its huge fabricated foreign reserves as show money to participate in the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. But, the country has failed to secure the AIIB memberships of Japan and the United States, respectively the world's largest credit nation and the key currency nation with most developed financial and bonds markets. Without sufficient funds and staffs, the AIIB cannot but co-finance projects with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to obtain a favorable credit rating necessary for financing through international financial markets.

In contrast, Japan has demanded China to observe international standards in aid and development, and only agreed in October 2018 to selectively coordinate its policy with China only when the country meets these stringent conditions. There has been no major successful coordination case between the two to date. Given that many of traditional Japanese aid recipients are no longer low-income countries, the Japanese approach will necessarily focus more on high quality aid and development in terms of sustainability through the public-private sector cooperation. The approach will be superior to China's, at least over a medium to long run.

Additionally, Japan plays a leading role to preserve the existing free and open international economic system. Against the tide of populism and protectionism, most notably U.S. President Donald Trump's "America First", Japan successfully led the formation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership after the U.S. made an abrupt exit

from an early TPP in the making, and concluded the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement.

In nutshell, Japan's geo-economic power and influence will be outstanding, at least for a mid-term. Yet, the country is not free from serious risks and problems. For a short term, Japan's rise will remain quiet and, perhaps, unnoticeable, especially because its geo-economic power and influence may be reduced by geo-political risks and crises, and because its vested bureaucratic interests hamper consolidation of its huge public debts and assets, which involves the great

risk of a liquidity crisis. For a long term, Japan needs to find out a societal equation to cope with an unprecedented low birthrate and a high longevity rate. The world must stay tuned on humdrum Japan.

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<https://www.travelchinaguide.com/map/asia-map.htm>

MILITARY – INTELLIGENCE

**The Modernization of Intelligence in WWI:
Military Intelligence in the Campaign for Palestine, 1917**

James NOONE, distinguished graduate of the United States National War College, Class of '95

Levant Campaign fought 100 years ago.¹

The Levantine coast is perhaps the most blood-drenched landscape in the world. Babylonians, Egyptians, Hittites, Greeks, Romans, Crusaders, Arabs, Philistines, Jews and many others have fought and died in this strategic crossroad between Asia, Europe, and Africa. Today's ongoing crisis in the Levant eerily mirrors dozens of earlier conflicts, including the British World War I

In 1917, the teetering central government was that of the Ottoman Empire. Like today's regime in Damascus, Istanbul's government held on in large part due to military support from its powerful ally to the north, Germany. The Western Allies pressing on multiple fronts to defeat Germany and its allies in Central Europe then were seeking regime change on the southeastern frontier of what would become the Republic of Turkey in 1923.



Map courtesy of the United States Military Academy, Department of History

1. The three maps used in this article were drawn from the online atlases of the History Department of the United States Military Academy, "Campaign Atlas to the Great War," <https://www.westpoint.edu/history/SitePages/WWI.aspx>.

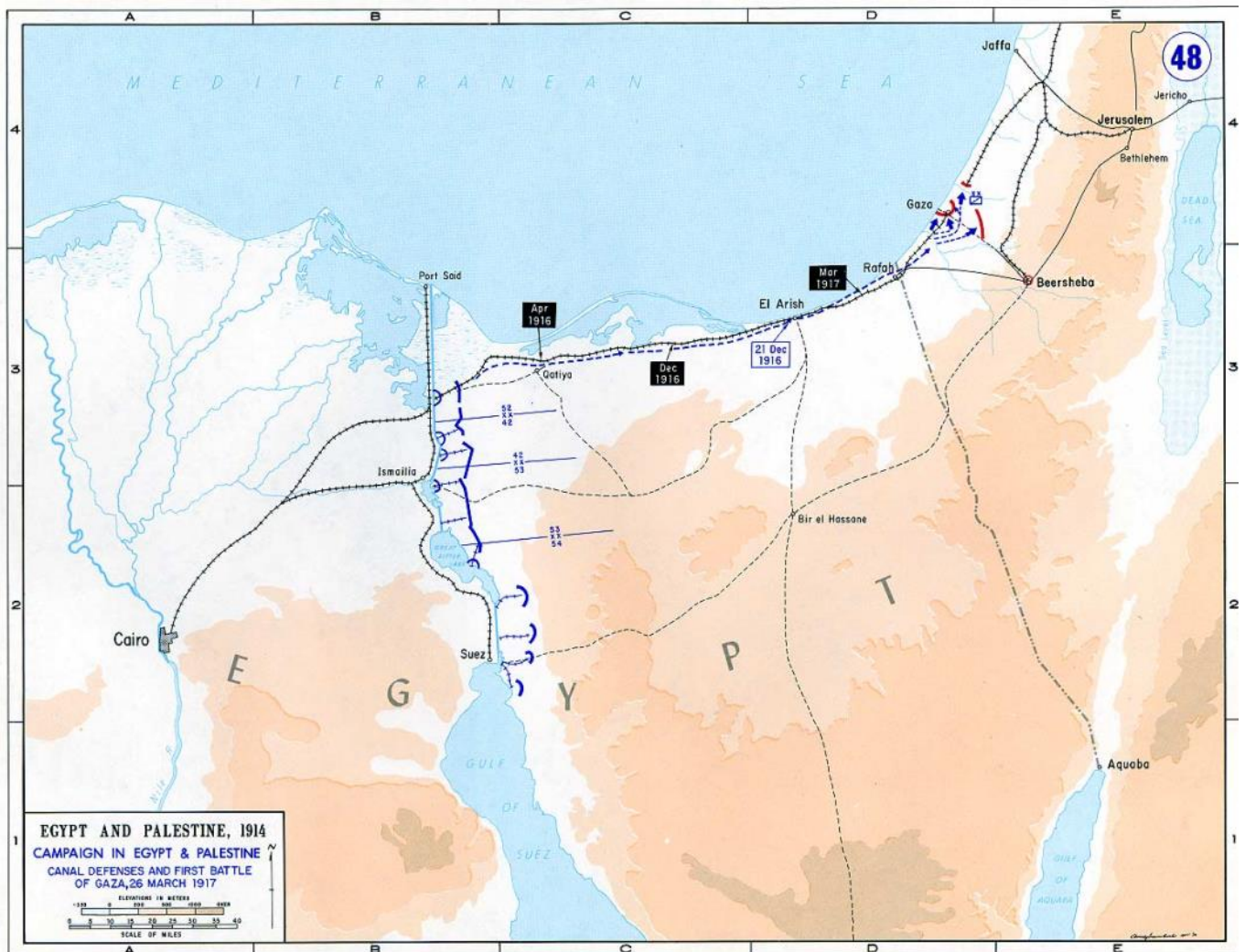
But the Allies had been frustrated, as they are today, in their attempts to identify reliable allies among the Arab entities opposed to the Ottoman.

However, the United Kingdom, the leading Western nation in the region, had a huge force multiplier in the conflict: state of the art military intelligence. The British had honed their techniques for building spy networks, intercepting communications, conducting strategic reconnaissance, and performing deception operations during three years of conflict with the German-led Central Powers.

Although initially under-resourced and disorganized, by 1917 British intelligence, with access to the newest technologies, possessed true all-source intelligence capabilities enhanced by its Western partners and by Jewish and Arab spy networks. After three years of losses and stalemates, the British had finally managed to effectively integrate most of these intelligence capabilities at a little known yet pivotal battle of the Palestine Campaign, the Battle for Beersheba in October 1917. Military intelligence and deception proved to be keys to the Allies' success during their third attempt that year to penetrate the Turk's Gaza-to-Beersheba defensive line. (See below.)

The Strategic Setting

The strategic rationale for the Palestine Campaign and the timing for the third battle of Gaza were



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determined by developments outside of the Levant. Ironically, since the Crimean War (1854–56) the United Kingdom had been a major proponent of sustaining the Ottoman Empire, which was also known as the “Sick Man of Europe.” Similarly, in 1908, many secular “Young Turks” felt deep ideological ties to the West.

However, more conservative Turkish nationalists were skeptical, pointing to a string of Ottoman territorial losses to European nations in the Balkans and the Italian invasion of modern day Libya. Moreover, Istanbul was well aware of historical Russian avarice for Ottoman territory, especially the Turkish Straits through which Russia could gain access to the Mediterranean Sea. Those factors, recent German investments in Ottoman infrastructure networks, and German battlefield successes at the opening of World War I, drove the Turkish government to an alliance with the Kaiser and declaration of war against the Allies on 31 October 1914, two days after German ships bombarded Russian territory on the Black Sea coast.

Within days of Turkey’s engagement in the war, the British began a naval campaign to force opening of the well-defended Turkish Straits to Russian and Allied war ships and commerce. The campaign was also expected to lead to the capture of Istanbul and the withdrawal of Turkey from the war. Unable early in 1915 to penetrate the defenses of the Dardanelles, the western-most of the Turkish Straits, and lacking a substantial troop component, the naval campaign failed and led to a decision to attempt, beginning in late April, to take the Gallipoli Peninsula, which formed the northern shore of the Dardanelles.

Logistical support for the Gallipoli Campaign, which ended in costly failure eight months later, came from bases in Egypt, a former Ottoman client state which Britain had occupied in 1869. Following the evacuation of British forces from Gallipoli in January 1916, British attention shifted from the Turkish Straits to the Turkish southeastern flank, which we now refer to as the Middle East.

There, the British attention was turned to defending Mesopotamia and operating in the Levant. A Levant Campaign was necessary to secure continued access to the Suez Canal and defend the Sinai Peninsula, which the British had taken two years to take back from Turkish forces that had occupied it in January 1915. The canal was the lifeline to both British possessions in the Persian Gulf and to India, “the Jewel in the Crown” of the British Empire.

In addition, the March 1917 abdication of Russia’s Tsar Nicholas II and the chaotic situation in the country increased British concerns about a Russian declaration of peace, which would free up massive numbers of Turkish troops defending against Russia in the Caucasus. Britain feared these forces would be shifted to Mesopotamia to retake Baghdad, which they had only recently recaptured. Therefore, an offensive along the Levantine coast was seen as a means of diverting Turkish forces to Palestine and relieving pressure on Baghdad.

Most importantly, the war in Western Europe was not going well and civilian morale was flagging. Although two attempts in the spring of 1917 to move up from the Sinai Peninsula to take Gaza had failed, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George told his new commanding general in the region, Sir Edmund Allenby, that “he wanted Jerusalem as a Christmas present for the British nation.”² Allenby’s first step in achieving that prize would be to dismantle the Turk’s Gaza-to-Beersheba line of defense.

Looking Back: British Intelligence Ramps Up

Before the outbreak of war, most of Britain’s intelligence capabilities and processes were modern

2. Michael Korda, *Hero: The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia* (Harper, 2010), 297.

in the terms of the day; however, knowledge of Turkey in government was almost non-existent. In 1929, Sir Winston Churchill wrote in *The Aftermath*, "I can recall no great sphere of policy about which the British government was less completely informed than the Turkish."³ The reasons for such ignorance are unclear as the British had been working with Turkish officials for years, including, for example, a British admiral who had been reorganizing the Turkish Navy right up to the outbreak of the war.⁴

Clearly, there were at least some senior officials in Britain with a deep understanding of the Turkish military. Fortunately for the British, they did actively pursue British civilians who could offer deep insights into the Arab world. Unfortunately, the government also set up a convoluted intelligence structure for the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF), which the Brits had established in March 1916 after the failure on Gallipoli. Originally formed of 14 divisions, the force served as a strategic reserve for the British, who transferred many of its divisions to the Western Front.

Brig. Gen. Sir Gilbert Clayton was the chief military spymaster in Cairo. With the formation of the EEF, he came to have three commanders: British High Commissioner Henry McMahon; Governor General of the Sudan Reginald Wingate; and the EEF's commander (initially General Sir Archibald James Murray and then led, after June 1917, by Edmund Allenby, a veteran of numerous campaigns on the Western Front). Clayton's organization actually had different titles under each of his three "masters."^a This could have diminished his effectiveness, but the experienced Clayton—who had served in the region in civilian and military capacities almost continuously since joining the British Army in 1895—used this ambiguity to his advantage^b.

The EEF's Military Intelligence Department (MID) . . . contained only a half dozen officers Two were uniquely suited to the intelligence mission.

The EEF's Military Intelligence Department (MID), which answered to the commander of the EEF in Cairo, was led by Clayton and contained only a half dozen officers, but they were highly competent. Two of them were concurrently serving as members of Parliament. Two others were uniquely suited to the intelligence mission. One, a newly commissioned officer in the army and soon to become legendary, T. E. Lawrence, was an archaeologist. He had been living and traveling in the region years before the war broke out and had learned Arabic. The other was an army veteran seasoned by campaigns in the UK's African possessions in the previous century, Richard Meinertzhagen^c.

Early in the war, Lawrence held a dreary desk job in Cairo but he embarked on what in today's parlance would be called an extremely career-enhancing rotational assignment, and gleefully accepted a transfer from Military Intelligence to the Arab Bureau, which reported to the Foreign Office. That unit would focus on political issues such as the potential for a revolt against Ottoman rule by the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. The bureau also frequently squabbled with the MID, not-

a. Commander Murray, Clayton was also maintaining a direct correspondence to the British Foreign Office. The chain of command was eventually, at least partially, clarified. By June of 1916, Britain's military focus had clearly shifted from Sudan to Egypt. This enabled Murray to successfully insist that Wingate and McMahon cut off all direct contact with Cairo military intelligence. (Sheffy, 130-31).

b. Based on 28 years of experience as a federal government manager, my observation is that anyone who has two government bosses is probably not spending 50 percent of his or her time on either leader's priorities. Similarly, Clayton's lack of a clear chain of command allowed him to, by and large, pursue his own priorities.

c. Meinertzhagen came to be seen after the war as something of a hero, in large measure the product of his own published war diaries and some uncritical biographies. The veracity of his diary entries have credibly been called into question, most notably in Brian Garfield's *Meinertzhagen Mystery: The Life and Legend of the Colossal Fraud* (Potomac Books, 2007). The reknowned intelligence scholar on the practice of deception, Barton Whaley, essentially labeled both T.E. Lawrence and Meinertzhagen frauds. See <http://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-61-no-3/pdfs/io-bookshelf.pdf> for a review of Barton Whaley, *Practise to Deceive: Learning Curves of Military Deception Planners* (Naval Institute Press, 2016).

3. Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis, Vol 0, The Aftermath (7575-1928)*, (Scribners Sons, 1929), 359.

4. Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East* (Penguin, 1991), 134.

withstanding Clayton's leadership of both.⁵

The initial point of debate between the Arab Bureau and MID concerned a central strategic question: Was deployment of a large Allied army needed to liberate Arabia and greater Syria from occupying Turkish forces? Arab Bureau members led by Captain Lawrence opposed use of such a force, arguing that it would be seen as another Western crusade and push potential Arab allies into neutrality or into the Turkish camp. To settle the question, Clayton decided to take advantage of Lawrence's skills and sent him on a fact-finding mission into Arabia. That decision would eventually have major implications for the battle of Beersheba.

Meanwhile, the British strengthened and honed their military intelligence capabilities in the region as they expanded the size of the EEF and the MID. By August 1916, MID comprised more than 30 officers. By October 1917, the number had nearly doubled. Historian of British military intelligence Anthony Clayton described the MID's duties as "air reconnaissance; air photography; tactical questioning of prisoners; with later adding agent handling and signals intelligence together with security duties." He also wrote that it had responsibility for the "briefing of visitors, publicity, and propaganda."^{d, 6}

Adaptation to a Revolution in Intelligence Technologies

One hundred years ago, military intelligence was also in the midst of a technological revolution. Just as the circumstances in the Levant in 1917 bore similarities to today's situation, it is worth remembering that the profession of intelligence during World War I was undergoing a technological revolution as profound as ours is today. Today's profession is being transformed by the advent of space, counterspace, cyber, and nanotechnologies; in 1917, intelligence was adapting to the introduction of transoceanic cables, radio intercepts, and aerial reconnaissance. All of the modern categories of intelligence, from a just-emerging measurements and signatures intelligence to imagery analysis⁷ and then to the most ancient techniques of human intelligence and open source intelligence, were present and influencing events on the battlefield.

The telephone and wireless radio greatly increased military command and control, as well as situational awareness, but introduced new signals intelligence vulnerabilities. Advances in mathematics resulted in prodigious leaps in both sides' ability to encrypt and decrypt communications. Although initially at a disadvantage, British military intelligence had noticeably outclassed its German and Turkish rivals by the summer of 1917.

How did the combined capabilities of the Arab Bureau and the MID serve the British? Let us take a bit of literary license to use today's terminology and examine each intelligence discipline, individually and when fused together.

Human Intelligence (HUMINT)

Multiple aspects of HUMINT supported the Levant Campaign. The British had very active spy networks in Egypt, using the Bedouin across the desert and Jewish settlers of Palestine along the coast. T. E. Lawrence fed invaluable HUMINT reports into this network and also benefited from it.^a For example, after the capture of Aqaba, Lawrence received two telegrams from Cairo warning him that his powerful ally, the Howeitat Chieftain Auda abu Tayi, was in treasonous discussions

5. Scott Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia* (Random House, 2013), 220.

d. Entertaining VIP visitors remains a burden on every military intelligence crisis center to this day. It is, however, a very necessary evil. Those VIPs set policy and strategy and provide resources for intelligence operations.

6. Anthony Clayton, *Forearmed: A History of the Intelligence Corps* (Brassey's, 1993), 48.

7. "Measurement and signature intelligence," *Citizendium* (website), 7 December 2013; available online at http://en.citizendium.org/wiki/Measurement_and_signature_intelligence. Acoustic and optical methods for locating hostile artillery go back to the First World War.

with the Turks.⁸ Lawrence confronted Auda with this intelligence and was able to retain his allegiance.

Of course, the Germans also were active in the spying game. Under the leadership of Kurt Prüfer, they attempted to stir up a revolt in Egypt against British authority in Cairo. This in turn led to a robust British counterintelligence (CI) presence.⁹ CI, seen to resemble police work, was treated as a subset of HUMINT and was manned by civilian policemen, who quickly adapted their methods to suit CI's requirements. The CI unit in MID uncovered and trapped numerous Turkish and German spies, most famously the Jewish doctor, Minna Weizmann^b. Moreover, 25 years before the WWII "Double-Cross System," the British were already quite adept at using double agents. They fed intentionally corrupted, dated, or partially true intelligence to the Germans via unwitting Arabs who were being paid by both sides.¹⁰

Military attachés and Turkish and German prisoners also were lucrative sources of intelligence. Allied military attachés were especially important for providing enemy order of battle (OOB) information—enemy's military command structure and personnel, unit locations, and equipment. Before the October Revolution, Russian attachés were the most valuable sources of such information. Perhaps more surprising, substantial contributions were made by attachés of smaller countries such as Romania and Bulgaria.¹¹

With respect to prisoners, there were plenty to debrief. For example, in August 2017, German troops attacked a rail line the British were building along the Mediterranean coast from the Suez Canal toward Gaza. The attack failed, with the Germans suffering 9,000 casualties, including the loss of 3,000 prisoners.¹²

The British had very active spy networks in Egypt. Using the Bedouin across the desert and Jewish settlers of Palestine along the coast, T. E. Lawrence fed invaluable HUMINT reports into this network.



Bedouin riders photographed in 1915, reportedly on the way from Jericho to Jerusalem. Photo © Berliner Verlag/Archiv via dpa picture alliance/Alamy Stock Photo

Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT)

Detailed maps have long been the backbone of military planning. Lawrence and Meinertzhagen were both adept at producing them because both had acquired geospatial skills in the course of

a. See in this issue J. R. Seeger's review essay of the recently republished collection T. E. Lawrence's work, *83 Articles* (page 51). In it he further details Lawrence's and British thinking about intelligence gathering in the region.

8. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Wordsworth Editions, 1997), 315.

9. In 1917, Counterintelligence was called contre-espionage.

b. Weizmann was a Russian-born, German-educated physician, who practiced medicine in Palestine and the Levant. She was caught on a mission to Italy, briefly imprisoned, and generously returned to Russia. She was the youngest sister of Chaim Weizmann—then a prominent Zionist in touch with senior British leaders about the future of Palestine. He would become Israel's first president in 1948. Minna's lenient treatment has led to speculation she was herself a double agent.

10. Yigal Sheffy, *British Military Intelligence in the Palestine Campaign: 1917-1918* (Routledge, 2008), 598.

11. In 1914, the Romanian Army was 50% larger than its American counterpart; see "The Romanian Army and the First World War," *Spartacus Educational*, August 2008; available online at <http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWromaniaA.htm>.

12. Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Turkish Front, 1914-1918* (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1964), 190.

years of living in the region. Meinertzhagen was said to be an especially good artist, and Lawrence would have been familiar with the Middle East from his archaeological research and writing. Just as today, mapmakers drew from many sources of information, including such unclassified sources as newspapers, oil company surveys, and academic treatises. Firsthand accounts from cavalry units, other scouts, debriefings of enemy prisoners, and captured maps also were especially valuable. Yet, the most lucrative geospatial intelligence eventually came from the air.

In addition to strafing and bombing, pilots of the nascent Royal Flying Corps (RFC) had a considerable reporting mandate. Intelligence was based on air crew observations and the interpretation of photography taken from their aircraft. Post-strike intelligence reporting contained descriptions of “routes flown to and from the objective, as well as the location, intensity, and effectiveness of any enemy countermeasures encountered.” Information concerning casualties, damage assessments, and the tonnage of bombs dropped was sent through channels specifically intended for such reports.^{a, 13}

In the Middle East, aerial reconnaissance benefited from multiple factors not present on the Western Front. The weather was extremely dry and cloud free and there were fewer natural and man-made barriers to effective observation. Germany maintained a qualitative aerial superiority from 1914 to 1917, but the RFC’s quantitative advantage enabled effective aerial reconnaissance. Because this method of intelligence collection was in its infancy, German and Turkish military leaders probably underestimated its efficacy.

When Allenby assumed command of the EEF in June, he demonstrated an insatiable thirst for intelligence. The arrival of five additional aircraft squadrons, which included reconnaissance aircraft and Bristol fighter planes, would help quench that thirst. Moreover, with their arrival in mid-1917, British combat air power became superior to its German rivals.

At about the same time, major advances were made in British geospatial capabilities. New cameras improved imagery resolution, and the British were able to continuously image linear features of



A Royal Flying Corps aircraft outfitted with a camera. Illustrative of imaging capabilities during the period is the image below, taken of a British encampment in 1918. Photo © INTERFOTO/Alamy Stock Photo



a. For a history of aerial reconnaissance on the Western Front, see Terrence J. Finnegan, *Shooting the Front: Allied Aerial Reconnaissance and Photographic Interpretation on the Western Front—World War I* (National Defense Intelligence College Press, 2006)

13. George K. Williams, *Biplanes and Bombsights: British Bombing in World War I* (Air University Press, 1999), 100.

interest such as railroads and defensive fortifications.¹⁴ The experience level of photo interpreters also improved markedly.

Nonetheless, critical gaps in aerial coverage remained, and all commanders wanted the best tactical reconnaissance possible just before any operation. Detailed knowledge of Ottoman defenses still required major ground reconnaissance efforts. Army cavalry scouts frequently brought back handheld photos of enemy strong points.

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Cryptology

The Germans were initially more technically proficient in SIGINT and clearly had communication security (COMSEC) superior to that of the British in the Middle East, but that changed as the war progressed. In 1915, a British radio intercept station was established near the Great Pyramid outside of Cairo. British spy ships started collecting SIGINT while patrolling the Levantine coast and reconnaissance aircraft plucked it from the sky. A prized British possession was a high-tech device called a Wireless Compass. Modified for military use by the famed scientist Guglielmo Marconi, the compass enabled intelligence officers to locate the source of enemy radio transmissions. It was particularly useful in identifying Ottoman military headquarters.¹⁵

SIGINT was a star at the operational level, providing the British what proved to be extremely accurate information on the arrival of Turkish reinforcements into the theater. As Anthony Clayton noted in his history, "Intercepts of signals proved especially useful in the third battle of Gaza, when Allenby deduced the German plan for strengthening the coastal flank would entail weakening the centre."¹⁶

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SIGINT should have given
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security concerns and procedural and logistical constraints, British frontline commanders rarely received decrypted and translated intercepts in time to influence an ongoing battle. Meaningful tactical SIGINT became even rarer as the Turks relied on "runners" and landline communications, vice radio, to transmit orders.

Perhaps surprisingly, this campaign did contain an early version of communications intelligence (COMINT). Both sides tapped into newly erected telephone lines and listened to unsecured conversations. The encryption used to counter this threat mainly consisted of time-honored letter substitution codes, but the addition of a second layer of mathematical encryption guaranteed much higher security.¹⁷ The resulting improvement in COMSEC led to a requirement for increasingly sophisticated code breakers.^b

Deception Operations

Given Prime Minister George's insistence that Jerusalem be taken by Christmas, Allenby had less than six months to overcome two failed efforts by his predecessor to breach the Gaza-Beersheba

14. Sheffy, *British Military Intelligence*, 95, 275–82.

15. *Ibid.*, 283.

16. Clayton, *Forearmed*, 48.

17. Adrienne Wilmoth Lerner, "World War I," *Encyclopedia of Espionage, Intelligence, and Security* (nd); available online at <http://www.faqs.org/espionage/Vo-Z/World-War-I.html#ixzz4rYD9nKy5>.

b. Originally the most heavily encrypted material had to be shipped to London in a process that resembles the way today's National Media Exploitation Center in Washington, DC, handles foreign language OSINT. The 2–4 weeks required to process intercepts in London was deemed inadequate, so code breakers were forward deployed to Cairo. As the Battle for Beersheba approached, code breakers were decrypting an average of 16 German or Turkish telegrams each day. (Sheffy, 227.)

line and open the way to Jerusalem. The third major British offensive against these fortifications could not be totally hidden, but could its specific objectives be disguised? Could the German-led Turkish forces defending the line be made to believe an attack was intended at one place and not the other, true, target?

The answer was that it was worth trying, and thus entered into the annals of military history one of the greatest exemplars of a deception operation ever conducted. Known as the “Haversack Ruse,” the operation involved—just before the October 1917 offensive was to begin—the intentional loss in enemy territory by a British staff officer of an apparent dispatch case containing the British attack plan. (See box at right.) Through this ruse, Allenby hoped to fool the commanders facing him regarding both the timing and direction of the attack, with the goal of convincing the enemy that the British would conduct a third direct assault on Gaza while the actual focal point of the attack would be Beersheba, 20 miles to the east.

At the operational level of warfare, Allenby also wanted the Turks to worry that a more northerly attack, emanating from Cyprus against Syria, was imminent. Once again, his intelligence staff devised a complex deception strategy. The EEF mustered enough movement of men,

The Haversack Ruse: Who Deceived Whom?



MID intelligence officer Richard Meinertzhagen laid claim to both the idea and its execution—a claim that has been credibly disputed. As Meinertzhagen has told the story, pretending to be on a courier mission, he intentionally rode close to the frontlines near Gaza and been taken under fire by an enemy cavalry patrol. He slumped forward in his saddle, feigning injury, and let the haversack (previously coated in blood) drop to the ground, reckoning it would be recovered by the cavalymen. Among common items that any soldier might possess, the haversack contained official papers and rough notes on a cipher which would enable the enemy to decode any encrypted messages Britain might send later. Once the haversack was successfully “lost”, British headquarters immediately began broadcasting encrypted messages in that code, that ordered urgent efforts to recover it. The sack and its contents soon were in the possession of the German commander of the Turkish force. The papers indicated that the British would yet again directly attack Gaza while moving a force to Beersheba to act as a feint. The papers also also indicated that a French force would attempt a simultaneous amphibious landing well north of Gaza on the Syrian coast.

Most historians accept that the Turks and Germans both fell for the deception, thus enabling the Australian and New Zealand (ANZAC) light horse brigade to capture the strategic water wells at Beersheba and begin to roll up the Gaza-Beersheba line from the east and move on to Jerusalem in December. As noted above, Brian Garfield put forth a compelling argument in his book, *The Meinertzhagen Mystery*, that although the deception took place, almost every claim Meinertzhagen made for himself was false. According to Garfield, Meinertzhagen was neither the author of the plan nor the British rider who dropped the haversack. Moreover, the enemy clearly dismissed several elements of a larger allied deception plan. Perhaps some elements of this plan helped the British at Beersheba, but the biggest deception *may* have been Meinertzhagen’s elaborate postwar scheme to use the incident to enhance his reputation.¹⁸

Image © LookandLearn.com

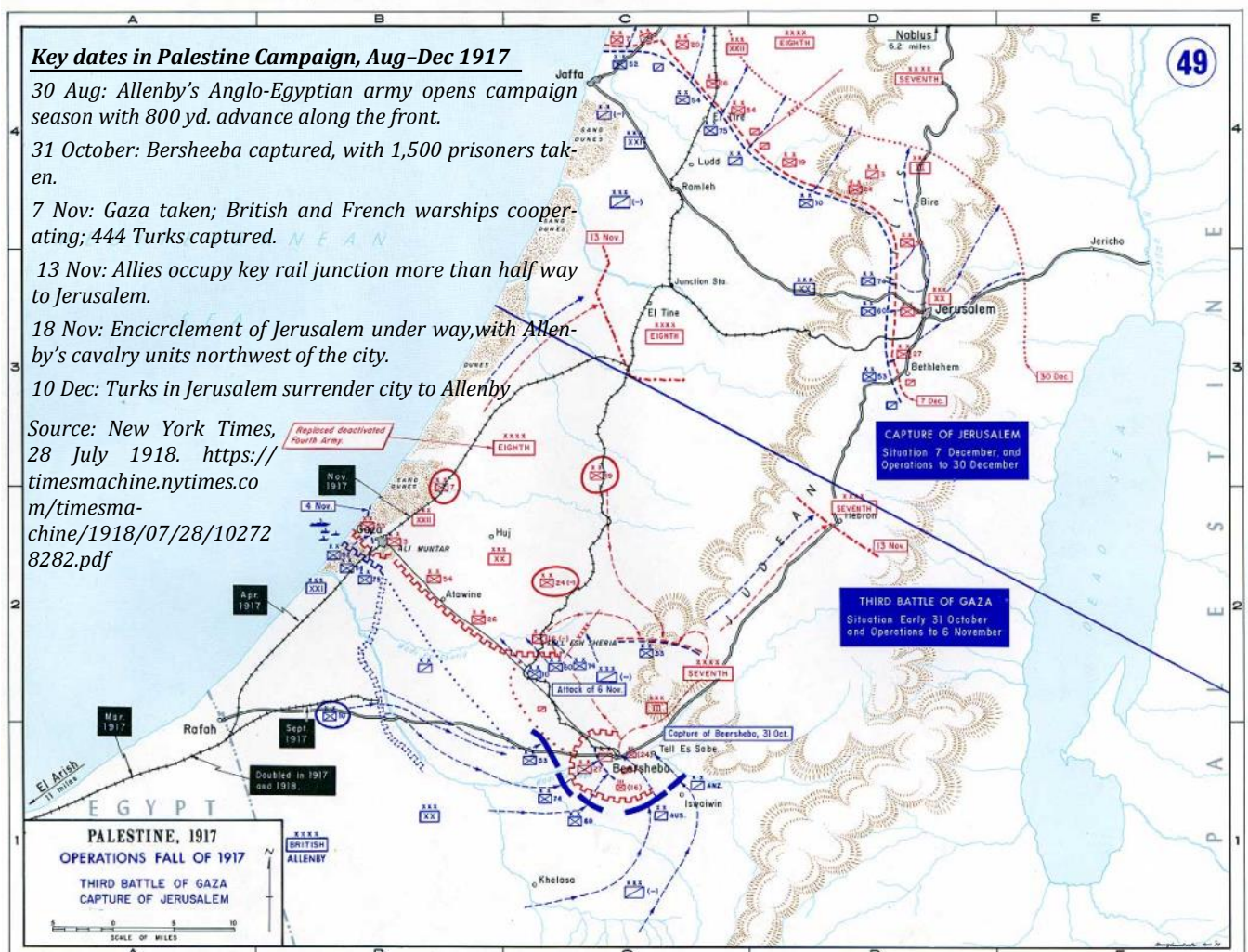
18. Brian Garfield, *The Meinertzhagen Mystery: The Life and Legend of the Colossal Fraud* (Potomac Books, 2007), 22–37.

horses, and materials on the island to make a looming operation seem plausible. There was increased signal traffic, and he even simulated troop movements by putting Egyptian workers on troop ships. The main goal was to pin down enemy troops along the Syrian coast, thus preventing them from reinforcing the Gaza to Beersheba frontline. Although the Germans and Turks were not fooled by all elements of the plans, their decision not to militarily reinforce Beersheba indicates the deception may have tilted the odds in this linchpin battle in favor of the British.

All-Source Analysis

All-source analysis is simply making use of all sources available to an intelligence analyst. Therefore, it has been a staple of intelligence since the time of the ancient Assyrians, Chinese, and Egyptians. The key variables have been the analyst's intellectual capabilities, as well as the relevance, timeliness, and reliability of available sources. During the Levant Campaign, the Allies developed excellent all-source analysis, but it was a bifurcated effort, divided between the Arab Bureau and the MID.

The Arab Bureau. The Arab Bureau focused on political and economic intelligence. Its flagship product was the *Arab Bulletin*, which was distributed to fewer than 40 people. Basically, it was a regional version of today's *Presidential Daily Brief*. Many of the Arab Bureau's insights are still worth consideration today, among them, for example, that any Western military troops in the Hijaz would eventually be seen as "crusaders" and become the enemy. Moreover, Lawrence judged and wrote that Turkish railroad locomotives were critical nodes for targeting. Railroad tracks could



Map courtesy of the United States Military Academy, Department of History

easily be replaced; locomotives could not.

Yet, the bureau's analysis was not always correct. Lawrence told Allenby that a successful attack on Beersheba would have to take place by mid-September before his Bedouin fighters had to move their flocks to better pastures in the east. Although this timeline was not met (the battle actually took place at the end of October—see timeline in box below), Allenby managed to take Beersheba fairly easily.^a Even the world's best intelligence analysts make some bad calls.



Access to water was a “center of gravity” in defining the region’s most important military objectives. Allied mounted troops required huge amounts of water for themselves and for their horses and camels. Shown here is a single squadron of the Australian Light Horse Brigade in Gaza. Photo © Prisma by Dukas Presseagentur GmbH/Alamy Stock Photo

MID Analysis. Rather than politics and economics, the parallel all-source effort of the EEF's MID focused on order of battle analysis and targeting. A number of bad analytic judgements were made during the first and second battles for Gaza, when MID assessments were largely dependent on debriefings of ignorant or intentionally deceptive prisoners of war. EEF tradecraft improved markedly as SIGINT and GEOINT became increasingly available to enable true all-source analysis. By the third battle, the enemy force deployed on the Gaza to Beersheba front was accurately estimated to consist of one cavalry and six infantry divisions, totaling 46,000 rifles, 2,800 sabers, 250 machine guns and 200 guns.¹⁹

EEF officers also developed skills and instincts possessed by the best modern military infrastructure analysts. This included Clausewitzian^b “center of gravity” analysis. They realized the first two attacks on Gaza had been failures in part because of the lack of sufficient water. An 88,000-man desert operation required massive amounts of water, especially for the Desert Mounted Corps, which contained both light horses and camels. The legendary wells at Beersheba could provide just such sustenance for the army's march north to Jerusalem. Beersheba also had other militarily significant infrastructure attractions, such as an airfield, railroad, and paved roads.

In addition to identifying critical infrastructure to protect or obtain, the EEF also targeted command posts, telegraph lines, bridges, ports such as Aqaba, and railroads. Captain Lawrence's Bedouin became quite adept at disrupting the latter.

Allied Intelligence Collaboration

a. Lawrence himself was the main factor in holding together the Arab insurgents.

19. Carver, *The Turkish Front*, 207.

b. Lawrence was quite familiar with Clausewitz's famous opus of military theory, *On War*, which was published in 1832. Although not intending to become a professional soldier, Lawrence notes in Book II of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* that he had studied military theorists such as Clausewitz, Jomini, Mahan, and Foch while at Oxford.

During the campaign, the Allies developed what we might today call intelligence sharing among the “Three Eyes” partners. The British served as the clear senior partners, working closely with the French and incorporating an infantile US effort into the arrangement. Like today, the Allies also had secondary and tertiary levels of foreign intelligence exchanges. Useful tidbits were traded, but the quality and sensitivity of the data varied based on the level of trust. For example, the British periodically exchanged information with the Russians on Turkish military movements—at least they did so until the Russian Revolution in 1917. As we will see, the United Kingdom also maintained similar exchanges during the Gaza Campaign, including an intelligence relationship with several local irregular forces. Although these sources would prove immensely valuable on several occasions, their reliability and responsiveness were always in question.

What, then, did each major nation or ethnic group bring to the military intelligence table?

“Playing the Long Game”—France

Clearly it was in France’s best interest to divert German attention away from Western Europe and to knock the kaiser’s weakest ally out of the war. France invested a small military presence of approximately 200 men in Cairo. Its leader, Col. Edouard Bremond, was not an intelligence officer, but he possessed years of experience dealing with Arabs, having had previous assignments in Morocco and Algeria. He has been described as a fluent Arabist, but his version of Maghreb Arabic may have been incomprehensible to the average Egyptian or Palestinian. Overall, French intelligence contributions to the British war effort were minor. In sharp contrast, it had excellent access to British intelligence and campaign plans.

The French were keenly interested in the work of T. E. Lawrence. Bremond’s instructions from Paris appeared to require him to supervise the Arab revolt while simultaneously making sure that it was not too successful.

Modern military intelligence exchanges are almost never equitable affairs. Junior partners tend mainly to be on the receiving end. . . .

Bremond and his political counterpart in Cairo, Marc Picot, were pleased that Lawrence’s Arab forces were harassing and tying up the Turks, but they feared too much success in the Hijaz would encourage the Arabs to turn their liberating gaze northward to Lebanon and Syria.

By early 1916, Bremond’s correspondence with Paris was describing Lawrence as a threat to France’s own colonial Middle East ambitions, which were codified in a secret British promise (Sykes-Picot Agreement) granting the French dominion over most of the Levant. The French generally supported British military operations in Palestine, as they did during the third Gaza Campaign, but they always remained bore-sighted on their ultimate territorial objectives further north.²⁰

“Mainly Just Watching” —The United States

Modern military intelligence exchanges are almost never equitable affairs. Junior partners tend mainly to be on the receiving end, but senior partners hope the junior member can provide useful intelligence “nuggets” that may contain niche information or cultural insights to help close intelligence gaps. To the British, US intelligence must have seemed a particularly weak junior partner during the 1917 Levant Campaign.

In fact, to call the United States a “bit player” in Middle East military intelligence would be an exaggeration. Unlike today, the United States had no standing national defense intelligence organizations. In *For the President’s Eyes Only*, British intelligence historian Christopher Andrew makes a compelling case that no nation was less ready than the United States for World War I.²¹

The closest thing to a US intelligence footprint in the Middle East in this period of 1917 was a lone,

20. Korda, *Hero*, 67.

newly appointed, State Department officer in Palestine. His name was William Yale. He not only attended Yale University, he was a direct descendant of the university's founder. William Yale had come to the State Department's attention because of his extensive travels in Palestine, where he had been able to pinpoint the German military installations around Jerusalem. Yet, by his own assessment, Yale was less than ideally suited for the job, saying "I lacked a historic knowledge of the problem I was studying. I had no philosophy of history, no method of interpretation, and very little understanding of the fundamental nature and function of the [regional] economic and social system."²² In short, he was a less than ideal intelligence officer.

When Yale traveled to Alexandria, Egypt, to meet General Allenby, he had so little military experience that he actually practiced saluting while standing outside Allenby's door. At first Allenby ignored Yale, but then turned to him and yelled, "What are you going to do at my Headquarters!" Yale stammered that his job was to send reports back to Washington. Allenby, clearly not pleased, told Yale that he did not care if Washington sent a butcher to his HQ, but he would have to at least act like a military officer. That was a rough way for any intelligence officer to meet the commanding general.²³

Like Lawrence, Yale spoke Arabic fluently; had a vast network of Arab, Turkish, and Jewish associates; and frequently traveled in Arab garb through the Levant. Unlike Lawrence's academic missions to the region, Yale's pre-war Middle East was on the behalf of the commercial interests of the Standard Oil Company of New York (SOCONY).^a Also unlike Lawrence, Yale was slow to master the tradecraft of the intelligence game. The Jewish spy Aaron Aaronsohn once gave Yale a letter detailing British and Zionist negotiations concerning the future of Palestine. Yale, seeming not to recognize its importance, took more than three months to have it translated from Hebrew to English.²⁴

With the world's attention fixed on the trenches of Western Europe, military operations in the Levant, with much justification, had been described as a sideshow.

Yale had supervised the construction of the highway from Jerusalem to Beersheba before the war and should have possessed considerable local expertise. However, it is not clear that British planning benefited in any way from this knowledge. In sharp contrast, the Americans, like the French, had excellent access to Britain's considerable intelligence trove. Yale was one of only 33 people (30 high British officials and three allies) to get access to the British *Arab Bulletin*.

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Yale promised not to quote the bulletin in his reports back to Washington, but he admitted in his memoir that he lied.²⁵ It is less clear how much information about Middle East oil deposits he later shared with his employer, SOCONY. Like the French, Yale and SOCONY seemed more interested in what would happen to oil concessions after the war than in supporting the British, Jewish, and Arab efforts against the Turks.

"A Sideshow to a Sideshow"—The Arabs

With the world's attention fixed on the trenches of Western Europe, military operations in the Levant, with much justification, had been described as a sideshow. Therefore, given the far greater scale of Allenby's military operations along the Mediterranean coast, the inland Arab revolt against the Turks was, in T. E. Lawrence's own words, "a sideshow to a sideshow." The undisci-

21. Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only* (HarperCollins, 1995), 30.

22. Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia*, 357; see also Janice Terry, *William Yale* (Rimal Publications, 2015).

23. *Ibid.*, 354.

a. SOCONY was a predecessor of today's EXXON-Mobil Corporation. Somewhat disturbingly, SOCONY kept Yale on half pay throughout the war, and he returned to SOCONY full-time after the war. In her biography of Yale, Janice Terry notes that he dutifully had his SOCONY wartime pay sent directly to his mother. (Terry, 47.)

24. *Ibid.*, 354–71.

25. *Ibid.*, 388.

plined Bedouin fighters did play an important role in the Gaza Campaign, but, one of the great dangers of relying on Arab allies was their fickleness.^b Although he was not the most objective observer, Aaron Aaronsohn might have been close to the truth when he observed that he was “still waiting for the first Arab who could not be bribed by the Turks.”

T. E. Lawrence enabled the British to tap into Arab tribal networks, with all their strengths and weaknesses. Numerous members of the Arab camp had intimate knowledge of the Turks. Hussein bin Ali, the Sharif Emir of Mecca,^c himself lived in Constantinople for 18 years as a hostage of the Turks. Moreover, his sons, including the revolt’s eventual Arab leader, Feisal, had been educated in Constantinople, thus giving them insight into the Turkish mentality.²⁶ Indeed, as Lawrence noted in his memoir, Feisal embodied the traits of Arab leaders with whom Lawrence worked:

*We on the Arab front were very intimate with the enemy. Our Arab officers had been Turkish officers, and knew every leader on the other side personally. They had suffered the same training, thought the same, and had the same point of view. By practicing modes of approach on the Arabs we could explore the Turks, understand them, and almost get inside their minds.*²⁷

The Bedouin’s most famous raid took place across a seemingly unsurvivable desert, when they attacked the lightly defended rear approaches to Aqaba with horse- and camel-bound Arab warriors. Aqaba highlights on identifying the enegavity because it was cant non-Mediterranean **Germany’s wartime alliance with the Ottoman Empire was principally based on a desire to draw Russian resources away from Germany’s eastern front.** Lawrence’s focus my’s centers of the only significant port within 200 miles of Jerusalem. Its capture provided logistical benefits for the British, but it also gave the Arabs a secure base from which to threaten the critical Hijaz railroad station at Maan and support the Third Gaza Campaign.

In addition to ports, Lawrence also targeted telegraph lines and life-giving desert water wells. The well at Mudowwara was the major source of drinking water between Maan and Medina. Although the well was too strongly defended to be threatened by a small Arab and British raiding party, Lawrence almost instinctively sought out and destroyed an even more lucrative target—he had blown up a railroad bridge near Mudowwara just as a Turkish military train with two locomotives was crossing. The Bedouin were rewarded with booty. Lawrence’s prize was knowing the Turk’s ability to move forces south from Damascus had been severely diminished.

Railways soon became Lawrence’s favorite targets. During the American Civil War, cavalry commanders such as Jeb Stuart repeatedly wrecked Union rail lines by tearing up the tracks. In contrast, Lawrence’s targeting was much more surgical. Having determined that a center of gravity was the locomotive,

*He avoided completely severing the line so as to draw Turkish concentration away from the main battlefronts. As a rule, Lawrence was so accurate at dynamiting train locomotives that the seats were sold accordingly— the safer seats in the back of the trains were said to have sold for five times more than the more risky ones in the front, near the engine.*²⁸

He also determined that the railroad hub at Derra was a critical node in defending Gaza. Derra itself was too highly fortified, so the high railroad bridge across the Yarmuk Gorge became his target. Lawrence handpicked a small group of Arabs and Westerners for this dangerous mission behind

b. Some historians argue that the British training of Arab irregular forces established the framework for Middle East crises over the past 100 years.

c. “Sharif” denotes a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed.

26. Carver, *The Turkish Front*, 192–93.

27. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 377.

28. Louise Dean, “Rail that Survived Demolition by ‘Lawrence of Arabia’: An Analysis,” *The Journal of Metallurgy* (July 2003); available online at, <http://www.tms.org/pubs/journals/jom/0307/dean-0307.html>, 2003.

enemy lines. He failed, but the bridge was later destroyed by retreating Turkish troops.

General Allenby said that after acquainting Lawrence with his strategic plan, he gave him and the Arab forces a “free hand.” Allenby later said: “I never had anything but praise for his work which, indeed, was invaluable throughout the campaign.”²⁹

The Opposition

“Herr Prufer’s Networks”—Germany

Germany’s wartime alliance with the Ottoman Empire was principally based on a desire to draw Russian resources away from Germany’s eastern front. The relationship had been built over the course of decades as German engineers contributed to the development of railroads in south-eastern Europe, Turkey, and the Middle East. Of course, the Germans also would benefit from any difficulties the British experienced in their holdings in India, Mesopotamia, greater Syria, and Egypt.

The German Intelligence Bureau for the East (Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient) was created in the runup to the war with the aim of creating disruptions in the British Empire. Like their British opponents, the Germans understood the value academic experts brought to the intelligence game. Kurt Prufer, another archaeologist, grew up during Germany’s “Golden Age of Egyptology.”³⁰

Berlin considered Prufer to be a master spy, but what did he actually accomplish? A gifted Arabic linguist, his many contacts throughout the former Ottoman Empire allowed him to correctly assess the flaws in German wartime propaganda. Previously, the Germans had focused on British atrocities against Muslims in India and the righteousness of the German cause.

Prufer realized the need to highlight issues of more local concern and to more subtly inject German messaging. He created seven Turkish-language newspapers and set up propaganda rooms in major cities in which the locals could view this material. His goal was to incite jihad (holy war) against the British. The Germans naively conducted negotiations with Britain’s ally, the Sharif of Mecca, encouraging him to attack the British. Prufer the Sharif was Damascus and clandestine sessions with Arab officers in the Turkish Army who might be sympathetic to the Arab Revolt.

Germany’s wartime alliance with the Ottoman Empire was principally based on a desire to draw Russian resources away from Germany’s eastern front.

ing him to attack the evidently did not realize using their meetings in Constantinople to cover

Prufer’s track record as a spy master was not good. His network of Egyptian spies was fairly easily rolled up during the Turks’ first failed attempt to capture the Suez Canal. He then resorted to a Jewish spy network with dismal results. Prufer seemed blind to the possibility the Jews might also be working against him. His main Circassian spy in Damascus had incorrectly dismissed the possibility of an uprising in Palestine based on a belief in the stereotypical Jewish coward.³¹

Finally, Prufer befriended and funded an Egyptian ex-Khedive (the Viceroy of Egypt during Turkish rule), Abbas Hilmi. Prufer believed Hilmi would be a powerful asset once Germany won the war, but German intelligence had grossly overestimated the Khedive’s influence in Egypt, which was almost zero. Based on the available evidence, it appears absurd that the commander of German forces in Palestine told Berlin, “Kurt Prufer is indispensable as the leader of the intelligence service.” If true, Prufer’s intelligence triumphs have yet to be uncovered.³²

29. “General Allenby—Lawrence of Arabia,” PBS documentary and web feature (nd); available online at <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/players/allenby.html>.

30. Donald M. McKale, *Curt Prufer: German Diplomat from the Kaiser to Hitler* (Kent State University Press, 1987), 44–46.

31. *Ibid.*, 46.

32. Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia*, 129.

German Technical Intelligence

At least initially, the Germans performed much better on technical intelligence issues. Before 1917, Germany had undisputed superiority in Levant aviation firepower and reconnaissance. Germans, and therefore the Turks, detected and readied themselves for both the first and second attacks on Gaza.³³

Theoretically, before and during the Battle for Beersheba, German intelligence could have conducted both aerial reconnaissance and direct aerial bombardments of the British—a German combat air squadron was based at Beersheba. Had it been deployed to follow up on the Haversack Ruse, it might have spoiled the British deception plan, which was totally reliant on secrecy. In practice, the squadron did little of either. Pruffer correctly assessed that by the fall of 1917 the British had finally achieved air superiority, if not dominance. The RFC's recently arrived advanced fighter planes made German reconnaissance missions almost suicidal.

German Counterintelligence

Concerning counterintelligence, the postwar Germans were painfully aware English literature widely reported they had been deceived by the Haversack Ruse. However, General Kressenstein, commander of German forces in Palestine, claimed his intelligence officers had seen through the ruse. It is true Kressenstein did not shift his reserves towards Gaza, but he did not reinforce the defenses of Beersheba. Therefore, despite Kressenstein's adamant claims of not being fooled by the ruse, perhaps the satchel created just enough doubt in his mind to keep the defenses at Beersheba relatively weak.

The Eyes and Ears of the Sick Man's Son—The Turks

The biggest gap in our understanding of military intelligence capabilities during the Palestine Campaign concerns Turkish intelligence. Very little has been written in English on this subject. Few of the relevant Turkish documents have ever been translated into English. The topic is covered in a book entitled *Yildirim*, published in 1920. Written by a former member of the Turkish General Staff, it covers the involvement of the Turkish Yildirim (Thunderbolt) Army Group in their Levant Campaign, which was also called Yildirim. The unit's headquarters was in Aleppo. The book proved to be a useful source for Yigal Sheffy's history of British intelligence in the Palestine Campaign.^a

The scant existing evidence does indicate Turkish military intelligence was fooled by British deception at Beersheba. The Turks were almost totally dependent on German technical intelligence which, as discussed, had largely dried up. A surviving Turkish military intelligence order proves that less than 48 hours before the battle, the Turks still estimated that six British divisions were facing them at Gaza and that Beersheba was only threatened by one infantry division and one mounted division.

*At present I am of the opinion that the enemy will make Gaza his main objective since the topography of the ground renders this part of our front the weakest part of our line.*³⁴

Based on this judgment, Turkish fortification activity in the Beersheba area actually decreased. Some forces were moved closer to Gaza and others were transferred to the reserves in the rear.

In contrast to its analytical capabilities, deception and counterintelligence (CI) were Turkish

33. Richard J. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 7560–1924* (Routledge, 1995), 175–86.

a. *Yildirim* has been roughly translated into English but never published. In the preface, the author, Husayn Husnu Emir, said he was inspired to write the book because he previously could only learn about Turkish military history by reading the works of foreigners. Perhaps not too surprising in 1920, but today that remains the case.

34. Australian Light Horse Studies Centre, http://alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog/1825605/colonel-h252sn252-yildirim-preface/ and http://alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog/1825345/turkish-understanding-of-projected-allied-attacks-august-1917.

strengths and an Ottoman tradition. They were particularly good at camouflaging military locations such as artillery batteries, although that edge degraded as the allies increasingly relied on aerial imagery over the visual observations of pilots. By 1915, the Ottomans had already put a clamp on outgoing communications. The orders to Ottoman commanders explicitly stated:

*Henceforth there is a total ban on relaying news from Palestine Egypt, both by land and by sea. Without your consent, no one is to set out for the coast, and no one is to cross the border or put to sea.*³⁵

The Turks caught and often executed Western agents inserted from the sea. This put a definite chill on British recruiting efforts. Moreover, clandestine Turkish reconnaissance forces on Cyprus were able to determine that the seaborne invasion force rumored to be supporting the third battle of Gaza was fictitious.

Finally, the Turks had a knack for intercepting the courier pigeons of Jewish agents, which had devastating consequences for the Semitic spy ring. However, their brutal handling of the ring members increased the Zionist sympathies of the heretofore largely apathetic Jewish community.

The Jews: Were They Spies? Yes—but for Whom?

The Jewish contribution to military intelligence was mainly old fashioned espionage—but for whom did they spy? The aforementioned Dr. Minna Weizmann, like many other emigre Jews, saw the Turkish-German alliance as a way to strike back against their former Czarist persecutors. As a female physician in the Middle East, she was a rarity for the time and place. Her notoriety and her family connections in London would have given her access to wounded British soldiers and the upper levels of Cairo society. What she accomplished is hard to discern, and as noted earlier, there is cause to believe she was actually spying for the British and working as a double agent against Pruffer.

On the British side, Aaron Aaronsohn and his sister Sarah ran a spy network based near Athlit (100 miles north of Gaza).³⁶ Among other accomplishments, they were reportedly successful in surreptitiously contacting Jewish documentors and convincing them to defect from the Turkish Army. Their organization was called NILI (“Nitzach Israel lo Ishakari,” meaning “The Eternity of Israel shall not lie”).³⁷ A clever deception by this Jewish spy network paid lasting benefits. During the second battle of Gaza, the Turkish Pasha decided to evacuate all civilians from the nearby coastal town of Jaffa. Being politically astute, Aaronsohn was mindful of the recent world press condemnation of Turkish atrocities against the Armenians.

Although no atrocities actually occurred at Jaffa, Aaronsohn used the evacuation to begin a media campaign concerning the “Pogrom of Jaffa.” Aaronsohn tricked the Western press into printing stories that the Syrian governor wanted to totally wipe the Jews out of Palestine. Although these accusations were quickly debunked by commissioners from neutral nations such as Sweden, the incident’s international condemnation continued to complicate Turkish leaders’ calculations.³⁸

These local Jewish agents were highly effective until their British overlords overplayed their hand by asking them to disseminate British propaganda. The NILI network soon paid a ghastly

35. Sheffy, 48

36. Clayton, *Forearmed*, 48.

37. See Carly Speranza’s review of James Srodes, *Spies in Palestine: Love, Betrayal, and the Heroic Life of Sarah Aaronsohn* in *Studies in Intelligence* 61, no. 2 (June 2017).

38. Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia*, 299.

price. Two key members were ambushed by Bedouins near El Arish in 1917. In September of that year, a carrier pigeon used by NILI was captured by the Turks. Two weeks later, a member of NILI was arrested and, after torture, disclosed some of the group's secrets. In early October, the Turks arrested Sarah Aaronsohn. After being tortured for three days, she committed suicide, apparently without betraying her colleagues. Two more members of the group were captured by the Turks and executed in December 1917. Aaronsohn survived the war, but died in 1919 in a plane crash over the English Channel while in route to the Paris Peace Talks.³⁹

Major Military Intelligence Lessons Observed

British military intelligence was initially heavily flawed, but it improved over time and eventually gave the Allies a decisive edge.

With regard to human intelligence, military attachés, deserter debriefings, ground reconnaissance, and counterintelligence all appeared to be much more profitable than traditional spying. Bedouins occasionally produced excellent intelligence, but they were too easily bought and turned. Some Jewish spies were incredibly brave but did not seem to know much. True, Aaron Aaronsohn provided a wealth of knowledge on Palestinian leaders, water resources, and road networks, but most of that knowledge was acquired before he was employed by the British. Germany had even less success than the Allies at clandestine operations. Both sides in this confrontation made the mistake of thinking the quantity of their spies was more important than the quality and tradecraft



Victory at Beersheba and then Gaza opened the way to Jerusalem, which the Brits captured before Christmas 1917, as ordered by Prime Minister George. Here Allenby's troops prepare to march in victory through the Jaffa Gate. Photo © Lebrecht Music and Arts Photo Library/Alamy Stock Photo

39. Mavi Boncuk, "Jewish Spies in Ottoman Palestine," blog entry (2 July 2004); available online at <http://maviboncuk.blogspot.com/2004/07/jewish-spies-in-ottoman-palestine.html>.

of their agents.

Technical intelligence collection, both geospatial and SIGINT, had far more impact on the battlefield. The intelligence pivot point of the campaign appears to have been the British acquisition of air superiority over the Germans in the summer of 1917. In the months before Beersheba, the Allies extended the scope and quality of their air reconnaissance, while effectively denying Turko-German surveillance of Allied operations. Yet, any commander's view can become muddled, or even grossly distorted, by inaccurate assessments. This vulnerability is magnified when any one intelligence discipline is overly relied upon. For example, crack British cryptographers decoded a Turkish order to withdraw 10,000 troops from Medina. Unfortunately, they were not able to decrypt the garrison's subsequent message, in which they refused to leave.⁴⁰

Regarding all-source analysis, the Arab Bureau's reporting was sometimes brilliant and prescient. Yet, the bureau had a fundamental flaw. It had no qualms about tailoring its reporting to support its own, as opposed to London's, policy objectives. Similarly, Lawrence disclosed in his book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* that he also frequently lied in his reporting. For example, he once assured London that the Bedouin Chieftain Auda abu Tayi was still totally loyal when he knew this to be false. The lie resulted partly from ego and a conviction that as the "man on the scene," Lawrence and bureau members believed they always had the most accurate view of events.

Similar failures occurred in Tehran in 1979 and this problem persists. Modern field operatives are sometimes encouraged to believe in their own sagacity. Although their insights can be extremely valuable, operatives can be deceived, accidentally misinformed, or simply unaware of events (such as the Sykes-Picot Agreement) beyond their personal network of informants. Therefore, there are benefits to integrating all sources of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence.

Finally, we've seen that deception operations may provide strategic advantages from meager investments of resources. Their highly touted use in the Battle for Beersheba is an historical fact, but their impact and authorship are still disputed. What cannot be disputed is that deception operations are extremely dependent on excellent intelligence and counterintelligence. We must remain cognizant that these activities can also stray into very murky territory. The Kirke Papers in the British Intelligence Corps Museum concluded that the British had no qualms about "false reports being given to the press or drafted into prepared political speeches." Both are illegal in the United States today.



40. Anderson, *Lawrence in Arabia*, 278.

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