The Clash of Empires: World War I and the Middle East

Conference organized by the University of Cambridge Centre for the Study of the International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa (CIRMENA), the University of Utah and the Turkish Historical Society
June 13-14, 2014, Cambridge, UK

Registration: (Alison Richard Building; ARB): 13:00-14:30

Opening: (Little Hall) Roxane Farmanfarmaian and Hakan Yavuz

Panel : The Origins of WWI and the Ottoman State (14:30-16:00)
Chair: Hasan Kayali

Feroz Ahmad, “The Ottoman Search for a Great Power Ally before the First World War. ”
Justin McCarthy (University of Louisville), “Political Pressure Groups and British Policy toward the Ottoman Empire 1893 to 1914.”
Feroz Yasamee, (University of Manchester), “The Problem of Turkish War Aims, 1914-1918.”

Coffee Break (16:00-16:20): ARB

Panel II: (16:20-17:50): The Ottoman State and the War (Little Hall)
Chair: Edward Erickson

Ozan Arslan (Izmir Economics University), ““His Majesty’s or the Sultan’s Ships: the “Seized Dreadnoughts Crisis” of August 1914 or the End of the Ottoman-British Friendship.”
Charles Jones (Cambridge University), ““Buchan’s Eastern Front: Transgression, Disguise and Gender in Greenmantle.”

Keynote Speech:
Queen College
Gerard Libaridian
(University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Retired)
"The History of Imperial Politics and the Politics of Imperial History"
18:00-19:00

Dinner: 19:00-22:00
Friday, 14 June 2014
Little Hall

Panel III: Ottoman-British Interactions (9:00-11:10)

Chair: Gul Tokay

E. D. Steele (Cambridge University), “The Place of Turkey in Lord Salisbury’s Foreign Policy.”
Erdal Kaynar, (IFK, Vienna/Cetobac, Paris), “The Young Turks and the Question of Anglophilia.”

Coffee Break (11:10-11:30)

Panel IV: Armenians, Muslims and the Major Powers (11:30-13:20)

Chair: Justin McCarthy

Thomas Schmutz, (University of Zurich), “The German role in the reform discussion of 1913 – 1914.”
Hilmi Ozan Ozavci (University of Southampton), “Mehmed Djavid Bey the Statesman: Great Powers, Unionists and the Armenians.”
Odile Moreau, (University of Montpellier), “Teskilât-ı Mahsusa’s transnational activities at the Periphery and the Clash of Empires.”
Christopher Gunn, (Coastal Carolina University), “The Armenian Volunteers & the Legacy of Fedayî Culture”

Lunch 13:25-14:25 ARB

Panel V: World War I and the Middle East (14:30-16:20)

Chair: Roxane Farmanfarmaian

Eric Hooglund, (Editor, Middle East Critique, Lund University), “Iran and WWI.”
Edward Erickson, (Marine Corps University), “Wasp or Mosquito? The Arab Revolt in Turkish Military History.”
Hakeem Naim, (UC-Davies), "Afghanistan's Young Turks: WWI and the Rise of the Islamic Nationalism in Afghanistan”

Coffee Break (16:20-16:40) ARB
Panel VI: The End of World War I (16:40-18:30)

Chair: Benjamin Fortna


Harun Buljina (Columbia University), “Borders, States, and the Ends of Empire: Recent Approaches to the First World War in Ottoman and Balkan Historiography”

David Saltzman (Washington DC), “An Empire Dies, Who Pays for the Funeral? The Question of State Succession between Turkey and the Ottoman Empire.”

Conclusion: Roxane Farmanfarmanian and M. Hakan Yavuz
Panel I:
Feroz Ahmad (Yeditepe University), “The Ottoman Search for a Great Power Ally before the First World War.”

Britain and the Ottomans had totally different perceptions about the situation before the outbreak of war in August 1914. Britain was primarily concerned with the challenge of Germany as a world power. To meet that challenge she knew that she must have an understanding, if not an alliance, with France and Russia, as they too felt threatened by Germany’s growing power.

After the restoration of the constitution in 1908, the Ottomans were keen to have an alliance with Britain, the “mother of parliaments” as a counter to Germany, Sultan Abdülhamid’s patron. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) sent a delegation to London and offered to have an alliance, claiming that the Ottomans were the “Japan of the Middle East”. Sir Edward Grey was reluctant to turn them down but he knew that such a bilateral alliance might alienate Russia and France. But he said that London would support the new regime.

In Istanbul at the British Embassy there may have been a touch of Orientalism while Sir Gerard Lowther was ambassador and Fitzmaurice his first dragoman. Both men looked down upon the CUP and favoured the “old Turks” and the Liberals. Thus the embassy supported the counter-revolution of April 1909 against the CUP. Even after the overthrow of Kamil Pasha, the pro-British grand vezir, the CUP assured London that there was no change in their policy towards Britain.

That is how the situation remained until Turkey’s defeat in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. She found herself totally isolated and was determined to end this isolation. Turkey offered an alliance to England, France, and even Russia but was turned down by each in turn. Before the war Turkey invited a German military mission to reform her army. But she already had a British naval mission while France trained her gendarmerie. But the CUP, now in power, still wanted a Great Power ally. But Turkey was considered a liability. Only after war had broken out in Europe did Germany sigh the alliance, believing that the Caliph would proclaim jihad and mobilize the Muslim subjects of Britain, France, and Russia against these powers.

Turkey, like the other powers, suffered from the “short war delusion” and expected to remain neutral despite her alliance. It was Britain that decided to confiscate the two ships built on Tyneside for Istanbul. Public opinion turned against Britain because the two ships had been bought through public contributions. Germany’s hand was strengthened when her two ships, the Goeben and Breslau, arrived in Istanbul and became Turkish through a fictitious sale. That still did not mean that Istanbul would abandon her neutrality. It was Turkey’s chronic financial situation that finally forced her to enter the war. But before the German loans arrived, Turkey
appealed to the Anglo-French Ottoman Bank to give her money. But she was turned down and Berlin came through providing Turkey abandoned her neutrality.

Justin McCarthy (University of Louisville), “Political Pressure Groups and British Policy toward the Ottoman Empire 1893 to 1914.”

The politics of the development of British antagonism toward the Ottoman Empire are well known: Nineteenth century British commitment to the survival of the Ottoman Empire was always based on the “balance of power,” fear of Russian aggrandizement. British fear of Germany’s developing power and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 changed all that. Given Russian intentions toward the Ottoman Empire, a friend of Russia could never be a friend to the Ottomans.

In fact, British feelings against the Ottomans had begun to develop well before 1907. International politics and British economic interests only briefly held those feelings in check. The Liberal Party long made animosity toward the Turks a basic part of its political platform. Indeed, it can be said that Gladstone owed his career to his skilful portrayal of the “Bulgarian Horrors.” After the time of Disraeli, Conservative politicians were only slightly less hostile toward the Turks. Gladstone, Salisbury, and Rosebery shared an antipathy for the Turks that was rooted in their religious convictions. Their dislike of Turks was not simply a political matter.

From the late 1870s on, the British public agreed with the politicians. No politician needed to fear negative repercussions from political rhetoric against the Turks or even intervention in the Ottoman Empire. The most important factor in public opinion was the near lack of any balanced, much less sympathetic, picture of the Turks in the press. Depictions of events that might have elicited sympathy for the Turks were virtually absent. News of the forced migrations and great mortality of Muslims from the Caucasus and the Balkans in the 1860s, the 1870s, and during the Balkan Wars did not reach the British public. Instead, journalists and political and religious pressure groups portrayed the Turks and other Muslims as oppressors and even mass murderers. Turkish ill deeds were exaggerated and often invented. It was safe to use the Turks as villains in the sensational stories that sold newspapers, because readers knew very little of the truth.

Until the British rapprochement with the Russians, politicians were somewhat constrained from acting on their beliefs about the Turks. Plans to force the Turks to acquiesce to British plans on Ottoman minority affairs were thwarted by international political considerations. After 1907, the British were free to impose their will on the Ottomans. The result was the beginning of dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in Europe and Eastern Anatolia. World War I gave the Ottomans a brief respite, but animosity toward the Turks was to come to fruition in the Versailles Conference and the Treaty of Sevres.

Feroz Yasamee, (University of Manchester), “The Problem of Turkish War Aims, 1914-1918.”
The calculations and ambitions which led the Ottoman Empire to enter the First World War on the side of the Central Powers shortly after the outbreak of hostilities remain obscure; so do those which subsequently shaped its political and military strategies in a protracted conflict which changed shape in accordance with shifting battlefield fortunes, the departure of old belligerents, and the arrival of new ones. Part of the problem lies in the dearth of documentation – a reflection of the informal nature of decision-making at the top of the Unionist regime. Another lies in the failure to distinguish between different types of war aims, which the Canadian historian Brock Millman has usefully categorised as permanent, conditional, instrumental or contingent. Contemporaries, Turkish and foreign, were inclined to view Ottoman participation in the war as a matter of ideological impulses (Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turanian), or of overweening personal ambitions, notably on the part of the war minister, Enver Paşa, and the navy minister, Cemal Paşa. These, however, are no more than claims. In the absence of convincing documentation, the present paper attempts an indirect approach to the question of war aims, with its focus on capabilities, opportunities and constraints. It also suggests that the search for “shopping lists” of territorial or other war aims may be misplaced: for the Ottoman Empire, as for other belligerents, ‘victory’ meant a political outcome which would enhance its security, independence and influence. The precise form that outcome might take would depend upon circumstances which could not be clearly foreseen, particularly in a war between coalitions in which the Ottoman Empire’s role was necessarily that of an auxiliary to its German and Austro-Hungarian allies. On this basis, attention will be focused on a number of issues and episodes which bear directly on the issue of war aims.

First, the context of the Ottoman Empire’s decision to enter the war: in 1914 it had suffered recent territorial despoliation at the hands of Italy and the Balkan states, had been divided by the Powers into spheres of economic influence, faced a Russian bid to establish a form of protectorate over its Armenian subjects and was diplomatically friendless and isolated. By entering the war, however, it acquired powerful allies abroad and a free hand at home, thereby enhancing its security.

Second, the Ottoman Empire’s war aims were necessarily shaped and constrained by its military and naval capabilities, and how it chose to deploy them: these suggest that its primary goals always lay in the Caucasus and perhaps in the Balkans, for these were the only regions into which it could project significant military power. Third, it is useful to re-examine the strategy of war by revolution embodied in the proclamation of a Holy War and the despatch of small groups of officers to stir up revolt against the enemy Powers in Iran, Afghanistan, India and Tripolitania: did these colourful initiatives, demanding few resources, ever amount to more than speculations or diversions?

Fourth, there is prima facie evidence that in 1917-18 at least some elements within the Unionist regime were ready to sound the Entente Powers on the prospects for a separate peace, and, at least implicitly, to thereby commit themselves to a view of acceptable war aims. Fifth, after Russia’s collapse in 1917-18 the Ottoman Empire pursued a clearly expansionist strategy in the
Caucasus, at the cost of some damage to its relations with its principal ally, Germany, but also, it seems, in anticipation of a German victory in the west, and an early and successful conclusion to the war. Finally, consideration must be given to the Empire’s domestic war aims, and especially to the Turkification of the economy and of Anatolia.

Panel II:


This paper investigates the Anglo-Ottoman relations through the correspondence of Ottoman diplomats between 1912 and 1914. The emphasis, however, is on how Ottoman officialdom interpreted the British policy on the eastern Mediterranean during course of the Balkan wars and after, leading to the WWI.

Within this framework, the purpose of the study has threefold. Firstly, it briefly reassesses the shift in the British near eastern policy under the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey during the second constitutional period. Secondly, it discusses the British policy on the Aegean Islands’ issue after the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese in May 1912 and the Greek occupation of the remaining Aegean islands, during the early stages of the Balkan wars. Under the circumstances, the question of the islands took a different turn and became an ongoing issue not only in Turco-Greek relations but also in the European politics.

For the British under Grey, it was vital that no third party should challenge the status quo on the Eastern Mediterranean, a circumstance, not only delayed solving the question of the future of the islands but also contributed to the escalation of the Serbo-Austrian tension leading to the break of World War I. Thus, the British Foreign Secretary implemented a policy of non-intervention, as long as his interests in the eastern Mediterranean were safeguarded and acted with the rest of the Entente powers, despite being very reluctant on the Russian ambitions in the east.

Lastly, the article discusses the views of the Ottoman envoys and highlights the split in their opinion on the eve of the WWI. When the war became more or less inevitable, Tevfik Pasha in London and Rifat Pasha in Paris insisted on strict neutrality. Joining the war was never an alternative for these two experienced diplomats, which also reflected the view of their European counterparts, namely the Entente representatives. On the other hand, however, German-
instructed diplomats such as Muhtar Pasha in Berlin and Huseyin Hilmi in Vienna insisted that the Ottomans should join the war with Central Powers without any delays. Thus, none were aware of the secret Treaty of Alliance on 2 August 1914.

With the assistance of Ottoman diplomatic documents and some European sources, the present article discusses the origins of the World War I and hopes to partially fill an existing gap not only in the historiography of the late Ottoman period but it also tries to contribute to the current debates on the British diplomacy and the Great War.

**Charles Jones** (Cambridge University), “Buchan’s Eastern Front: Transgression, Disguise and Gender in *Greenmantle.*” John Buchan wrote three spy novels dealing with the First World War with Richard Hannay the central character. He also contributed articles to *The Times* and wrote a twenty-four volume history of the war in real time, later condensed into a four-volume abridgement, all while working in senior positions in the emerging Ministry of Information. Never out of print, but long excluded from scholarly attention as middlebrow, Buchan’s novels – though not modernist – confront modernity in ways that have lately caught the attention of scholars. In the thriving new Buchan literature the second of the Hannay trilogy, ‘Greenmantle’ occupies a special place. It deals with the German relations with Turkey, and the factually based attempt to threaten Britain’s position in Egypt and India by fomenting a jihad in the Middle East, a plot foiled in its fictional version by Hannay and his confederates, one of whom – Sandy Arbuthnot – is able to pass as the inspirational proto-leader of the holy war and play a decisive role in the February 1916 fall of Erzerum. The paper offers a close reading of ‘Greenmantle’, concentrating on Buchan’s preoccupation with intelligence and espionage as the decisive elements in modern warfare, the use made of fiction by Buchan – the professional propagandist – to air heterodox views, and the particular twist lent to his characteristic imaginary of disguise and gender stereotyping by the Turkish setting of this novel, unique in his oeuvre.

**Ozan Arslan** (Izmir Economics University), “‘His Majesty’s or the Sultan’s Ships: the ‘Seized Dreadnoughts Crisis’ of August 1914 or the End of the Ottoman-British Friendship.” The naval operations of the First Balkan War (1912) revealed the incapacity of the Imperial Ottoman Navy to respond to the challenge posed by the more modern and expanding Hellenic war fleet in the Aegean Sea. Following its humiliating defeat, both on land and at the seas, at the hands of the Balkan Powers, the Sublime Porte launched a major reform and reorganization program for its land forces as well as a naval expansion program for its small fleet composed mainly of obsolete warships. Several orders were given to foreign shipyards, however the two most important among them were placed, not surprisingly, to Armstrong-Whitworth and Vickers shipyards of Britain, the traditional friend and ally of the Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean since the Crimean War (1853-1856). The gigantesque dreadnought *Rio de Janeiro*, already under
construction by Armstrong-Whitworth in Newcastle upon Tyne, was bought by the Sublime Porte from the Brazilian government and another large man-of-war was launched for the Imperial Ottoman Navy in the fall of 1913 by Vickers. The tremendous building costs of the two large dreadnoughts were a significant burden for the already quasi-bankrupt Ottoman state and they were partly paid by public subscriptions in Istanbul and in several provinces of Anatolia. Large donations were rewarded with a "Navy Donation Medal” and their construction boosted the national pride of the Ottomans in the aftermath of the recent humiliations of the Tripolitanian and Balkan Wars. The imposing warships, whose photographs and postcards were circulated all over the Ottoman lands already in 1913, were named after two Ottoman monarchs. The former Rio de Janeiro became Sultan Osman-ı Evvel (Sultan Osman I) after the founder of the Ottoman dynasty and state, and, the second ship was named Reşadiye after the then reigning sultan, Mehmed V Reşad. A hand-picked Ottoman crew was sent to Britain to collect the two dreadnoughts in the summer of 1914 in the midst of the “Sarejevo Crisis” in continental Europe. After several delays in delivering the ships to their Ottoman crews, the British Admiralty ordered in August 1914 the seizure of both dreadnoughts for the Royal Navy. Sultan Osman-ı Evvel was renamed HMS Agincourt and Reşadiye HMS Erin. Ottoman naval and diplomatic authorities, present in London, and, the Ottoman government in Istanbul protested, to no avail.

This paper will try to answer, in the light of the Ottoman and British archival collections and the memoirs of several Ottoman and foreign officers, diplomats and statesmen, the following two questions. How did the Sublime Porte’s perception of Britain change after the seizure of the two dreadnoughts and the subsequent diplomatic crisis? How did this incident affect the Ottoman public opinion’s view of Britain in comparison to the other Great Powers of the era, and particularly in comparison to the German Empire?

Panel III:

E. D. Steele, (Cambridge University), “The Place of Turkey in Lord Salisbury’s Foreign Policy.”

As foreign secretary for 14 years between 1878 and 1900, Lord Salisbury came to personify the policy of his country, as Palmerston had done earlier in the century. His overriding aim was to maintain the freedom of action and the security that England needed amid the tensions and conflicts of the Great Powers of Europe. In that atmosphere the Continent was to be divided between the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy (1882) and the Dual Alliance of France and Russia (1894). Salisbury persisted in keeping England outside these alliances: he refused to enter into a binding commitment with either. He was never, however, an isolationist and mocked critics with a famous reference to ‘splendid isolation’. He believed in co-operating
closely where interests coincided and conflicts threatened. That kind of diplomacy did not make him popular with the other Powers, and especially not with Germany, the dominant power on land after 1870 and anxious to consolidate her predominance against French revanchism and Russia’s growing strength. In Salisbury’s time an arena for Great Power rivalries was the South-East of Europe occupied by the declining Ottoman Empire and Balkan peoples increasingly eager to break away from residual Ottoman control. Balkan Christians naturally appealed to Christendom in the shape of the other Powers. These powers had old designs and new ambitions where Turkey was concerned. There was ample scope for confrontations with each other and with the Turks. In the 1870s Russia attacked Turkey and international co-operation was necessary to secure a settlement of the South-East and its problems at the Congress of Berlin (1878). The political landscape of the region was not much changed for the rest of Salisbury’s tenure of the Foreign Office.

Nowhere did the appeals of Balkan Christians against Turkish hegemony have greater impact than in England. Gladstone famously made their case his own in the seventies. Salisbury by contrast was no enthusiast for national liberation, but, like Gladstone he was a devout Churchman and was indeed more outspoken in his hostility to what he termed ‘the false religion of Islam’. England’s ostentatious preparations for war with Russia in 1878 represented a combination of Disraeli’s secular imperialism with Salisbury’s mainly Christian concerns. They brought Russia to the negotiating table, aided by Bismarck’s desire to avoid what might become a general war. England’s belligerence in this situation was less than convincing. The small English regular army was not fit for a Continental war, as its showing in the Crimean War had demonstrated. Salisbury overreached himself when in the 1890s he launched, in confidential diplomacy, an astonishing project for the partition of the Ottoman Empire between the Powers and their Balkan protégés. He justified a revolutionary proposal by intimating that the spoils of the Ottoman dynasty would satisfy the territorial appetites of all the Powers for some time to come, England included. Germany, whose co-operation was essential, reacted with genuine indignation. The German Emperor Wilhelm II and his Foreign Ministry suspected Salisbury of wanting to set the Continental Powers quarrelling over the re-distribution of the Sultan’s dominions.

In this, the boldest of all his initiatives, Salisbury was to be disappointed. Not only the Powers but the Turks frustrated his hopes of re-drawing the map on a scale unseen since the end of the Napoleonic Wars. When he wanted to send the Mediterranean fleet through the Dardanelles to anchor in the Sea of Marmora with Constantinople under its guns, the Royal Navy, to Salisbury’s disgust, was unwilling to risk its ships against Turkey’s coastal defences. It was one more illustration of the Turks’ extraordinary capacity for self-renewal, despite endemic corruption and maladministration. Sultan Abdul Hamid II, with all his well-publicised faults, was an effective defender of his people and of Islam, which he represented as the Caliph. The Muslim East had held off the Christian West and Salisbury was the loser in a protracted duel with the Grand Turk.

Erdal Kaynar, (IFK, Vienna/Cetobac, Paris), “The Young Turks and the Question of Anglophilia.”

The question of Anglophilia in the Ottoman Empire has been a central issue in studies on the Ottoman entry of war in 1914. Observers and historians alike have underlined the inconsistency between the Young Turks’ pro-British orientation and the fact that they declared war on the very power which seemed to have inspired the Ottoman experiment in constitutionalism. Often this
crucial decision was linked to the rising importance of the German Reich in the Ottoman Empire. However, the question of Anglophilia is more complex and cannot be reduced to retrospective interpretations. The attitude towards Britain related to shifting international power constellations since the 1870s and to attempts of the Ottomans state to adapt to the new geopolitical conditions brought about by the rise of Germany as a global power. Therefore it oscillated between ideological affinities and geopolitical choices. Also, Anglophilia was highly debated in the Young Turk movement well before their rise to power in 1908. It was a central matter of dispute among the Young Turks and led early on to the formation of different fractions.

In my paper, I shall follow how the question of Anglophilia developed in the Young Turk movement and reassess its important for the intellectual history of Ottoman modernisation. It will demonstrate how the evolution of the pro-British orientation always depended on the perception of the other European Great Power, and also on the general attitude towards the “West” conceived as a homogenous entity. Ideological affinities with one country or the other did not impede the Young Turks from seeking assistance from different Great Powers when they judged it to be convenient. These were the first examples of realpolitik, which was to become a central feature of Young Turk politics. My paper will not try to link events of the Second Constitutional Period to discussions in the Young Turk movement prior to the revolution of 1908. Rather, it will argue that certain ideological patterns defined the Young Turks’ understanding of international politics. Also, it will demonstrate the Young Turks’ failure to develop a full comprehension of the discrepancy between diplomatic preferences and diplomatic realities in the era of imperialism.

Dr. Warren Dockter, (Cambridge University), ““A Great Turkish Policy”: Winston Churchill, the Ottoman Empire, and the First World War.”

The British and Ottoman Empires had developed a unique relationship by the latter half of the nineteenth century. Years of diplomatic relations which oscillated from reluctant alliances to outright hostility, left the relations between the two powers in a state of confusion and incoherence. In London, British diplomatic policy with the Ottoman Empire was caught in the political struggles of the Conservative and Liberal parties, the imperial tensions of London and its imperial holdings in Asia and Africa, the prejudices of orientalism, and the powerful personalities of the political elite. In Constantinople, Ottoman policy concerning Britain was subject to the major debts of the Empire, the tensions of the increasingly weak Sultan and the rapidly westernizing Turkish population, the spectre of Pan-Islamism and the spectre of increased nationalization in the Ottoman peripheral regions in the Middle East. Given the significant role that Britain played in the Middle East in the aftermath of the First World War, it is important to understand the relations between the two empires and how those relations eventually collapsed into war.

One of the most major players in British/Ottoman relations and the ultimate breakdown of those relations during the Edwardian period and war years was Winston Churchill. Diplomatic historians and Churchill biographers have focused on Churchill’s role in the attempted naval conquest of the Dardanelles, the unsuccessful Gallipoli campaign, and Churchill’s wartime disdain for the Ottomans. In doing so, they tend to portray Churchill’s
relationship with the Ottoman Empire in a negative light, assuming that he, like much of the War Cabinet, based his strategies and diplomacy on ideas of European superiority and oriental weakness. However, new archival evidence has come to light which paints a much more nuanced account of Churchill’s role in British/Ottoman diplomacy. Using new archive sources such as Churchill’s personal correspondence with Ottoman leaders such as Talaat Bey and Enver Pasha, this paper will explore Churchill’s relationship with the Ottoman Empire and his role in shaping British/Ottoman diplomacy. Taking into account the history of Churchill’s opinions, attitudes and policies, this paper will reveal that Churchill was initially supportive of an Anglo-Ottoman alliance, only to be thwarted by the First World War. It will demonstrate Churchill’s support for an Ottoman alliance owed partially to his Victorian Tory background and to a greater extent, a fear of a pan-Islamic uprising. Separating, Churchill from his contemporaries however, was the notion that by pursuing an Ottoman alliance, Britain could court the Caliph and followers of orthodox Islam (rather than ‘militant Mohammedanism’) resulting in an alliance based on the notions that the two Empires were ‘the greatest Mohammedan powers on earth.’ Ultimately this paper will reveal that Churchill’s relationship with the Ottoman Empire was one but on a unique blend of Victorian orientalism, geopolitical strategy, and genuine respect and friendship.

Benjamin Fortna, (History Department, SOAS, University of London), “A Man, a Plan a Canal: The Suez Canal Campaign from an Ottoman Perspective.”

The aim of this paper is to examine the first Ottoman attempt to cross the Suez Canal during World War I from the perspective of an Ottoman Special Operations officer who took part in the first campaign. Often portrayed as another in a quixotic and ultimately failed ventures dreamed up by Enver Pasha, the Ottoman attempts to surprise the British in Egypt by attacking her “lifeline of empire” deserve another look, not only for their wider strategic considerations but also for what the ability to launch such logistically challenging missions can tell us about the composition, motivation and capabilities of the Ottoman military in the Great War.

After reviewing the broader context associated with Ottoman plans to launch a surprise attack on the Canal, the paper turns to consider the many operational issues involved. Drawing on a cache of previously unseen documents preserved in the private papers of Eşref Kuşçubaşı, including field notes, scouting reports, muster lists, telegrams and battle diagrams, and supplemented by Ottoman and British archival material, the paper will attempt to provide an on-the-ground account of the Canal campaign as experienced by a field officer. Eşref was an officer in the Special Organisation (TeVkilat-ı Mahsusa) formed by Enver prior to the war as a means of harnessing the intelligence and operational capabilities of what we now refer to as “asymmetric warfare.” The Sinai campaigns were one of many operations into which the Special Organisation was tasked. Eşref, having fought under Enver in the Ottoman-Italian War in Libya and in the Balkan Wars, was a seasoned campaigner known for his ability to raise and train volunteers.
The paper will pay particular attention to the formidable obstacles that the Ottomans faced in this endeavor. As if the logistical challenges thrown up by the distance, desert terrain, scarcity of food, water and transport were not enough, the Ottoman forces also had to contend with the superior weaponry and numbers of their British adversary. In the face of these difficulties, the day-to-day accounts of the Ottoman volunteer contingent reveal a range of attitudes, including enthusiasm, grim determination, exasperation and even moments of quasi-slapstick comedy, all of which help us to recover the individual experience behind the strategic exigencies inherent in the Great War in the Middle East.


To win the WWI the British government made written or public pledges to Armenians, Zionists and Arabs. Promises of independence to Arabs and Armenians and support for the establishment of a Homeland to Zionists in Palestine were meant to encourage these nationalities to support the Allied cause and defeat the Ottoman empire. These pledges along with President Wilson’s Fourteen Points generated high expectations in the immediate postwar period. Armenians anticipated the establishment of a "Greater Armenia" by Allied help while the Arabs expected to see the establishment of an Arab Kingdom with Sharif Hussayn as its king. The Zionist hoped that the Jewish homeland will become a Jewish state.

After the War these hopes and expectations were dashed in short order generating anger, bitterness, and distrust. Based on British archival sources and secondary literature, this paper analyzes the factors shaping British policy. A well-documented factor was the dilemma faced by the postwar British government in view of conflicted wartime promises, pledges and agreements made for the immediate purpose of winning the war. Some commitments and pledges were honored based on strategic considerations: pledges to those who were least likely to harm British interests were not honored.

Another factor, one which has not received much attention, is the imperial ethos prevailing in British political and military circles which helped to rationalize postwar policy. The decision-makers tended to share a poor opinion of the various nationalities inhabiting the Caucasus and Middle East in general. These people were considered to be "beastly", uncivilized, dishonest and, collectively, not worth the life of a single British private. This sense of British superiority was reinforced by the prevalence of Social Darwinism which touted the superiority of Western nations and civilization. This, combined with considerations of national interests, led to the rationalization of the decisions to break wartime pledges and commitments to Armenians and Arabs, decisions which generated anger and animosity towards Britain.

Panel IV:

Thomas Schmutz, (University of Zurich), “The German role in the reform discussion of 1913 – 1914.”
The aim of my research is to analyse the German role concerning the reform question in Eastern Anatolia in 1913 and 1914. In June of 1913, André Mandelstam – the Russian dragoman –
proposed a draft for an agreement in order to improve the Armenian status, by means of
including proposals that representation in the courts and the administrative bodies would
guarantee them equality. On 8th February 1914, an agreement was signed by the Ottoman
Government after six months of intense negotiations between the European powers and the
Sublime Porte. In particular due to German intervention as well as counter proposals respecting
Ottoman sovereignty wishes, this agreement differed substantially from the initial Russian
proposal. After the agreement, another round of negotiations took place in order to name two
inspector-generals who should implement and monitor the reforms in Eastern Anatolia, but they
took place in early summer when Europe was already on its way towards war. In the ensuing war,
Germany became the Ottoman ally and the reforms were thus rendered obsolete in December
1914.
I ask myself to what extent Germany was able to influence the Russian proposal and the whole
diplomatic negotiations while at the same time being engaged in a war of influence inside the
Ottoman theatre and conducting imperial world politics ranging outside its orders as far as
China. To answer this question I have analysed the political archive of the German Auswärtige
Amt, situated in Berlin. Thousands of telegrams, reports, maps and statistical information can be
found there. Even though sources concerning the Ottoman-German relationship have been
analyzed before, most studies have focused on the time period between 1915 and 1916.
Therefore, the topic of pre-war German diplomacy as part of the European rivalry in and around
the Ottoman Empire is not only very interesting but also largely unexplored. In order to have a
more objective view I use French diplomatic sources as well (Nantes).

In my paper I follow the German reports from January 1913 until November 1914. Ambassador
Wangenheim analysed the Armenian-Kurdish relationship and Russia’s fear of both the Young
Turks and Germany. But reports concerning the Armenians have an ethnographical touch and
sometimes even accuse them of having incited political unrest. German overall strategy was to
counter any foreign European influence and to keep Russia out of Anatolia. I argue in my paper
that Germany was more interested in having a strong relationship towards the Sublime Porte than
in protecting the Armenians. German concerns were focused on the European rivalry and as
such, the reform question was seen as one issue among other crises like the Liman-von-Sanders
mission or the question of arms deals with Krupp.

My conclusion is that Germany as an imperial newcomer needed the Ottoman Empire in order to
fulfil its own dreams of Weltpolitik and the reform questions showed to what extent German
influence carried weight in the diplomatic arena. As a result of 8th February, Germany foreign
policy turned against the Entente Power and especially against Russia. Austria-Hungary and Italy
stayed in the shadows of German agitations, while Paris and London were not ready to
implement the reforms at all costs, as was Russia. It would be interesting to conduct more
extended research into the motivations of every actor involved as well as into Ottoman
discussions on the reforms and on Germany.
Christopher Gunn, (Coastal Carolina University), “Armenian Volunteers, Nemesis Agents & the Legacy of Fedayi Culture”

In his trial for the murders of Mehmet Baydar and Bahadir Demir in 1973, Gourgen Yanikian claimed to have left his university studies in Moscow to fight for General Dro in the Armenian Volunteer Regiments. For Yanikian, who, if not outright fabricated than at least embellished his autobiography, it seemed that this claim was enough to address his critics and establish his bona fides as a lifelong Armenian revolutionary. This is particularly noteworthy, because very little has been written, in English, about this group of individuals who left the United States, France, Russia and elsewhere, to fight with the Allies in the Caucasus. This paper will analyze the role the Armenian Volunteer regiments and its veterans played in perpetuating fedayi legend and culture within certain elements of the Armenian diaspora between 1918 and 1973, and explore the reasons why claiming participation in those regiments were so important to a man of his generation, nearly seven decades later.

Hilmi Ozan Ozavci (University of Southampton), “Mehmed Djavid Bey the Statesman: Great Powers, Unionists and the Armenians.”

No history of late Ottoman domestic and international politics and finance is exhaustive without reference to the diaries of Mehmed Djavid Bey. Known as a Jewish dönme from Thessalonica, Djavid was the most famous finance minister of the Ottoman Empire in the late 1900s and later in the 1910s with irregular intervals. He was also a prominent Unionist and one of the most active and decisive figures of late Ottoman relations with the Great Powers through his key connections in financial and political circles in Europe. Although Djavid the economic thinker has widely been discussed in literature in reference to his ‘liberal’ ideas until today, lesser attention has been paid to Djavid the statesman in the inner circle of the Unionists and the European financial world.

My intention in this paper is to offer a critical reading of Djavid’s diaries and his private and diplomatic correspondence with his European connections. In so doing, while bringing onto surface a number of new materials by and about this important figure, I would also like to throw some light upon three issues concerning international and domestic politics of the empire: the first of these is the Ottoman perception of Britain and other Great Powers; secondly, the Armenian question in the 1910s; and thirdly, ideological tendencies in the late Ottoman Empire. The questions that the paper will seek to address are: how and why did the Ottoman governments in the late 1900s and the 1910s perceive Great Britain as a threat and, at times, as a potential ally? Who were Djavid’s main European connections? How did he perceive the Great Powers and compare one with another in his diaries? How did European diplomats see him? Was he really a Francophile? Given that he had many close Armenian friends and advisers in the ministry, how did Djavid Bey approach the Armenian question in the longest decade of the empire? To what extent did he share the growing nationalist policies of the Committee of Union and Progress? And was he as ‘liberal’ in his understanding of domestic politics as he was in his early economic views?
The Special Organisation «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» grew out of an informal organization established by Enver Pasha before he became Minister of War and Deputy Commander in Chief of the Ottoman Army. This informal organization took over informal translocal networks already existing. Enver Pasha was convinced that a secret semi-military organization could help out the policies he thought would maintain the unity and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» was the «special force» of Enver Pasha against internal security problems and European Imperialism.

When the Ottoman Empire entered World War I, the nature of the «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» changed and it received a semi-overt official status within the Ministry of War (Harbiye Nezareti). This new status provoked an increase of personnel and a more important budgetary allocation to realize its new missions. The «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa»’s reorganization took place immediately after the signing of the Ottoman-German secret alliance in August 1914. «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa»’s activities took place until the end of World War I, at a military level by recruiting volunteers and then managing these auxiliary forces, and at an ideological level, by fomenting uprisings in the Ottoman periphery or in territories under the Entente power’s rule. The «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» participated in operations in which auxiliary forces were involved. They were recruited and led by the «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa».

It is well known that the Special Organisation «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» played a considerable role behind-the-scene in many places during the First World War. The «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» operated in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, but also outside the Empire, in order to incite Muslim Resistance against the enemies of the Ottoman Empire, Great-Britain, France, and Russia in their colonial territories. In this respect, «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» played a role in the Clash of Empires. Enver Pasha and the «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» leaders planned far-reaching operations and rebellions in North Africa including Egypt.

Joint «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa»-German operations in Iran and Afghanistan with rather little success are well known. However less known activities were led in North-Africa. I will shed light on the transnational activities led in North Africa, in Morocco, Libya and Egypt. In 1915, a «Turkish Military Mission» was sent to the Ottoman Embassy in Madrid and organized clandestine operations in Morokko. However, the situation deteriorated in 1916, when news of the outbreak of the Arab Revolt and the Turkish repression of Arab dissenters in Beirut reached Spain. What kind of activities took place in Morocco, and for which effects? In Libya, «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» had a well-functioning alliance with the Sanusi and local forces. Ottoman-led Sanussi attacks and Ottoman Suez Canal Campaigns took place against British Forces and targets. Even if «Teskilât-ı Mahsusa» achievements were more psychological than military, it really increased the paranoia of British and French authorities in North Africa.

Odile Moreau is Associate Professor in History at the University of Montpellier in France and Researcher in the French National Research Center (CNRS). She is the author of “L’Empire ottoman à l’âge des réformes, 1826-1914, (2007), translation: Reformlar çağında Osmanlı
Panel V:

**Eric Hooglund**, (Editor, *Middle East Critique*, Lund University), “Iran and WWI.”

The aim of this paper is to examine how British policy toward the Ottoman Empire changed during the First World War. During the 19th century, Great Britain’s major imperial interest was India, and for that reason it perceived control of Ottoman territories along the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf as vital to protect its sea routes to India. Accordingly, British forces conquered the port of Aden on the Arabian Sea coast in 1839 and began signing treaties of protection with tribal shaykhs in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and along the Persian Gulf, treaties that effectively ended Ottoman sovereignty in these areas. After completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, which made it possible for ships to travel directly form the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean via the canal and the Red Sea, Britain assumed a greater interest in Egypt, nominally an autonomous Ottoman territory, and occupied it outright in 1882, while still maintaining the fiction of Ottoman de jure sovereignty until November 1914, when Britain annexed Egypt outright following the entrance of the Ottoman Empire into the First World War as an ally of Germany and an enemy of Britain and its allies, France and Russia.

Britain—as well as its allies—anticipated the demise of the Ottoman Empire as an outcome of the war, and thus a British strategic aim was to ensure the dissolution of Ottoman rule in the Arab provinces benefitted Britain. To help achieve this goal, Britain sent secret missions from Egypt into Arabia to persuade the governor in Mecca to organize a revolt against the Ottoman state among the Arab tribes, which happened in 1916. At the same time, Britain and France negotiated the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement to divide among themselves the Ottomans’ most ‘desirable’ Arab provinces, Syria and Mesopotamia. Because Kuwait was a British protectorate and British forces occupied southern Iran, nominally an independent and neutral country, these areas were used to launch attacks into southern Iraq (Mesopotamia), which culminated with the capture of Baghdad in March 1917. In the east, a British force crossed from Egypt’s Sinai region into Palestine (then the southern district of Ottoman Syria) and captured Jerusalem later the same year. At the start of the campaign but before Jerusalem’s fall, the British foreign ministry had proclaimed the Balfour Declaration, signaling Britain’s intention to create in Palestine a ‘homeland’ for Jews, thus staking Britain’s claim for control of the territory, which also was of interest to its allies, France and Russia. British forces also captured Damascus in October 1918. In 1919, with Russia now preoccupied with its own revolution, Britain and France negotiated the division of the Arab provinces: Syria was reorganized as Lebanon and Syria under French control; and Palestine and Transjordan under British control. The 3 provinces of Mesopotamia were reorganized as Iraq under British control, while Arabia and Yemen, both of which were assumed to have no valuable resources, were recognized as independent states.

This paper will examine the changing attitudes of the Shiites of southern Iraq to the British during World War I. Despite the attempt at a pan-Islamic project by Sultan Abdulhamit II in the 1890s and early 1900s, significant tensions existed between the Ottoman state and Iraqi Shiites, who had not forgotten the 1843 reduction of Karbala by troops from Istanbul and who resented the Sunni missionary campaigns among them launched by the sultan in the two decades before the outbreak of the war. The Shiite leadership had ambiguous and, over time, contrary attitudes toward the British. Because of the endowment for Shiite charities in Najaf known as the Oudh Bequest, by a deposed Shiite ruling house in what became the United Provinces and Oudh in British India, the British had for some time had a role in the religious politics of Najaf and had some clients there. Many Shiite Iraqi families had ties of trade or missionary work to British India, especially Bombay and Luckow. Still, most Iraqi Shiite clerics were dead set against having happen to them what had happened to their Indian coreligionists, and some organized a tribal riposte to the first British invasion during the war. Many of the 14,000 tribal irregulars who fought alongside Süleyman Askerî’s regular troops at Shaiba against Townsend’s forces in April of 1915 were Shiites answering the call to jihad issued by their clerics in Najaf and Karbala. As it became clear that the second campaign, of Maude, would succeed, some Iraqi Shiites began hoping for an independent Iraq, midwifed by the British intervention. British bombardment of the shrine cities during their winter 1917 advance up to Baghdad from Basra provoked another round of hostility. While the 1920 revolt provoked by disappointment that Iraq was given to the British Empire as a Mandate in the post-war settlement has been much studied, the changing posture of Iraqi Shiites during the war itself has received less attention. The paper is based on Arabic, Persian and Urdu memoirs and biographical dictionaries published Ottoman sources, and on British archival documents.

Edward Erickson, (Marine Corps University), “Wasp or Mosquito? The Arab Revolt in Turkish Military History.”

The irregular operations of T.E. Lawrence and others, during the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans in 1916-1918, have achieved almost mythic status in the literature of both the First World War and in the study of counterinsurgency. In many quarters, the success and effectiveness of Arab operations in attriting Ottoman strength and diverting resources from the main theaters of war are accepted almost without dispute. This historiography and received wisdom have gone unchallenged for almost a century without inquiry into the Ottoman record. In fact, the Ottomans waged a very successful counterinsurgency campaign against Lawrence and the Arabs, which reduced their contribution to the allied cause to almost nothing. This paper examines the Turkish official military histories of the Palestine and Hejaz campaigns to establish the affect that the Arab Revolt had on Ottoman army operations in those theatres.

Dr. Ed Erickson is a Professor of Military History at the Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia. He is a retired regular army field artillery officer and foreign area officer, specializing in Turkey. He is the author or co-author of numerous articles and eleven books about the
Ottoman Army and Turkey, the most recent of which is *Ottomans and Armenians, A Study in Counterinsurgency*.

**Hakeem Naim, (UC-Davies), "Afghanistan's Young Turks: WWI and the Rise of the Islamic Nationalism in Afghanistan"**

When the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War in October of 1914, a wave of Muslim solidarity and sympathy for the Ottomans emerged in India, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. The idea of mobilizing a Muslim revolution against the British culminated in the exchange of various diplomatic missions between the Ottomans, Germans, and Afghans, which intensified the existing anti-British and anti-Russian sentiments in the region. This paper argues that the Ottomans’ social, political and religious contacts with the Afghans and the pro-Ottoman activities of the Afghan nationalists such as Mahmud Tarzi, an Ottoman educated politician who invited a group of former Young Turk officers to Afghanistan, contributed to the rise of nationalism and the emergence of modern Afghanistan in the first decades of the 20th century.

The concept of Ittihad-i Islam, Islamic Unity, was transformed into an anti-British resistance by Tarzi and the nationalist Young Afghans through the Islamization of “modern nationalism.” They emphasized Watan, homeland, as a divine object to be defended, which kindled the third Jihad against the British and led to the independence of Afghanistan in 1919. As a multi-ethnic society, Afghanistan could not form a homogeneous ethnic nationalism. Similar to the 19th century Ottoman Empire, nationalism in Afghanistan required a multi-ethnic polity that was politically organized around an inclusive and common concept: Islam. Using the content of religion and the theme of external aggression, Mahmud Tarzi and Young Afghan nationalists advocated for national unity and centralization through religious justification. The term Afghan was redefined within the frame of Sunni-Islam.

The Islamic perception of nationalism is shaped by a composite of colonial and imperial modernism and religiopolitical importance of unity in an Islamic community or, Umma. Nationalism in a form of religious, political, and cultural unity at a time when the relationship of the Ottomans and Afghanistan were highly internationalized was advantageous for appealing to construct policies that promise to correct “injustice” and fight against colonial exploitation and humiliation. Using mainly non-European primary sources, this paper also traces the echoes and impacts of Young Turks nationalism in Afghanistan, which was propagated by Tarzi and a group of Ottoman officers during World War I, within the socio-political paradigm of Ittihad-i Islam.

Panel VI.

**Jonathan Conlin, (University of Southampton), “Informal Empire” or Fiscal Nationalism? The National Bank of Turkey and Ottoman Economic Development, 1909-22.”**

The establishment of a National Bank of Turkey in 1909 represented a bold experiment, an attempt to break the near-monopoly of the French-dominated Imperial Ottoman Bank (IOB) over Ottoman economic development, a monopoly which in turn gave the French foreign ministry extensive powers over internal Ottoman affairs. These powers were in addition to those France and other western powers exercised through the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. The NBT has traditionally been seen by English and French scholars such as Marian Kent and Jacques
Thobie as an unsuccessful attempt by British and German financiers to muscle into the lucrative Ottoman bond market. Meanwhile Turkish scholars such as Edhem Eldem have ignored the NBT entirely. Yet the NBT can also be seen as an attempt by Djavid Bey and fellow Young Turk ministers to play the western powers off against each other, to reassert Ottoman fiscal sovereignty.

Though the NBT’s failure to issue the 1910 Ottoman Loan has been taken as evidence that it was never a serious challenger, the NBT did issue Treasury Bills and smaller loans, funding the construction of battleships and establishing the Turkish Petroleum Company in 1912 – which in turn secured the valuable concession for Mesopotamian oil in 1914, a few months before the outbreak of the war. Seen in this light, the NBT indirectly laid the foundations of the 1928 Red Line Agreement which determined how the former Ottoman Empire’s oil deposits were exploited.

This re-assessment of the NBT experiment emerges from groundbreaking research into the life and career of Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian. Born into a family of Armenian merchants in Constantinople in 1869, Gulbenkian was one of the founders of the NBT. As conseiller financier to the Ottoman ambassador in Paris, he was Djavid Bey’s appointed negotiator with the French finance ministry for the 1910 loan. Finally, as is well known, he was an expert in oil finance, an experienced intermediary in negotiations between rival oil producers and distributors, the mastermind behind Turkish Petroleum.

This paper draws on Gulbenkian’s private archives (to which the author has been given exclusive access) as well as those of Deutsche Bank and Barings Bank (never before consulted). By considering this new material alongside papers from more familiar state archives in Paris, London, Washington and Istanbul, this paper reveals a surprisingly fluid set of relationships, relationships which cut across the Anglo-French “entente cordiale” as well as the usual opposition between “financial imperialist” powers on the one hand and their supposedly passive “victim”, the Ottoman Empire on the other.

Hasan Kayali (Department of History, University of California, San Diego), “The End of World War and Shifting Imperatives Before the Settlement.”

I will focus on the perception, implementation, and shifting understandings of seminal compacts and guiding principles promulgated at the war’s end. Even as the fluidity – and, often, the duplicity and deception-- inherent in wartime and postwar agreements has been noted in national narratives as well as broader scholarship, declarations and compacts such as Wilson’s Fourteen Points, the Mudros Agreement, and the National Pact emerge in standard narratives as firm and defining touchstones of the postwar settlement. The paper seeks to destabilize the certainties accorded to such texts in historical accounts by highlighting contingencies that shaped and re-shaped meanings attached to them. In particular, it interrogates the evolving comprehensions and manipulation of these texts in relationship to one another. The focal points of the analysis will be
(1) the relationship of the articulations of Wilson’s Fourteen Points to the armistice agreements in general and the armistice of Mudros in particular; (2) interpretations of the Wilsonian principles and of the terms of the Mudros Agreement against military conflict in the unfolding of the National Pact within the Kemalist movement. The investigation will be at the intersection of the several stated objectives of the conference: interplay between foreign powers and indigenous movements (especially in Anatolia and Syria) at the time of imperial dissolution; options that presented themselves and paths not taken; the strategic foregrounding of ethnic, national, and tribal identities; and teleological accounts that have lost sight of the malleability of the compacts and the resilience, opportunism, and resourcefulness of the actors. The overarching framework will be a relational one that seeks to complicate (1) the notion of the inevitable, even tidy, breakdown of the Ottoman Empire into its familiar successor states and (2) the assumption of seamless and predestined replacement of imperial ideologies and allegiances by national ones.

David Saltzman (Washington DC), “‘An Empire Dies, Who Pays for the Funeral? The Question of State Succession between Turkey and the Ottoman Empire.”

State Succession Paper Outline

I. Introduction/Purpose
   A. Trying to understand the character of the Republic of Turkey in the context of state succession:
      i. When historians, politicians and other people talk about the Republic of Turkey in the era where the country was forming, do they refer to the NGA?
      ii. Regardless of how the actors are classified/named, can we transfer the obligations of the Ottoman Empire or the NGA to the current Turkish Republic?

II. State Succession
   A. Meaning/History in International Law
      i. Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties and Vienna Convention on State Succession in Respect of Property
      ii. International Law Commission Articles on State Responsibility
   B. Successors vs. Continuing States
      i. Why the classification may matter
      ii. Continuing States: General belief is that a continuing state accedes to the rights and obligations of its predecessor.
         a) Examples
            1. Austro-Hungarian Empire
            2. Federal Republic of Germany
            3. Russia
      iii. Successor States
         a) Different Types of Succession
            1. Dissolution of State
            2. Cession/Transfer of Territory
3. Secession

III. The Turkish Case: Studying the Republic of Turkey Through A look at Its History

A. Demise of the Ottoman Empire
   i. Parliamentary Movement in the 19th Century
   ii. WWI Era

B. Interim Period: Establishment of TBMM
   i. Amasya Protocole of October 1919
   ii. Treaty of Sevres

C. Official Birth of the Turkish Republic
   i. Treaty of Lausanne
      a) Rights & Obligations of Turkish Republic under the treaty towards the Ottoman Empire
         1. Article 58(I)

D. Subsequent Acts of the Turkish Republic with respect to the obligations of the Ottoman Empire
   i. Debts of the Ottoman Empire
   ii. Treaties
   iii. International Recognition
   iv. Ankara Agreement
      a) Article II

E. Conclusion: Continuing State or Successor
   i. Territorial change & Legal Identity of a State
   ii. Social and political change
   iii. Previous Arbitral Decisions
      a) Ottoman Public Debt Arbitration Case
      b) Lighthouse Arbitration Case

IV. Rights and Obligations of Turkey: There is no argument to be made in either scenario that the law requires Turkey to act in a certain way.

A. Turkey as a Continuing State
   i. General belief is that a continuing state accedes to the rights and obligations of its predecessor.
      a) Still, after 100 years of the Ottoman Empire’s demise, any discovery of debt that will be ascribed to Turkey is unlikely.
   ii. When it comes to the transfer of rights and obligations that arise from internationally wrongful acts, the area is still unclear even for continuing states.
      a) Problem of classifying international wrongs.
      b) The problem of timing
   iii. Problem of enforcement in the case of Turkey

B. Turkey as a Successor
   i. General Rule of no transfer of rights and obligations.
   ii. Exceptions
   iii. Non-applicability

V. Conclusions
A. Despite Turkey’s classification as a continuing state of the Ottoman Empire or a successor of it, it is not necessary that any legal determination will lead to practical effects.
B. The current state of the law does not require Turkey to proactively take on the obligations and remedy in some way the loss during WWI. This lack of obligation does not mean that Turkey will not or should not be proactive, just that the state of the law is not at that level yet.

Harun Buljina (Columbia University), “Borders, States, and the Ends of Empire: Recent Approaches to the First World War in Ottoman and Balkan Historiography”

As part of the broader historical interest in the First World War on the eve of its centennial, Ottoman Studies have seen a number of productive articles and monographs pertaining to the period in Anatolia and the Arab provinces. This paper surveys certain salient aspects of this burgeoning literature, with a particular focus on how it relates to recent scholarship on the contemporary Balkans. While lost to the Empire a mere two years earlier, I argue that the experience of its European provinces and successor states nonetheless deserves consideration in the effort to arrive at a more holistic understanding of the place of the Great War in Middle Eastern and Ottoman history. Building in part on the concept of the “war decade” of 1912-1922, I close by suggesting a number of remaining avenues for further bringing the Middle and Near Easts into conversation across the traditional area studies divide.
The Clash of Empires: World War I and the Middle East

Conference organized by the University of Cambridge Centre for the Study of the International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa (CIRMENA), the University of Utah and the Turkish Historical Society
June 13-14, 2014, Cambridge, UK

To mark this hundredth anniversary of WWI, a two-day conference to be held at the University of Cambridge, will examine the clash between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, and its related impact on the social and political causes of the Ottoman collapse. The conference will examine the immediate and long-term implications of the processes of imperial dissolution through a set of theoretically guided and empirically based questions. The goal of the conference is to bring together experts and scholars from different disciplines to exchange theoretical and empirical insights, as well as to provide an academic platform for fruitful discussion on the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the nation-state system in the Middle East.

The conference organizing committee is as much interested in the causes of WWI as in its results and implications for the Middle East region. Discussions of the pre-War balance of power, escalation of tensions in Europe, and the Ottoman response to the outbreak of the conflicts will be encouraged, as will specific studies on different fronts in the eastern theatre, such as the Gallipoli and Suez campaigns. The conference will address questions on the following themes:

1) To what extent were the political tensions between the British and Ottoman empires inevitable? How did Orientalism and Islamophobia play a role in shaping British public opinion throughout the nineteenth century and on the eve of WWI? How did ethno-religious identities shape the perceptions of policies and institutions?

2) How did domestic politics affect foreign policy considerations in Great Britain? What was the balance between national economic interests and personal ideological leanings among British decision makers? How did Great Britain's evolving national identity in the Victorian, and later, Edwardian, periods affect its imperial aspirations?

3) How did the Ottoman government perceive the growing animosity in Great Britain leading up to WWI? What diplomatic measures were taken to avoid the clash between the two empires? How did the Ottomans view Great Britain in comparison to the other major powers of the time?

4) What patterns of imperial disintegration, if any, might explain the collapse of the Ottoman Empire? How can one define the interplay between foreign power, nationalist rebellion, and weakened state in the last days of the Ottoman Empire? How does this triangle relate to modern-day cases of failing states?

5) How did WWI impact the Middle East? How did the war transform the region's social, political, and economic life? What considerations and options were disregarded or underestimated following the War?
6) What were the perspectives of popular nationalisms and confessional identities in the progression of WWI? How did the war transform Islamic, Arab and sub-national identities? How did the local press convey these processes of identity formation?

7) How did WWI change British policy toward the region? What characterizes the alliances that were formed between the major powers and local forces? To what extent did the War bring about the exploitation of ethnic, confessional, and tribal identities?

8) How is the legacy of the Ottoman Empire remembered and utilized in today’s Middle East? How has the collapse affected perceptions of Islamic rule? How have perceptions of the Ottoman Empire changed over the years?

9) What is the role of nationalist teleological approaches in writing the histories of the late imperial settings? How is the writing of history affected by the vantage point of modern nation-states that emerged after the collapse of imperial orders—that is, in anticipation of the birth of nation-state structures? How has post-colonialism affected the study of WWI history?

The Conference to be held at Cambridge University will provide a stimulating venue for senior and junior scholars to present the most recent and cutting-edge research on the above themes. The organizers will be able to provide, in select cases, accommodation and travel expenses. It is anticipated that a selection of the papers presented will be published as an edited volume following a strict peer-review process. The volume is projected to be published in the course of 2015.

A title and 300-500 word abstract of proposed papers should be sent to Elise Lapaire el402@cam.ac.uk, by January 31, 2014. To be considered for publication in the edited volume, all accepted proposals must be followed by a full paper by May 1, 2014.

Organizers:
Dr. Roxane Farmanfarmaian (CIRMENA, University of Cambridge)
Dr. Hakan Yavuz (University of Utah)

For questions, please contact Elise Lapaire el402@cam.ac.uk