LESSON 2 War Agreements The Hussein–McMahon agreement was not the only agreement that led to the changes that took place in the different Arab countries. Although the Arabs won their revolt, several other agreements left them under the rule of new powers, those of the British and the French. The British, who supported the Arab revolt, had other interests in the area. They secretly planned the future of the region with the French supported by the Russians. On May 19, 1916, the British signed the Sykes–Picot Agreement with the French. The agreement led to the division of the Ottoman territories in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine into French and British administered areas. The main architects of the agreement were the British Sir Mark Sykes and the French Francois Georges–Picot. Russia was also represented in this agreement by Sergey Dimitriyevish Sazonov. Based on the agreement, Britain was to gain control over Jordan, southern Iraq, including Baghdad, and the Mediterranean ports of Haifa and Akko. France was to control Syria, Lebanon, Adana, and Cilicia. Russia had a share as well. This included Constantinople, Turkish Straits, most of present day eastern Turkey, and Armenia. The Arabs did not find out about the agreement until late 1917 when it was published officially. They were devastated by the arrangement that conflicted with the pledges that were previously given to the Arabs before launching the Arab revolts. McMahon also submitted his resignation upon discovering the agreement. The British did not only betray the Arabs with the Sykes–Picot Agreement. They also had another secret agreement, the Balfour Declaration. On November 1917, the British announced a public pledge supporting the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Lesson 2 Upon the declaration, the British began to facilitate the immigration of European Jews to Palestine. The Arabs refused the declaration and reacted by declaring Sharif Hussein the king of all Arabs. He was therefore responsible to set up a new Arab government. When in 1920, King Faysal became the sole ruler of the Arab areas, the French and British leaders convened a conference in San Remo, Italy. The conference approved the final framework of a peace treaty with Turkey. It was later signed in Sevres, France. 13Lesson 2 The Treaty of Sevres On August 10, 1920, the treaty was signed between the victorious Allied powers and representatives of the Ottoman government. It was attended by the British, French, Italian, and other governments. As a result of the treaty, the Ottoman Empire was completely abolished. The old Ottoman province of Syria, which included Syria and Lebanon, was mandated to France. Palestine and Iraq were mandated to Great Britain. When King Faysal of Damascus opposed the French mandate over Syria, he was expelled by the French Army. The San Remo conference also provided France with a 25% share of Iraqi oil. Arabs' reactions to the San Remo conference were severe. In December 1919, Hashim al–Atassi, an activist against the French, was named speaker of the Syrian National Congress. This is the equivalent of a modern parliament. But the French deposed him in July 1920 under the terms of the Sykes–Picot Agreement. In 1926, he was exiled by the French together with his cousin Wasfi al Atassi to the Island of Arwad for a period of two months. In 1927, he established the National Bloc which was to lead the nationalist movement in Syria for twenty years.

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