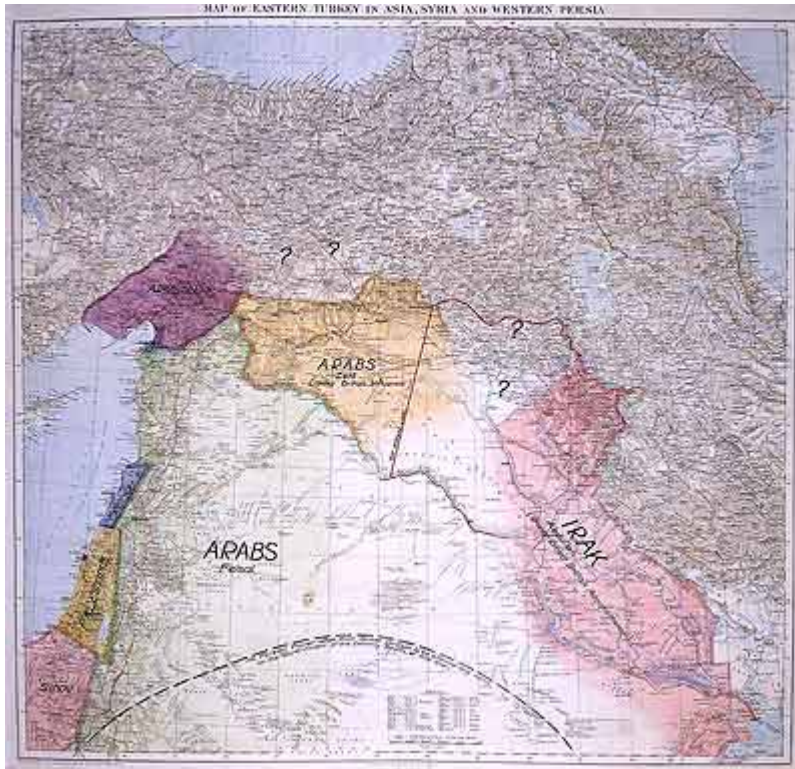


Lawrence's Peace Map and what the papers say



Newly discovered Lawrence of Arabia Peace Map.
Courtesy of The National Archive.

In Lawrence's footsteps. Exhibition's warning from history. (Ian Black in *The Guardian*, 13 October 2005)

Lawrence of Arabia told the war cabinet at the end of the First World War that there was no case for separating Sunni and Shia Arabs.' An extraordinary foreshadowing of the issues at stake in the Iraqi constitutional vote overseen by US and British constitutional forces.

TE Lawrence's ideas are shown in a recently unearthed map that is one of the many uncanny links between past and present in a new Imperial War Museum Exhibition marking the 70th anniversary of his death in 1935. Winston Churchill led mourners at the funeral of the national hero and writers of genius mythologised for his role in the desert war against Ottoman Turkey. From the sands of Arabia to the mother earth of England intoned the Pathe newsreel as 'the soldier-philosopher rallied the Arabs to our cause' was buried.

Charismatic figure cherished high hopes for his Arab allies (Jack Malvern in *The Times*, 12 October 2005)

Lawrence of Arabia's vision for the Middle East has been revealed in a map he created after the First World War. His sympathy for the cause of Arab self-determination is well known but the full details contained in the map eluded historians because it was filed at the National Archives under the wrong date. The map which goes on display at the Imperial War Museum on Friday, shows his proposals for a state in northern Iraq similar to one now demanded by Kurdish separatists, and a large territory uniting what is now Syria, Jordan and parts of Saudi Arabia.

Lawrence who had encouraged the Arabs to rise up against their Turkish rulers, wanted to award territories to the sons of his ally, Sherif Hussein of Mecca. He was thwarted by a secret Anglo-French plan to carve up the Middle East to suit imperial ambitions. That plan awarded Syria and Lebanon to France and Palestine, including modern-day Jordan, to Britain. The borders created by the imperial plan survive today largely intact.

Imperial War Museum Displays Newly-Discovered Lawrence of Arabia Peace Map

Press View: Wednesday 12 October, 11.00am – 2.00pm

The Imperial War Museum is to display for the first time a newly-discovered map outlining TE Lawrence's proposals for the reconstruction of the Middle East at the end of the First World War. These proposals, never before seen in such detail, show that Lawrence opposed the allied agreement, which eventually determined the borders of Iraq as it is today. The document is one of a number of previously unseen exhibits featured in ***Lawrence of Arabia: the life, the legend***, a major new exhibition at Imperial War Museum London about one of the most famous British icons of the twentieth century.

The peace map, recently uncovered in The National Archives, Kew, illustrates the proposals Lawrence made to the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet in November 1918. The suggested frontiers would have replaced those drawn up in the allied agreement of 1916 negotiated by Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot. During the Arab Revolt Lawrence heard the views of men from across the Middle East who were serving in Feisal's army. He was also in close contact with other British experts such as DG Hogarth and Gilbert Clayton. In 1918 he suggested separate governments for the predominantly Kurdish and Arab areas in what is now Iraq, and for the Mesopotamian Arabs and the Armenians in Syria. These proposals were opposed by the British administration in Mesopotamia.

Jeremy Wilson, Lawrence biographer and one of the historical advisers to the Imperial War Museum exhibition said, *'the discovery of the map is particularly interesting. It suggests that Lawrence's proposals were taken fairly seriously, at least in London. They would have provided the region with a far better starting-point than the crude imperial carve-up agreed by Sykes and Georges-Picot.'*

Hania Farhan, Regional Director Middle East and North Africa, Economist Intelligence Unit added, *'Among other things, the map shows that the opinions of those who knew the region well were often ignored, as the colonial powers in London and Paris had their own agendas and did not*

appear to care about the facts on the ground or the people of those areas. Lawrence's proposed borders differ substantially from those that ended up being put in place.'

Other previously unseen items featured in the exhibition include the Arab Revolt flag raised at the Capture of Akaba in July 1917, lent to the Museum by King Abdullah II of Jordan, and dramatic colour slides, scripts and publicity material from Lowell Thomas's illustrated travelogues, which created the Lawrence of Arabia legend in 1919. The Brough Superior SS100 motorcycle, which Lawrence was riding when he had his fatal accident on 13 May 1935, is also displayed alongside other motorcycle accessories belonging to Lawrence which have not been exhibited before, including a pair of goggles, and the motorcycle's tax disc and log book.

The exhibition opens at Imperial War Museum London on 14 October 2005 and runs until 17 April 2006. For further details visit www.iwm.org.uk/lawrence

An accompanying fully-illustrated book, **Lawrence of Arabia: the life, the legend** with text by Malcolm Brown, Lawrence biographer and historical adviser to the exhibition, will be published by Thames & Hudson to coincide with the exhibition.

Sponsor

The Economist Group

Adults £7.00, Concessions £6.00

Groups 10+ £5.00 (pre-booking essential on 020 7416 5439 or groups@iwm.org.uk)

Book online at www.iwm.org.uk

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Open 10.00am – 6.00pm daily (except 24, 25, 26 December)

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