DELEGITIMIZING THE OTTOMAN IMPERIAL ORDER
AT THE THRESHOLD OF NEW DIPLOMACY

(The Interplay of Anglo-American Policies on the Ottoman Armenians, 1914-1923)

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This dissertation examines the interplay between the policies of the United States and Britain vis-à-vis the Ottoman Armenians from the Great War through the Lausanne Peace Conference. It starts with a review of historical background of their policies prior to the war. Then, it looks into the development of different political aspects of the issue of Ottoman Armenians in view of the British war aims as well as America’s neutral status in the war. With American entry into the war in April 1917, the thesis concentrates on the impact of British efforts to induce America to get involved in the Near Eastern conflict, and continues its focus on the Anglo-American interaction at the Paris Peace Conference. The thesis discusses the emergence of the mandatory system and the American efforts for a mandate in the Ottoman geography in the light of tension between the notions of new diplomacy vs. old diplomacy. It concludes with an analysis of the political circumstances that culminated in the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

Whereas America was practically a nonexistent political player in the pre-war period, its involvement in the Ottoman geopolitical space underwent a dramatic transformation toward the latter part of the war and during the postwar peace negotiations. Under the impetus of Wilson’s policy of interventionism, America emerged as one of the key players in the Ottoman settlement. Britain did its utmost to convert America’s rising power in world affairs to suit its own foreign policy goal of safeguarding its imperial interests in the former Ottoman lands. This dissertation posits that via the prism of Anglo-American policies on the Ottoman Armenians, it is possible to trace the major dynamics and factors which led to the undermining of the legitimacy of Ottoman imperial order in the post-war Near East at the threshold of Wilson’s new diplomacy.
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INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Age unleashed dynamics of change in the nineteenth century that challenged the viability of poly-ethnic and multi-religious political systems. Differences in economic power and military technology among states rendered global politics a precarious environment for those that could not keep pace with this dramatic transformation.

Dominic Lieven argues that in the relentless rivalry for sustaining and/or expanding political control, the West European maritime empires were more successful in meeting the demands of the new era by virtue of their ability to adapt to technological innovations, generate fiscal and financial resources commensurate with the necessities of socio-economic stability, and reform their political institutions. The less successful group of empires, which spanned essentially over an uninterrupted continental expanse, i.e. the Ottoman, Russian, and Chinese empires, shared some common characteristics such as a centralized bureaucracy, absolutist political power, and pre-modern economic conditions in an overwhelmingly agrarian society. The primary dilemma for the second type of empire was how to preserve the unity of their comparatively stagnant political systems against the demands of nationalism and economic dynamism. Their ability to reform their military, bureaucratic and political structures essentially determined the fate of their state sovereignty, i.e. renewing or repudiating political legitimacy both within and without.
According to this viewpoint, the Ottoman failure to reform its state system precipitated its ultimate dissolution.¹

Although such analyses provide useful paradigms to understand fundamental dynamics of the period, they tend to overlook the complexity of varying responses produced by the second type of empires to meet the challenges of modernity and nationalism. Other than ascribing an essentialist inability to the second type empires, such approaches did not also explain much, if any, about the erosion of state legitimacy through the intrusion of stronger players into the geopolitical realms of this second type of empire. Such encroachments took the form of either direct political intervention, or the system of extraterritorial concessions, i.e. the Capitulations. In the Ottoman case, among other factors which were also related to the encroachment of major powers, the emergence of protégé communities as well as increased foreign control in trade and economy added insult to injury by undermining further the moral and material basis of state legitimacy. For instance, only a few weeks before its entry into the Great War and under seemingly suitable circumstances, the Sublime Porte was able to abrogate the Capitulations and demand an increase in its customs duty. Once the armistice at Mudros was signed, the restoration of the capitulatory rights was among the first stipulations the Entente powers and America imposed on the Ottoman government.

As another feature of this period, Peter Holquist points outs to a general pattern in state practices across Europe from the second half of the nineteenth century, in which the population and demographic features came to be considered an object of policy and the

social realm as a sphere for measuring and intervention by the state. Borrowing Holquist’s term, “population politics” was not only employed by poly-ethnic states to “mold” through manipulation their demographic composition. Population politics also became an instrument in international politics to assert or reject legitimacy for statehood over a specific territory. Nationalist and revolutionary organizations, too, came to see demographics as a significant factor in their bid for political control of a certain region. In the interplay of Anglo-American policies on the Armenian issue, the demographic situation figured repeatedly in the diplomatic assessments. Claims and counterclaims for preponderance in population, and alternative ideas to supplant demographic disadvantages pervaded the diplomatic arena in the quest for political legitimacy.

This dissertation aims to analyze the interaction between the policies of America and Great Britain on the Armenian question from the Great War through the Lausanne Peace Conference. Prior to World War I, American involvement in Armenian affairs had been limited to missionary and educational interests; and unlike Great Britain, its role in the diplomatic arena on this question was almost non-existent. British diplomacy, on the other hand, had been at the forefront at least since the Treaty of Berlin (1878) when the Armenian question had become a subject of great power diplomacy. Until its entry into the war in April 1917, American foreign policy adhered to the Monroe Doctrine which had precluded active involvement in European affairs, although the United States had benefited

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3 Anaide Ter Minassian, Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1887-1912), (translated by A.M. Berrett, Massachusetts, Cambridge: the Zoryan Institute,1984), 4-5.
immensely during the first years of the war from its foreign trade and financial transactions under neutral status. By the end of the war, America had emerged as one of the primary powers, if not the foremost, in terms of political involvement in the Armenian issue. The age-long missionary impact on American perception of this question and British diplomacy’s strategic goals conspired to prepare the ground for President Wilson’s unexpected activism in the Ottoman settlement.

By the end of the war, and largely owing to war itself, the dynamics of international system had changed drastically, with the United States exhibiting its supremacy through a new political discourse, named in the literature on this period as the new diplomacy, which not only allowed but also prescribed active American involvement in shaping the postwar world order. Meanwhile, Great Britain, though victorious at the end of the war, was at the limits of exhaustion\(^4\) and financially dependent on America to keep its imperial domain standing. Cognizant of its diminishing great power position, British diplomacy employed its time-honored methods to attain war aims, as set forth in the wartime secret agreements, but it had to do this under the constraints of newly invented notions such as mandates, a league of nations, non-annexation, nationality or self-determination, open-door, freedom of the seas, etc.

At the Paris Peace Conference, Wilsonian diplomacy introduced this new array of concepts, thereby illustrating America’s influence in the aftermath of the war. Epitomized in Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and particularly through his personal attachment to the creation of a league of nations, the new diplomacy challenged the age-long European

\(^{4}\) Page to Lansing, December 19, 1917, Box 2, Folder 3, Robert Lansing Papers, MC083, Princeton University Library, Manuscripts Division, Princeton.
monopoly of great power politics and, paved the way to direct American involvement in world politics. However, despite the fact that their states’ material and financial exhaustion compelled them to rephrase their aims in accordance with the Wilsonian ideas, the old world’s veteran diplomats did this adeptly by appropriating the jargon of the new diplomacy to articulate, not to repudiate, their wartime desiderata at the Paris Peace Conference.

While presenting their war aims in line with Wilsonian principles, the Entente policymakers, with the British at the forefront, steadily urged the United States to assume its “responsibility” on behalf of humanity by accepting an Armenian mandate under the League of Nations. Secretary of State Lansing believed that even President Wilson, the originator of the new diplomacy, and his confidant Colonel Edward M. House, were carried away by European intrigue. At Paris, political adherence to the widely proclaimed principles of the new era, in other words the tension between the old diplomacy and the new one, was nowhere more strikingly tested, and exposed, than it was in the Ottoman settlement, especially regarding the Armenian question.

All in all, British diplomacy utilized the Armenian issue as an important subject of its wartime propaganda for influencing American public opinion to arouse its support to the Entente cause. It was the Ottoman government’s decision, however, in the spring of 1915 to relocate en masse the Armenian population of Anatolia to the southern territories

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of the empire with mass loss of life that gave the British one of their most effective themes for mobilizing public opinion in America in support of the British war effort.

It appears that Entente and American policymakers both stimulated the formation of an extremely negative view of the Ottoman Empire through wartime propaganda and then manipulated this image to delegitimize the Ottoman political order and thus implement their territorial partition plans.

As will be explored in the following chapters, in spite of all their proclaimed differences in their worldviews, there was a striking unanimity in the political discourse employed by the representatives of the old diplomacy and those of the new one in ascribing an intrinsic incapacity to the Ottoman state to provide good governance from within. They characterized it as a perennially failed state owing to its alleged age-long “misrule” that forfeited its legitimacy as a government over Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Not only the British (and the Entente) politicians and diplomats but also the American officials, including President Wilson himself, constantly used this pretext in their vigorous endeavor to partition the Ottoman lands and create new political entities.

Among the Central powers, the Ottoman Empire was the only one as such that its capital was under the occupation of the Entente armies and its government affairs controlled by occupation officials titled “high commissioners;” its heartland invaded by a combination of Entente forces and armies of its former subjects; former Ottoman Cabinet ministers, including the Grand Vizier, and high-level officials court-martialed or kept as captives at Malta; last but not least, it was handed a treaty in August 1920 that, had it been applied, would have reduced Turkish sovereignty to a rump-state in Anatolia.
America and the Ottoman Empire had not become belligerents against one another during the Great War. American policy toward the Ottoman Empire, however, was less than friendly, particularly after the former’s entry into war in April 1917. Ottoman policy toward America, on the other hand, never became hostile, notwithstanding the fact that it was the Sublime Porte who decided to break bilateral diplomatic relations under Germany’s pressure. The Ottoman authorities also continued their friendly attitude towards American missionary societies, relief organizations, and educational institutions in the empire throughout the war, which continued uninterrupted even after the severance of diplomatic relations.

It was an ironic situation that the American missionaries and relief personnel who had been allowed to stay and continue their work in the empire had become the most effective asset of the British wartime propaganda toward the Ottomans through their reports constituting the bulk of the disseminated material. The anti-Ottoman rhetoric which had been used by the American missionaries, and widely propagated by the British wartime “publicity network,” had colored the official discourse of both the American and British statesmen in deciding on the fate of the Ottoman lands.

Without considering this constant communication and flow of information at various levels and on both formal and informal channels between Great Britain and America, it would be difficult to understand the abrupt rise in American interest in the schemes of the Ottoman settlement at the Paris Peace Conference as well as the intensely hostile American rhetoric employed against the Ottomans.
I will discuss the interaction of Anglo-American policies toward the Armenian issue in the following order:

The first chapter will briefly review the British official position on the Armenian question prior to the Great War, particularly in the light of the pro-Armenian reform project between 1912-14. It will also give an overview of American missionary involvement in Armenian affairs.

The second chapter will examine the organization and application of British wartime propaganda on the Ottoman Armenians in the light of British policy toward America and the American missionary impact in this regard. A separate section will summarize American policy toward the Ottoman Empire and the launching of a large-scale relief operation in the Ottoman Empire (and later in Caucasia under Russian control) for the displaced Armenian population.

The third chapter will deal with the changing geopolitical circumstances in view of America’s entry into war as well as the collapse of Tsarist Russia in 1917, which gave rise to British efforts to induce Washington to declare of war against the Sublime Porte. I will concentrate on Wilson’s peace overtures, the new impetus given to missionary-led public propaganda, as well as British-led efforts to form a local pro-Entente bloc in Caucasia against the Ottoman and German advance into the region in the last year of the war.

In the fourth chapter I will attempt to analyze American and British policies toward an Armenian mandate project, and mutual perceptions and exchange of views, as well as direct and indirect influences of various circles to this effect. The tension between the new diplomacy and the old one will provide the general theme of the discussion in this chapter.
In a separate section, I will focus on missionary “diplomacy” as far as its involvement in Washington and London’s policymaking process was concerned. As part of this “diplomacy” I will also look into the vast repatriation effort and relief drive launched right after the Mudros Armistice in the Ottoman territories and Caucasia.

In the last chapter, I will analyze Wilson’s mandate project in the Ottoman Empire, discussing its emergence and its ultimate failure in the light of geostrategic dynamics in the region as well as the impact of domestic American politics. In a separate section, I will touch upon the attempts to revive the Armenian issue at the Lausanne Peace Conference through a national home project, upon an American initiative and with the British support, although the latter was less than consistent.

It would be appropriate to underline at the outset that this dissertation is not an examination of the history of the Armenian question in the Ottoman context, nor is it aimed at referring to or commenting on the controversy as to how the events affecting the Ottoman Armenians in 1915 during the en masse population transfer by the Ottoman authorities should be characterized. I believe that entering into such a discussion would require legal expertise and detailed examination of first-hand records of all the states and parties directly involved in this issue. Such a colossal undertaking is outside the scope of this study. Further, there is an increasing amount of literature on different aspects—historical, political, diplomatic, legal, sociological, demographic, ethnographic, etc., of the Armenian question which, while expanding current knowledge on this issue, also points to the enormity of the future work that needs to be done for a comprehensive academic understanding.
This dissertation is, therefore, confined to the analysis of the interplay of Anglo-American policies on the Ottoman Armenians from the Great War up until the conclusion of the Lausanne Peace Treaty. It is mainly based on the available American and British archival records, private papers and collections, and other primary sources.
CHAPTER I: ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT WAR

British Diplomacy and the Armenian Crisis of 1912-1914

Long before fin de siècle Ottoman diplomacy had been in the throes of internal and external woes stemming from the conflicting imperial aims of European great powers toward its lands on the one hand, and the breakaway movements amongst its various ethnic and religious minorities on the other. These two dynamics, often spurring and reinforcing each other, severely checked Ottoman statesmen’s capability to reverse the downward course of Ottoman political affairs. With each “reform scheme,” the Ottoman elites saw an increase in encroachment by one or the other foreign power that added further complication to an already checkered situation. The Ottomans’ efforts to bring order to their own house encountered, more often than not, antagonism from within, which in return prompted intervention from without. 8

In addition to political difficulties, there were also deeper economic and strategic forces at work that militated against Ottoman endeavors to arrest the looming likelihood of a total disintegration. It is hard to overemphasize the crippling impact of the Capitulations, i.e. the extraterritorial concessions to foreigners in commercial, judicial and criminal affairs, upon the empire’s socio-economic fabric and domestic cohesion. Though averse to

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this situation, the Ottoman officials were in no position to limit the scope of these concessions, let alone to abrogate them. This became evident particularly in the course of several fruitless attempts to abolish or modify the capitulatory regime by the Young Turks following the 1908 Revolution. Rivalry among the great powers, not to mention their capitulatory rights, disturbed and usually incapacitated Ottoman efforts to modernize their country and revitalize their economy, and thus precipitated political turmoil. Therefore, the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, notwithstanding the optimism it had created at the beginning, soon proved to be insufficient to remedy the chronic malady of the so-called “Sick Man of Europe.” The efforts to uphold Ottomanism above ethno-religious differences did not sit well with the aspirations of various ethno-nationalist groups whose breakaway tendencies were frequently occasioned by foreign intervention.

According to an analysis, the gulf between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe in productive power, in military strength and government efficiency, was at least as wide in 1908 as it had been in 1774. The general tendency in the declinist approach to the late Ottoman history sees it as an impossibility to expect the Ottomans to rejuvenate from within. Only through outside intervention by the powers to implement directly a thoroughgoing reform would have been the remedy. Yet, this was also not an option for the Ottomans except where European material interests were involved. The mutual suspicions and rivalries of the great powers rendered any comprehensive reform scheme ineffective as a consistent program of rehabilitation. These insurmountable dynamics plunged the
empire into a maelstrom of disintegration engulfing the entire Ottoman population with disastrous consequences.⁹

As a noteworthy example of great power meddling, the competition of obtaining railway concessions can be cited here. Ottoman efforts to develop railways in the empire each time encountered great difficulty owing to rivalry among the powers. Great Britain, for instance, resented the presence in the Ottoman Empire of German firms building railways, seeing it an encroachment onto its interests in the Near East. British Ambassador Lowther was aware of the Ottoman frustration of the great power duplicity regarding “reforms” when he quoted the Ottoman complaint: “We are invited on the hand to improve the position of our subjects in Asia Minor but we are deprived of the means of doing so by not being allowed to build railways.”¹⁰

Extracting concessions from the Sublime Porte required what Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, called “diplomatic effort.” Ironically, while the Ottoman Empire bore the brunt of the detrimental impacts of the capitulatory regime, British statesmen resented its continuation in Egypt under their protectorate. Despite the fact that they were occupying an incomparably different status in the scale of balance of power, British officials found the debilitating regime wrought by the Capitulations unbearable and incompatible with a state’s sovereignty to run its own affairs.¹¹

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¹¹ Viscount Grey of Fallokon, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916, vol. I-II, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), 1, 9-11. Grey remarked: “As long as we assumed responsibility for the government of Egypt, the Capitulations were like a noose round our neck, which any Great Power, having rights under the Capitulations, could tighten at will.”
The growing significance of the Armenian issue as a subject of great power diplomacy was part of a more general and larger problem of what came to be known as the “Eastern Question,” namely how to succeed in a scramble for acquiring as large a share as possible from the spoils at the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Although foreign involvement in Armenian affairs, in terms of cultural and economic impact dated back to the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Treaty of Berlin internationalized, and according to some authors “legitimized,” the Armenian Question, as a subject of great power diplomacy.12

In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Armenians, like many other ethno-religious elements of the empire came increasingly under the influence of European ideas and experienced a cultural self-awareness. Modernization efforts by Ottoman statesmen, improved communications, mass use of the printing press, expanding foreign trade, and the advent of missionaries paved the way for such a development.13 Of the ethno-national groups in the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians were among those who had attracted great sympathy throughout the world. As an indication of this sympathy, for instance, prominent French figures such as Georges Clemenceau, Anatole France, Jean Jaurès, and others founded a fortnightly journal Pro Armenia in November 1900 to advocate for the Armenian cause.14

Nevertheless, it was Russian Armenians who had spearheaded the ideological and organizational formation of Armenian nationalism by setting up the two most influential secret political parties: the Hunchak Party in Geneva in 1887 (later, its center was moved

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12 Minassian, *Nationalism and Socialism*, 4-5.
to London), and the Dashnaktsutiun (the Armenian Revolutionary Federation) in Tiflis in 1890. The aim of these parties was the “national independence” of Ottoman Armenians, while their method of “insurrectionary revolutionary action” was based upon the expectation of provoking great power intervention. These parties disseminated nationalist propaganda among the Armenian populations in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere through their official organs: Hunchak (Bell), and Droshak (Flag). They stirred up revolts whenever possible in eastern Anatolia, staged violent demonstrations in Istanbul and in other cities, plotted assassinations and bombings, and employed other coercive and terrorist methods. The leaders of the revolutionary Armenian parties thought that the Greek, Romanian, Serbian and Bulgarian peoples attained their nation-states by following such a course of action. Hence, both the Hunchak Party and Dashnaktsutiun attempted to transplant the Balkan, particularly Bulgarian, model of nationalism into Asia Minor where Armenians were only a minority on the territory they were claiming for themselves.

For Great Britain, as of Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-8 and the signing of the Treaty of Berlin, the Armenian question became another significant aspect of the Eastern Question, to be dealt with under the impetus of political and strategic considerations of great power politics. Fearing that the Russian advance in the Asia Minor would threaten its lifeline to eastern imperial possessions, Great Britain managed to compel Russia to revise its stipulations with more moderate terms by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. As a strategic measure against the territorial expansion of Russia further south toward the Mediterranean

16 Louise Nalbandian, The Armenian Revolutionary Movement (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California UP, 1963), 115-31 146-56, 176-81; Minassian, Nationalism and Socialism, 12, 18.
17 Langer, Diplomacy, 150-1.
and Persian Gulf sea-lines, Great Britain moved to secure its own position in the Near East by getting under its control strategic Ottoman regions and sea-ports in and around the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean in an incremental, yet determined, policy. British efforts to “encourage” the Ottomans to undertake reforms toward the Armenians included at times the gunboat diplomacy, too, as seen in 1894 when Great Britain sent its Mediterranean Squadron to Beirut which proceeded thence to Marmaris in order to press the Ottoman government to accept the reform scheme.18

King Edward’s visit to the Czar at Reval in June 1908 and news that both sides reached an agreement on certain issues, including a reform scheme for Macedonia added to the Ottoman fears. Sultan Abdul Hamid’s clever diplomacy had been able to maintain the status quo in the Near East by carefully attending the requisites of the balance of power politics at the time.19 However, with consolidation of its power in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean through establishing de jure or de facto protectorates along its seaways, British policy towards the Ottoman Empire underwent a dramatic change. Since Gladstone’s premiership, the British Empire had ceased to be the Sublime Porte’s main ally to turn to against the Tsarist Russia’s expansionist policy towards the Near East. The emergence of the Entente Cordiale between Great Britain, France and Russia at the turn of the century did not bode well for the Ottoman diplomacy’s principal objective, i.e. to maintain the empire’s unity.20

This rapprochement between Russia and Great Britain, whose interests had long been looming large over the Near East, increased the anxiety of the Ottomans. The fears of

19 For Great Britain’s diplomacy at this time, see: Grey, Twenty-Five Years, I, 196, 202-209, 248-9.
20 Ibid., I, 154-5.
yet another secession in the remaining Balkan territories of the empire, exacerbated by the renewed Anglo-Russian initiative for reform in Macedonia, somehow precipitated the Committee of Union and Progress’s action in July 1908 for the Young Turk Revolution.\textsuperscript{21} After all, it was the Near East, and particularly the control of the Turkish Straits and Russia’s ambitions for southward expansion, which had been the original cause of hostility and friction between Great Britain and Russia, and even in these areas the British government was prepared to discuss favorably some changes if Russia would introduce it, as Grey himself had underlined. However, the fact that the question of the Turkish Straits and the Near East concerned the other European powers would make any bilateral arrangement untimely prior to the Great War.\textsuperscript{22}

Ottoman attempts at finding allies or cultivating sympathy for alleviating its vulnerability against external woes were falling on deaf ears. As the British Ambassador in Istanbul brusquely put it in his annual report of 1912, it was not sufficient to desire an alliance and to offer it, “but it must be accepted by the other contracting party.”\textsuperscript{23} Diplomatic overtures that the Committee of Union and Progress (the CUP) government had made in order to cultivate alliance relationships with a major European power did not yield any favorable result. As explained by M. Şiükrü Hanoğlu, neither London nor Berlin was impressed much by such a burdensome engagement with the so-called “Sick-Man of Europe” whose demise was already viewed as foredoomed by its economic and military weakness. The Ottoman defeat by Italy in the war of 1911-12 resulted in the loss of the


\textsuperscript{22} Grey, \textit{Twenty-Five Years}, I, 156-9.

Ottoman Province of Tripoli (Tripoli of Barbary and Cyrenaica), the last territory on the African Continent. The Balkan Debacle in 1912-13 deprived the empire of almost all of its European territory culminating in a dreadful humanitarian disaster for the Muslim population, which deepened further the Ottoman sense of insecurity along with its diplomatic isolation.²⁴

As clearly indicated by Ambassador Gerard Lowther, Great Britain was no more an ally of the Ottomans. He remarked that the Ottoman Empire appeared “to have completely closed her eyes to the fact that our relations with Russia have been modified since the Treaty of Berlin.” The unsympathetic attitude of Great Britain, along with that of the other Powers, during the Balkan Wars, especially Prime Minister Asquith’s remark that “the victors were not to be robbed of the fruits which cost them so dear,” was a “bitter pill for the Turks to swallow,” and hardly reconcilable with the declaration of the powers regarding the integrity of the Ottoman Empire made in the beginning of the war.²⁵

The disastrous defeat of the Ottoman Empire during the First Balkan War in 1912 meant to European diplomatic circles that its disintegration could happen even sooner than presumed. In the meantime, not the Ottoman appeals for great power intervention, but the European fears for a Russo-Austrian conflagration which could precipitate a general war on the continent were effective for a cease-fire and for the convening of a peace conference.²⁶

²⁴ Hanoğlu, Brief History, 167-73.  
Apparently prompted by an imminent Ottoman collapse during First Balkan War, Tsarist Russia suddenly resurrected the Armenian question. Armenian Catholicos Gevork V was authorized to appeal to Czar Nicholas II with a request for protection and reforms on behalf of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. In Istanbul, the Patriarch and the Armenian National Assembly “threw themselves wholeheartedly” behind this new initiative.27

British officials felt that Russian annexation of the eastern Anatolian vilayets was only a question of time. The territory on which Russian and Armenian aspirations focused in eastern Anatolia did not have a geopolitical prominence in itself, except for its proximity to the regions on the British imperial lifeline to its eastern possessions. Foreign Secretary Grey’s main concerns in the region were “open door for trade and an arrangement about the Persian Gulf and below Baghdad.” In February 1913, a memorandum of the Foreign Office concluded that nothing could be done for the Armenians as long as the Porte possessed executive power: foreign control was “no doubt” the only solution.28 Corroborating once more Ottoman fears, the British position was less than enthusiastic in attending to Ottoman concerns during the negotiations for reforms in 1912-14.

While having instigated the Armenian demands for reforms, Russia curtly turned down other powers’ suggestion for allowing the Ottomans to participate in the conference in Istanbul to discuss the reform scheme. Sazonov asserted that the Armenians would have no confidence in the reform “if a Turk participated,” nor would Russia allow the discussion of an Ottoman proposal. It was obvious that Russia wanted a free hand in Armenian affairs

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27 Minassian, Nationalism and Socialism, 55-6.
28 Heller, Great Britain and the Armenian Question, 7.
and made it known to other powers that it should control the reform scheme.\textsuperscript{29} As a result, the great powers, prompted by Russia, decided to debate in Istanbul the reform scheme for an area under Ottoman sovereignty without Ottoman participation. Moreover, Russia threatened the Sublime Porte with military intervention, if the conditions for Armenians did not improve.\textsuperscript{30}

France and Germany were skeptical of Russian proposal for reform and viewed it as a prelude to preparing the ground for annexation of eastern Anatolia, as it required the creation of a single administrative district encompassing the six eastern vilayets and equal representation of the non-Muslims in the provincial councils and gendarmerie, etc. Germany supported the Ottoman efforts to limit as much as possible the excessive Russian demands in the reform scheme.\textsuperscript{31} Tevfik Pasha, the Ottoman Ambassador at London, conveyed Ottoman objections to Russian demands. In response to Russian and Armenian demand for equal representation, the Sublime Porte emphasized that the total number of Armenians in these provinces was 627,715 which did not even constitute a quarter of the whole population in the eastern vilayets. The memorandum presented by the Ottoman Embassy at London gave the following figures for the provinces under the reform scheme:\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Grey to Goschen, January 4, 1914, FO 371/2116.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Grey to Goschen, January 29, 1914, the cable transmitted also the memorandum prepared by the Imperial Ottoman Embassy, ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
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<tr>
<th>Vilayet</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Muslims (male-female)</th>
<th>Armenians (m/f)</th>
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<td>Trabzon</td>
<td>1,063,918</td>
<td>436,943-437,047</td>
<td>16,282 -16,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sivas</td>
<td>1,216,368</td>
<td>502,919-482,913</td>
<td>74,390-69,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canik</td>
<td>382,277</td>
<td>130,642-127,749</td>
<td>13,686-12,314</td>
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<tr>
<td>Van</td>
<td>251,422</td>
<td>96,516- 77,190</td>
<td>37,758- 28,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Aziz (Harput)</td>
<td>514,025</td>
<td>217,987-207,388</td>
<td>38,638-34,583</td>
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<tr>
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<td>419,806</td>
<td>159,528-135,846</td>
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Throughout the Armenian crisis of 1912-14, London had no intent to antagonize Russia. As revealed by Colonel Cemal Bey, the Minister of Public Works at the time, the Ottomans were deeply disappointed once more by the reticent attitude Great Britain had displayed during the negotiations for the reform scheme. The friendly approach and sympathy the Ottomans had expected in their hour of need were not forthcoming from Great Britain. The British Ambassador, Louis Mallet, was unambiguous in explaining to Cemal Bey the underlying aspects of British policy towards the region. He pointedly stated that London had first to consider how far its general interests and relations with Russia and France were affected by such questions as the reform scheme in the eastern vilayets.33

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33 Mallet to Grey, January 5, 1914, FO 371/2117; see also Talat Pasha’s resentment at the British acquiescence to Russia in the reform scheme: “Posthumous Memoirs of Talaat Pasha,” *Current History*, 21
The Ottomans distressingly saw in the Russian-instigated reform project the repetition of the previous pattern in the Balkans: one the one hand, fomenting unrest and disorder in a province, then accusing the Sublime Porte of its inability to maintain internal order, and finally demanding reforms which were invariably to result in the permanent loss of the territory. Following long-drawn-out diplomatic negotiations, the Ottomans had to accept on February 8, 1914 a modified Russian scheme envisaging pro-Armenian measures in administration in the eastern provinces. It is noteworthy that with Germany’s diplomatic mediation, the Sublime Porte managed to dilute the Russian plan, thereby preventing its context from being an Armenian reform project. The Ottoman and Russian authorities agreed to drop all the references to “Armenian” and “Christian” in the final version of plan, and the province of Trabzon with a small Armenian population was added to the area of the project. The Ottoman government was aimed at eliminating any pretext for the Armenian territorial claims.34

The Sublime Porte selected Nicolas Hoff (a Norwegian officer) and Louis Constant Westenenk (Dutch Indies administrator) from a list of five candidates proposed by the powers to be the two inspectors-general for the eastern vilayets. Westenenk and Hoff signed their contracts with the Ottoman government to undertake their duties on July 5, 1914.35

As to the local repercussions, the reform scheme gave rise to high expectations on the Armenian community leaders. They hoped that administrative measures under the

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15:2, (1921: Nov.), 287-8; Enver Bolayır, Talat Paşa’nn Hâturaları (İstanbul: Güven Basımevi, 1946), 20-1, 53-5.
34 Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 76-7.
35 Mallet to Grey, April 7, 1914, FO 371/2116; Mallet to Grey, April 15, 1914; Mallet to Grey May 27, 1914, ibid.
supervision of European inspectors would serve their interests. According to British officials, the Armenian professional and trading classes believed that, owing to their superiority in education and commercial activity, they would, under European control, be able to dominate the Muslim majority in the region. The great majority of the Armenian population in the region who were peasants living in villages were indifferent to such political aspirations.36

Consul Ian Smith in June 1914 wrote on the conditions in the region while referring to the Ottoman government’s efforts to implement the reforms to ameliorate local conditions.37 Unlike the negative image created by the anti-Ottoman propaganda abroad, Smith observed that the Ottoman government was exerting a genuine effort at securing tranquility and maintaining law and order in the region. The reform scheme introduced in the beginning of the year started to produce tangible improvements in security and in other aspects of administrative affairs. Foreign inspectors and advisers appointed by the Sublime Porte in consultation with European powers arrived on the scene and rapidly took part in in the efforts to overhaul gendarmerie and civil administration in the provinces. The Ottoman government moved swiftly to replace ineffective or corrupt local officials with more energetic and able ones.38

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36 Smith to Mallet, January 10, 1914, FO 195/2456; Mallet to Grey, February 9, 1914, FO 371/2130.
37 Smith to Mallet, June 10, 1914, FO 195/2456.
38 Smith to Mallet, June 10, 1914, FO 195/2456; Mallet to Grey, June 29, 1914, FO 371/2135.
Missionary America and Ottoman Armenians

In the diplomatic arena, the involvement of the United States in great power politics on the Armenian reform scheme was nonexistent. In 1913, the new American Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau, had some unsophisticated observations. According to Morgenthau, the uncertainty as to the “frontiers” of Armenia or whether Armenia was not in fact Kurdistan was only a reflection of the uncertainty of the Ottoman government. Save some periods of truce, there had never been peace between these two “races,” for they belonged to two different religions. There was also an actual struggle between the Kurds and Armenians for the possession of lands, he added. He further believed that owing to these unstable conditions and weak Ottoman officials it was “but natural that the shadow of the wings of the Russian eagle should be supposed to hang threateningly over the frontiers of Anatolia.” Yet, he did not think that the majority of the Armenians desired annexation to Russia, and they knew that, as the population was not homogeneous, autonomy was not possible either. Besides, thanks to their more advantageous situation in education and economy, they realized that they should have the practical domination. Morgenthau was aware that due to their fear of a war in Europe the great powers would not object to Russia’s territorial pretensions against the Ottomans, as the latter had no friend in international arena.39

Prior to the Great War the Armenian revolutionary organizations, most of all the Dashnak and Hunchak parties, managed to establish quite an effective network among the expatriate Armenian community in the United States. There they were engaged in

propaganda work, and raising funds through methods including extortion of merchants and others among their compatriots, and arranging the export of new cadres, money, arms, and publications to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman diplomatic and consular missions in the United States were aware of these activities and sent reports to the Sublime Porte about them. Many of the Armenians who had gone to America for work or education starting in the second half of the nineteenth century became naturalized American citizens in time. Their new status of virtual double citizenship, while creating long-lasting diplomatic and legal disputes between the Ottoman and American authorities, provided them with extraterritorial rights under the regime of the Capitulations, thereby facilitating considerably the revolutionary committees’ activities across the two countries.40

American involvement in Armenian affairs in this period was almost exclusively driven by missionary interests that had been evolving since the early nineteenth century. The activities in the Ottoman Empire of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches were directed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).41 The American impact on the Ottoman Armenian community had essentially been a cultural one made through a wide-spread network of missionary schools, churches, printing press and other related organizations. However, it had produced political consequences by stimulating among the Armenians “an awareness of their distinctive cultures.” The American missionary press in the Ottoman Empire promoted the standardization of the Armenian vernacular, which encouraged the educated Armenians who had hitherto spoken

only Turkish to communicate with one another in their native tongue. The American Bible Society cooperated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), in disseminating religious publications in the people’s vernacular. Thus, the American cultural influence in stirring national awareness among the Ottoman Armenians ran counter to the efforts long being exerted by the Ottoman statesmen to uphold the empire’s unity through Ottomanism in line with western ideals.

The American Board (ABCFM), itself founded in 1810, dispatched to the Ottoman Empire a decade later the pioneers of what was to become a more than a century-long missionary work particularly toward the Ottoman Armenians and Arabs. Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk of the ABCFM landed at Izmir in 1820 to start right away their primary objective: to convert the Muslims. Nonetheless, it became clear before long that this was not an easily attainable object, and consequently the missionaries turned their attention primarily to native Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire, though they never lost their hope of evangelizing the “heathen” and converting him to the “Kingdom of God.”

From Izmir, Parsons wrote in February 1820 that “I find a great desire in my breast…to see a system in operation which, with the divine blessing, shall completely demolish this mighty empire of sin.” Since the first half of the nineteenth century, the American missionary influence among the Armenians in Anatolia and Istanbul had steadily grown.

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43 Arpee, *Century*, 155.
By the turn of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Armenians constituted the bulk of the clientele of the ABCFM in the empire.\textsuperscript{47}

Extraterritoriality and immunities of jurisdiction under the Capitulations provided a convenient atmosphere for the American as well as European nationals, including missionaries to expand their activities in the Ottoman lands and create local protégé communities affiliated with them. The capitulatory privileges included almost total immunity of the domicile of the foreign subjects and exemption from all the taxes levied by the Ottoman government, except customs and excise duties, of which the maximum amount must also have been agreed with the foreign powers. The Capitulations created such an exasperating situation for the Ottoman authorities that in addition to the domiciles of the foreigners, the post offices of the foreign powers, the commercial and business facilities, schools, printing houses, and other facilities owned and run by foreigners virtually became exempt from Ottoman jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{48}

Largely owing to the regime of the Capitulations, the American missionary work and influence had rapidly expanded in the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{49} On the eve of World War I, the ABCFM reported that under its control there were nine hospitals, eight colleges, 46 secondary schools, 369 elementary schools; and 137 organized native churches presided by 151 American missionaries who were assisted by 1200 local workers in Anatolia. This figure did not include the three independent high schools (two in Istanbul, one in Izmir).\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{47} Daniel, \textit{American Philanthropy}, 107-8.
\textsuperscript{50} Roger R. Trask, \textit{The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939} (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1971), 9-10; Denovo, \textit{American Interests}, 95-6.
When the Ottoman Government realized that the missionary activities and schools had an impact on the emergence of nationalist ideas, it tried to limit, if not thwart, such intrusions by suspending the permits of some missionaries, closing down a few schools, and limiting the distribution of missionary publications. The Ottoman efforts to stem the negative consequences of the missionary work did not succeed in creating a permanent control upon such activities. The missionary institutions proudly praised their impact upon raising the elites of various nationalities. Robert College at Istanbul had an enormous effect on the emergence of Bulgarian nationalism, while numerous other missionary schools spread in Anatolia such as the Merzifon and Fırat (Euphrates) colleges did the same for Armenian nationalism. Of course, not just the American missionaries, but also Russian agitation, European missionary work, and the nationalist movements in the Balkans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had played a substantial role in the emergence of Armenian nationalist groups.

As of the 1890s the missionary work in Turkey had become the most important project of the American Board and continued to be its leading mission up until the early 1930s with a temporary drop in the activity between the American entry into World War I in April 1917 and the Mudros Armistice in October 1918.

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In order to give boost to their fund-raising activities in the United States, many American missionaries wrote books and gave public speeches with strong anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic undertones. As early as the second half of the nineteenth century, some missionaries of the ABCFM were calling for American military intervention in the Ottoman Empire to protect the missionary interests.\(^55\)

In the meantime, missionaries operating in the Ottoman Empire held almost a monopoly in informing American public about the events in the Ottoman Empire.\(^56\) The power of the ABCFM and other missionary groups to influence American foreign policy stemmed largely from such factors as their powerful image in public opinion, their strong constituency, and the close relationship as well as the sympathy they enjoyed at the highest levels of government, including the State Department. The ABCFM’s main focus in the Ottoman Empire was its activities related to the Armenians which made its interests closely tied to the fate of the latter.\(^57\) At the same time, the negative attitude of the missionaries and therefore of the press had “poisoned public opinion in the United States in regard to the Turkish people to such an extent that a member of that race is seldom thought or spoken of in this country otherwise than as the ‘unspeakable’.”\(^58\)

The disastrous defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of its former subject nations during the Balkan Wars filled the American missionaries with elation. They did not even attempt to restrain the outburst of openly hostile remarks in their celebratory writings,

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reminiscent of the spirit of medieval crusades. *The Biblical World*’s editorial board introduced Dr. Barton’s article on the Ottoman defeat in this manner:

> For centuries the Turkish Empire has been a brutal enemy of Christianity….Now its grip upon Europe is broken! The prayer of thousands of Christians is being answered! The joy of the Seer as he foretold the fall of the Beast and the Harlot may not yet be fully ours, but we can already see that Turkey can never again be the archenemy of Christianity.59

In the American missionary view, the source of all their problems in the Ottoman Empire was *Mohammedanism*, and their problems had especially been intensified by the fact that its government was *Mohammedan* which kept on preventing their effort at making inroads into Muslim masses. Dr. Barton, who was foreign secretary of the ABCFM and former president of Euphrates College in Harput, eastern Anatolia, asserted that the Balkan War had proved, not only to the world but also to the Muslims themselves, that Muslim rule could never meet the demands of the twentieth century; since the problem was inherently related to the capacity of Mohammedanism for “safe administration.”60

A few months before the outbreak of the Great War, Ambassador Morgenthau made an extensive tour in Eastern Mediterranean in March and April 1914 visiting Izmir, Athens, Egypt, Palestine and Syria. His notes of this trip included short accounts of his conversations with the British officials in the region as well. On one such occasion, Morgenthau called on Lord Kitchener in Cairo on March 28, 1914. The British official exposed his feelings about the “Orientals.” In their nice and frank talk, Morgenthau wrote, Kitchener, who was anti-Turkish, remarked that the “Orientals” were unable to accept

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60 Barton, *What the Defeat of Turkey*, 3-6.
western methods. Lord Kitchener considered the British “the best equipped for administration” of these areas. At Port Said, Morgenthau met Lord James Bryce, former British Ambassador to Washington and perhaps the leading advocate of the Armenian cause in Great Britain. The two continued their trip to Palestine together talking about politics and diplomacy. In Palestine their entourage consisted of prominent missionary leaders who played an important role all through in the American involvement in the Armenian question. Morgenthau cited the names of Dr. Bliss, Hoskins, Peet, Cleveland Dodge, etc. Schmavonian, his personal Armenian assistant, accompanied him throughout the trip as well. Nahum Sokolow and some other Zionist leaders were also present at Palestine during the trip and Morgenthau had a long talk with Sokolow on April 8. 

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62 Diary, April 1-7, 1914, ibid.
CHAPTER II: WAR, HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, AND PROPAGANDA (1914-17)

**British War Aims and Ottoman Armenians**

In the period preceding the war the Ottoman government had persistently sought an alliance relationship with a great power, most of all Great Britain, but to no avail. Even Germany’s response was less than favorable at first, which it had to modify under the exigency of the Great War in July 1914.63

Despite the lukewarm stance of the British Foreign Office towards the Ottoman overtures for friendship and its reserved position during the pro-Armenian reform talks, reports by Ambassador Louise Mallet, at the beginning of 1914 exhibited generally a favorable attitude towards the policies of the CUP’s young leadership. He considered them capable and “earnestly bent on the regeneration of Turkey,” notwithstanding great difficulties they had both at home and in external affairs. Mallet unreservedly stated that British government’s position had been much shaken by its lead, unfavorable to the Ottomans, in Edirne or the Aegean islands questions.64 The British government’s hostile initiative to compel the Ottoman government through a naval demonstration to accept the great powers’ decision for handing over the Aegean islands to Greece further tarnished the British image.65

At the outbreak of the Great War, Great Britain’s primary objective was to keep the Ottoman Empire neutral as long as possible. In spite of reports and information received from various sources about the increase of German influence in Istanbul, even the weeks

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64 Mallet to Grey, January 6, 1914, FO 371/2112.
65 Mallet to Grey, February 2, 1914, ibid.
following the *Goeben* and *Breslau* incident, Foreign Secretary Grey was keen in impressing upon French and Russian ambassadors in London that the neutrality of Turkey was of utmost significance for Great Britain as it would create a very embarrassing situation both in Egypt and India, if the Ottomans came out against the British.\(^\text{66}\)

Grey in his memoirs acknowledged that, although they did not know at the time that the Ottoman Empire already had a secret treaty binding her to Germany, this made little difference, for they (the British) knew well that some influential Ottoman officials were “fanatically” pro-German, and the extent of Germany’s influence at Istanbul was immense. He explained that all the British aim was about timing, i.e. keeping the Ottomans neutral till the British Indian troops had got through the Suez Canal. He also glossed over the delicate issue of the two battle-ships that were being built for the Ottomans but commandeered by the Admiralty. Grey had used evasive language when explaining this matter, thereby weakening further whatever credibility the British held in Istanbul during those critical weeks of Ottoman neutrality.\(^\text{67}\)

As part of the British initiative to prolong Ottoman neutrality, the British, Russian and French ambassadors in Istanbul made a joint statement to the Sublime Porte to the effect that they would guarantee Ottoman integrity, should the latter remain neutral. Ottoman memories of the futility of great power assurance at the beginning of the Balkan Wars regarding the maintenance of integrity were still fresh. The Sublime Porte had been left empty-handed in its quest for alliance relationship just a few months earlier. The Entente powers were trying to buy extra time for preparation and their hesitant language


\(^{67}\) Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, II, 169-77.
further undermined the position of those Ottoman ministers who were in favor of neutrality. 68

The Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha, while acknowledging the constant German pressure on the Ottomans to follow the counter course, gave assurances to Great Britain that the Ottoman Empire would remain neutral in the European war. Nevertheless, the Grand Vizier pointed to the Ottoman public’s resentment of Great Britain for requisitioning the two Ottoman warships, Reşadiye, and Sultan Osman. Said Halim also noted that the seizure of these warships, whose purchase had been made possible by the money raised through the subscription of the Ottoman public, created a crisis and left a terrible image of Great Britain in Ottoman public opinion. If Great Britain had promised to give these ships back at the end of the war, or paid the money back, that would have been understandable to the Ottomans. In absence of such promise, “it looked like robbery,” Said Halim emphasized. 69

Mallet’s telegram of September 3 was useful to shed light on the intentions of the Entente powers at the time of these diplomatic conversations on the Ottoman Empire. Referring to his talk with his Russian colleague, Mallet suggested that the Foreign Office not raise “the question of the partition of Turkey at the present time,” in order not to provoke the latter to join the war on Germany’s side. 70

The Ottoman Government abolished the Capitulations on September 8, 1914, precipitating protests not only from the Entente but also Triple Alliance. Italian

70 Mallet to Grey, September 3, 1914, ibid., Doc.142, 68.
Ambassador warned Wangenheim, German Ambassador at Istanbul, of “dangerous consequences” to all, including Germans, of encouraging the Ottoman Empire in its “crusade against foreigners.” Talat Pasha told Mallet that “time had come to emancipate Turkey from foreign shackles,” yet no hostility was intended against foreigners.71

Mallet learned from his Russian colleague that the German and Austrian ambassadors were not sparing any effort to force the Ottoman Minister of War to send the Goeben and the rest of the fleet into the Black Sea. Mallet was aware that abolition of the Capitulations was the principal card in the hands of this peace party and in order not to weaken their hands it would be imprudent not to give consent to their demand, at least in fiscal and commercial terms, at that juncture.72 Grey’s reply to Mallet, however, was not favorable as he reasoned that concession in this issue might be regarded as a sign of weakness.73

The Ottoman Government tried to press the issue of abolition of the Capitulations and urged the Entente powers to accept principle of equal taxation of foreigners and Ottomans, and to agree to the raising of import duties to 15 percent.74 However, the British government exhibited an arrogant attitude and sent a strongly-worded warning, short of an ultimatum, to the Grand Vizier.75

71 Grey, September 9, 1914, ibid., Doc.163, 76.
72 Mallet to Grey, September 15, 1914, ibid., Doc.173, 81-2.
73 Buchanan to Grey, September 16, 1914, ibid., Doc.175; Grey to Mallet, ibid., Doc.176., 83.
74 Mallet to Grey, September 17, 1914, ibid., Doc.183, 86.
British authorities, meanwhile, were busying themselves for the eventuality of war with the Ottomans by luring through various promises local Arab notables and chiefs on the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Palestine and Basra.76

When the news came of the Ottoman fleet’s bombardment of some Russian gunboats and coastal areas on the Black Sea on October 29, Russia responded by declaring war against the Ottoman Empire on November 3, 1914.77

Years later British naval intelligence deciphered an intercepted message containing orders, dated August 4 & 10, 1914, sent from Berlin to the Goeben and Breslau to proceed to Istanbul as quickly as possible in order to compel the Ottoman Empire to side with Germany on the basis of the treaty that had been concluded. On March 9, 1921, Admiral Hall, the director of naval intelligence, explained to Hankey, the private secretary of Lloyd George, that his object to present these telegrams was to show that the Ottoman Empire only entered the war on the side of Germany in fulfillment of the mentioned treaty and it was compelled to do so by the presence of the warships, Goeben and Breslau.78

As soon as the Ottoman Empire entered the war, Boghos Nubar, the president of the Armenian national delegation at Paris who had lobbied in Europe for the Armenian cause during the negotiations for the pro-Armenian reform scheme, told the British authorities on November 12, 1914 that Armenians in Cilicia would volunteer against the Ottoman Empire in support of an Entente landing, and that, if arms were supplied, mountain districts to the north would rise. Although viewing the prospect of an Armenian

76 Resident Aden to Government of India, September 30, 1914, Doc. 215, 103; Mallet to Grey, October 7, 1914, Doc. 230, 111: passim.
77 Grey to H. Baz-Ironsde, ibid., November 3, 1914, Doc. 287, 146.
78 Hankey to Lloyd George, March 9, 1921, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/25/1/14.
uprising and collaboration favorably, the British Foreign Office chose to wait until Russia would advance successfully near Erzurum, which would encourage the Armenians. A landing at Iskenderun was also considered significant to cut across the Ottoman military position. The main obstacle to proceed with this scheme immediately lay in the shortage of arms and the absence of means for distributing them.\textsuperscript{79}

Stalemate on the western front against the Central powers led the British War Cabinet to consider launching an all-out attack upon the Ottoman Empire which might bring about a decisive victory changing the entire course of the war. Among the possible points for action, a landing on the Syrian coast and Cilicia, as suggested by Boghos Nubar, seemed to offer great advantage by cutting off the main railway communication and supply lines of the Ottoman armies. This would also render the ongoing Ottoman preparation for an attack on the Suez Canal ineffective. David Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, advocated this idea of an attack on the Ottomans in January 1915.\textsuperscript{80}

On February 9, 1915 at the Russian Duma, Sazonov promised the introduction of reforms in Armenia on the basis of the Russo-Ottoman Agreement of February 1914 upon the conclusion of the war.\textsuperscript{81} In an effort to allay the suspicions held in Russia about British attitude on a possible settlement regarding the Ottoman Empire, Grey instructed Ambassador Buchanan to explain to the Czar and Sazonov without delay that although

\textsuperscript{79} Cheetham to Grey, November 12, 1914, FO 371/2146; FO Minutes, ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} Memorandum by Lloyd George, to the Committee of Imperial Defense (CID), January 1, 1915, War Memoranda, \textit{Lloyd George Papers}, LG/C/16/1/3; Memorandum by Kitchener, ibid., LG/C/16/2/3.
Great Britain had long opposed to Russian aspirations in the past, its view had now entirely changed, and it would take a lead in sympathy with them.  

In February 1915, Great Britain along with France then undertook a strategic decision to force the Straits with multiple war aims in mind: to paralyze the Ottoman Empire, to enable the Entente powers to have direct communication with Russia, to defeat the German ambitions in Near East. Were these aims achieved, the Entente attack would have had a great, if not decisive, impact upon the course of the war.

Lord Kitchener drew the attention of the War Cabinet to the possibility that in case the war was brought to a successful conclusion, Russia would secure the control of the Straits and Istanbul, and France would have in its possession Syria. Even if they were allies in the war, in the postwar period old enmities and jealousies might revive. If, Kitchener warned, there would arise hostility with Russia or France, or with both of them, the British strategic position in the Levant, including Egypt, could be intolerably affected. Kitchener’s explanation was important in that it threw light upon the British strategic thinking about great power rivalry in the Near East. He underlined that in any partition scheme of the Ottoman territory, Great Britain should avoid creating a frontier coterminous with that of Russia. He further stated that “sufficient remains of the Ottoman Empire” should be left to ensure a Turkish or Armenian buffer state stretching from Anatolia to the Iranian border. He underscored that even a frontier coterminous with Russia, “with all its

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82 Grey to Buchanan, March 2, 1915, ibid., Doc.489, 266-7.
grave drawbacks,” would be preferable to a Franco-Russian domination of the line from the Gulf of Iskenderun to the Persian Gulf.  

In the diplomatic exchanges and partition talks between the Entente powers during the war, the Armenian question as a political issue did not figure until May 1915. On May 11, 1915, however, it was again Russia, who after having secured British and French consent to its claim on Istanbul and the Straits, brought this matter to the fore. Sazonov told Buchanan that the Entente powers should hold the Ottoman Empire responsible at the end of the war for any massacre of Armenians, and suggested the following declaration be made jointly by the Entente states:

In face of these fresh crimes committed by Turkey against Christianity and civilization, Allied Governments announce publicly to Sublime Porte that they will hold all the members of the Ottoman Government, as well as such of their agents as are implicated, personally responsible for Armenian massacres.  

Grey at first hesitated to consent to the Russian proposal citing the reason that they did not possess sufficiently trustworthy data on which to make such a declaration, and moreover it was doubtful if such a move would bring the desired effect. Yet, when Russian Ambassador made a further demarche saying that in order to satisfy Armenian opinion in Russia his government was anxious to make such an announcement, Grey consented.  

Bertie, British Ambassador at Paris, drew attention to the word “Christianity” in the proposed text and suggested its omission in view of the British interests, and the French Foreign Minister preferred omission of whole phrase “against Christianity and

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84 Memorandum by Lord Kitchener to the CID, March 16, 1915, ibid, LG/C/16/2/3; for a detailed discussion of strategy, see also: CAB 27/1.
85 Buchanan to Grey, May 11, 1915, FO 371/2488.
“humanity and civilization.” Russia proposed, instead, the insertion of the phrase “against humanity and civilization.” However, British Foreign Office had already issued the declaration without any reference to Christianity or civilization, one day before this latest Russian proposal arrived.87

At the time they had entered into negotiations with their allies in the Entente as to the partition and distribution of Ottoman lands, British officials evaluated in detail possible scenarios in connection with their effect on British long-term interests. The possible creation of an Armenian entity to be carved out of the Ottoman territory in Asia Minor, and its political control by a power or a combination of powers was among the subject matters under discussion. What preoccupied British policymakers’ mind most in this regard was the issue as to whether the creation of buffer states between the British and Russian empires in Asia would be strategically prudent or not.88

In their secret negotiations on demarcating their territorial aspirations on the Ottoman territory which would result in the so-called Sykes-Picot Agreement, the early signs of mutual distrust and suspicion between Great Britain and France also became visible on various occasions. One such situation arose when their governments sent both Sykes and Picot to Petrograd to obtain Russian consent to their scheme. They were introduced to Sazonov on March 10, 1916 to explain on map the details of the agreement. Before the British and French ambassadors left the room, and as soon as Sazonov commented that he did not like the extension of French area into Russian sphere up to the Persian border, the French Ambassador to the surprise of his British colleague revealed

88 Memorandum by Sir Valentine Chirol conveyed by Mark Sykes to the Director of Military Operations (DMI), WO, in McMahon to Grey, July 9, 1915, FO 371/2476.
that Great Britain wished the districts indicated to be French as it wanted a buffer between itself and Russians. Buchanan protested the French Ambassador’s remarks and said that it was untrue and that the determination of the limits of their areas was up to Russia and France. Sykes reported that Monsieur Picot repeated the buffer zone argument against which he tried hard to convince Sazonov that it was not true. Buchanan cautioned Foreign Office that it would create a very bad impression in Russia, were the idea of placing buffer to gain ground.89

Again, the tenor of these exchanges between the Entente powers hinted not only at the mutual mistrust about motivations, but also the fact that in the projected partition schemes they were considering annexation or direct control of these areas without any reference to local nationalist aspirations of the Armenians or any other groups.90 That the annexation of the occupied Ottoman provinces was the ultimate aim of Russia became clear when the Russian army advanced further into northeastern Anatolia. Despite diplomatic assurances to the contrary, public notices issued by the Russian military authorities in occupied Ottoman territories unambiguously announced their incorporation into the Russian Empire.91

It was also noteworthy that the Russian government was reportedly obstructing the return of the Armenian refugees to the areas in eastern Anatolia under its occupation.92 Russian officials declared that they must not be expected at the end of the war to withdraw

89 Buchanan to Grey, March 10, 1916, FO 371/2767. Grey instructed Buchanan to tell Sazonov that there had never been the slightest intention on the part of Great Britain to interpose a buffer between Russia and itself. See: Grey to Buchanan, March 11, 1916, Ibid; for the impression left by Sykes and Picot’s talks on the Russians, see: Reynolds, Shattering Empires, 140-1.  
90 Buchanan to Grey, March 12, 1916, FO 371/2767.  
91 Buchanan to Grey, August 30, 1916, FO 371/2781; see the texts of two notices conveyed by British Consul at Batum: Ibid. One of the notices ordered that no Muslim services could further be held in the ten “originally Christian churches” converted subsequently into mosques.  
92 FO to Ian Malcolm (MP), June 8, 1916, FO 371/2778.
from what they had “conquered.” Notwithstanding his well-known advocacy of the Armenian cause in Great Britain, Lord Bryce hinted somewhat his acquiescence to Russia’s aim for annexation in early 1915. He suggested the Foreign Office approach Russia to ask the latter to announce that it would agree to an “autonomous Armenia being eventually instituted under Russian protection.”

At the critical juncture in 1915, when the Anglo-French assault on the Dardanelles and Gallipoli was at its peak and Russian and British forces were trying to make headway in eastern and southern approaches of the Ottomans, Mark Sykes busied himself with added impulse to work out detailed plans for partition and political reshuffle in Ottoman lands. In Cairo he held consecutive sessions of conversations in July 1915 with representatives of different nationalist and religious groups and marked imaginary boundary lines on the map serving British interests, though inevitably incongruent with the plethora of nationalist aspirations, as promises in return for their support to the Entente cause.

At one of these exercises, Sykes met on July 14, 1915 with L. Bartevian, the Dashnakist editor of the Houssaper, an Armenian newspaper published in Egypt, at Shepherds Hotel in Cairo. The Dashnaks would stand for autonomy under international protection but they would also be prepared to accept the suzerainty of Russia. Bartevian stated that from private sources he had learnt that no Muslims survived in the city of Van,

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93 Grey, Twenty-Five Years, II, 237.
94 FO Minutes, March 6, 1915, FO 371/2485.
95 WO to FO, August 6, 1915, FO 371/2490.
and the district was rapidly filled with refugees from the Caucasus. The Armenians, he boasted, hoped to capture Muş soon as well.96

In the first years of the war, the British government’s interest in Armenian political activities was negligible as compared to that of Russia, and this could be considered natural owing to geopolitical circumstances at play. Yet, as early as in the spring of 1915, British authorities became aware of disorders, revolts, civil strife and forced relocation. British high commissioner in Cairo cabled on May 12, 1915 that information in the region pointed to the Ottomans having considerable trouble with the Armenians and to latter having risen in several places.97 The Foreign Office confirmed that there had been an “Armenian rising” in Van which had been suppressed. It further asserted that “Turks” were “apparently encouraging massacres throughout Armenia.”98

At the time when Great Britain and its allies were engaged in the Dardanelles campaign against the Ottoman Empire, and the British along with the French gave their consent to Russia’s claims for the possession of Istanbul and the Turkish Straits in March 1915, Prime Minister Asquith appointed a governmental committee to formulate policy recommendations and prepare draft schemes to the British War Cabinet on the future of the Ottoman Empire in the light of Russian and French interests. The Committee concluded that “the Turk” should be driven from “his last foothold” on the Bosphorus. As for the Ottoman territories in Asia, the special interests of Great Britain in the region to the south of the line Haifa-Rowanduz should be formally recognized by the treaty Powers along with

96 Sykes to DMO (WO), July 14, 1915, ibid.
97 High Commissioner to FO, May 15, 1915, FO 141/629.
98 FO to McMahon, May 15, 1915, ibid.
the retention of British commercial interests in the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{99} In its 11th meeting held in Foreign Office on May 5, 1915, Lt-Colonel Sir M. Sykes, remarked that when considering the future status of the Ottoman Empire’s Asiatic provinces, the question of a coterminous frontier with a great military Power would have to be faced sooner or later, and it would therefore be better not to postpone it for arriving at a satisfactory settlement.\textsuperscript{100} Regarding the Armenian issue, the interagency committee employed vague language, most likely in deference to Russia’s designs on Ottoman territories in Asia Minor. While admitting that this issue held a strong appeal to British public opinion, the committee did neither desire nor put forward any specific suggestion on this subject. It only pointed to the possibility of the region becoming a Russian possession in the war, and in that case this issue would resolve itself.\textsuperscript{101}

Secretary Grey, like his successor Balfour, had been in close and discreet communication with Edward M. House. Therefore, he had the chance to convey at once to President Wilson diplomatic messages for the latter’s consideration. During the times when Germany’s submarine warfare started to harm American interests, the situation became tense. Expectations of British statesman for an American declaration of war against Germany grew higher than ever, and Grey pressed for America to join with the Entente. Following the sinking of the \textit{Lusitania}, Grey wrote Colonel House that if the United States was to “drift into war” with Germany, the American influence in the general aspects of the peace would be predominant and perhaps decisive. Grey carefully underlined that this was, of course, related to the general aspects like preserving peace in

\textsuperscript{99} CAB/27/1, \textit{“British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia,”} Report, Proceedings and Appendices of a Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister, 1915, 28-9.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 27-8.
future, but not to “local and particular” issues such as destiny of Alsace-Lorraine, which were “purely European.” However, Grey added, if the American people wanted to keep out of war with Germany despite such incidents as the *Lusitania*, then the belligerents might tend to discount any American influence later on.\textsuperscript{102}

From the very beginning, British policymakers understood and appreciated America’s significance in relation to the outcome of the Great War. When America had still maintained its neutrality, Grey believed that the United States’ attitude might be decisive in determining the war in favor of either side of belligerents.\textsuperscript{103} Meanwhile, the Asquith coalition government resigned on December 11, 1916 following the pressure exerted by Lloyd George and his followers on war policy.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102} Grey to House, 6 June 1915, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol.32, 462-3.
\textsuperscript{103} Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, II, 168.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., II, 255.
American Policy and Its Response to the Relocation of Ottoman Armenians

While commenting on the reasons for the Ottoman entry into the war, Ambassador Morgenthau observed that during the critical period preceding the war, the prominent Ottoman officials were already aware that they would be made the “scapegoat of the contest” and divided among the major powers, as the Entente powers had already sorted out their partition schemes.105

In September 1914, a diplomatic incident occurred causing the Ottoman Ambassador, Ahmed Rüstem Bey, to leave his post at Washington D.C. The crisis broke out when Ambassador Rüstem’s remarks, as published in the Washington Evening Star, angered the Wilson administration. In his interview, the Ottoman Ambassador had criticized the American press’s relentlessly hostile coverage of the Ottoman Empire, particularly on the subject of Ottoman Christians. Ambassador Rüstem contrasted this attitude with some unpleasant practices involving America, such as “lynching or water-cures.” He also deplored the decision of the American government to sell to Greece two warships at such a critical juncture as well as the rumors circulating in American newspapers that the U.S. government was considering the dispatch of warships to the Ottoman waters for a naval demonstration.

The Ottoman Ambassador’s remarks immediately brought about the ire of American officials. Secretary of State, W.J. Bryan, asked the Ottoman Ambassador to express his regret for the published utterances. Ahmet Rüstem, while admitting that he might have transgressed diplomatic rules, did not back away from his position, stressing

that it was a legitimate departure from conventionalities in view of the circumstances, and it could not be fairly said that he attacked the United States, but the hostile attitude of its press. Finally, he informed the Secretary of State that he had asked his government to grant him leave of absence within a fortnight.106

President Wilson took some diplomatic initiatives at various times, apparently at the urgings of the belligerents on either side, to test the waters for peace. In one of these, at Germany’s request Wilson conveyed to Great Britain through discreet channels such a proposal in the beginning of 1915. In the early period of the war, it seemed that through such indirect overtures, both sides tried to find out the possible terms onto which peace could be made. The British response was voiced by Field Marshal Sir John D. P. French who said to Ambassador Page on January 15, 1915 that in order to end the war Germany must give up Belgium, restore Alsace-Lorraine to France and agree that Russia should have Istanbul.107

When Ottoman authorities began forcibly relocating Armenians in eastern Anatolia to Syria in the spring of 1915, Ambassador Morgenthau conveyed with his own comments to the State Department the reports he had been receiving from American consuls and through them from missionaries in Anatolia and Syria on the miserable conditions during the relocation. Morgenthau wrote that “a more systematic policy than has been customary in the past” appeared to have been pursued in “the wholesale deportation of the population.” He reported the destruction of “entire villages,” with the “invariable accompaniments of murder, rape and pillage.” Morgenthau’s reports prompted the State

106 For detailed information regarding this incident, see: Lansing Papers, I, 68-74.
Department to instruct him for a diplomatic representation at the Sublime Porte for the protection of the non-Muslim population.\textsuperscript{108}

The Secretary of State sent a cable to Morgenthau on June 1, 1915, quoting the allied statement of May 24 on holding the Ottoman officials personally responsible in the crimes against “civilization and humanity” in connection with the ill-treatment of the Armenians. He instructed him to communicate the paraphrased statement to the Ottoman government.\textsuperscript{109} On June 3, Morgenthau conveyed the Entente statement to the Grand Vizier who took offense at the threat of being held personally responsible and resented any attempt of interference with the sovereign rights of the Ottoman government by foreign governments over their Armenian subjects.\textsuperscript{110}

In a telegram to Washington, Morgenthau stated that he had repeatedly appealed to the relevant Ottoman Cabinet ministers to stop “the persecution,” and he had told the German Ambassador that he and his government would share a considerable responsibility in “the odium arising from the Armenian massacres.”\textsuperscript{111} In its reply to Morgenthau, dated July 16, 1915, the State Department approved his procedure in pleading with the Ottoman government to stop “Armenian persecution” and in attempting to enlist sympathies of German and Austrian Ambassadors to this effect. Other than this, the Department had no additional suggestions regarding the situation.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{108} Morgenthau to Secretary of State (Bryan), May 3, 1915, reel 7; Bryan to Morgenthau, May 5, 1915; Jackson (Aleppo) to Morgenthau, May 12, 1915; Morgenthau to Bryan, May 25, 1915, ibid.; and for the further correspondence: passim.

\textsuperscript{109} Bryan to Morgenthau, June 1, 1915, reel 7, ibid.

\textsuperscript{110} Morgenthau to Secretary of State (Bryan), June 18, 1915, ibid.

\textsuperscript{111} “Summary of Action by the State Department relative to the Armenian Situation,” September 17, 1915, Box 22, Folder 112, \textit{Frank Lyon Polk Papers}, MS656, Yale University Library Manuscripts and Archives.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
On September 3, 1915, Morgenthau informed the State Department that the Minister of War had promised to permit departure of such Armenians to the United States whose emigration Morgenthau would vouch bona fide. He further stated that “destruction of Armenian race” was progressing rapidly. Morgenthau requested the State Department to suggest to Cleveland Dodge, Stephen Wise and others to form a committee to raise funds and to provide means to save some of the Armenians and to assist the poorer ones for their emigration to America. However, the Acting Secretary of State responded that the “parties” Morgenthau had mentioned in his cable felt that difficulties in the way of “wholesale emigration [of the] Armenians insurmountable,” and asked Morgenthau whether he could use fifty to one hundred thousand dollars for immediate relief.

Colonel House, who was President Wilson’s personal adviser and confidant, suggested to Wilson in October 1915 that “some sort of protest over the Armenian massacres” would appeal to the American people more strongly than even a rigid insistence upon the German submarine warfare.

Hüseyin Bey, the Ottoman Chargé d' affaires at Washington, protested the vociferous press campaign that was based upon reports sent by Ambassador Morgenthau. He requested a public denial by the American government. Secretary of State Lansing replied that it was better not to publish any official repudiation as it would further stir debate in the press and thus draw the attention of the public more to this issue.

113 Ibid.  
114 Morgenthau to Lansing, September 3, 1915, FRUS, 1915, Supplement, 988; Polk to Morgenthau, September 22, 1915, ibid.  
115 House to Wilson, October 1, 1915, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.35, 2-3.  
Ambassador Morgenthau gave some insight on the political developments in the Ottoman Empire in his personal letters to Secretary of State Lansing in 1915 and 1916. Started on November 4, 1915, upon Lansing’s instruction to that effect, Morgenthau’s confidential letters presented detailed assessments. In one of them, dated 18 November 1915, he referred to the unsuccessful military campaign led by Enver Pasha against the Russians at Sarkamış in eastern Anatolia, and underscored that the Ottoman defeat was greatly due to the assistance rendered to Russians by the Armenian volunteers. The Armenian volunteers also brought about the failure of the Ottoman expedition in Iranian Azerbaijan in the same period. The Ottoman losses were so enormous that, Morgenthau believed, it had made a deep impression upon Enver and Talat causing in them great enmity against the Armenians. Morgenthau contrasted the despair prevailing in the Ottoman statesmen and the governing elites in the spring of 1914 with the self-confidence regained at the victory in the defense of the capital and the most important strategic core of the empire. He wrote:

It is almost impossible…to portray the contrast between the fear stricken, almost discouraged set of men that were trying to govern here in the spring of 1914, with an empty treasury, and restricted by the Capitulations to an 11 % duty, with post offices in the hands of foreigners, their navy under the control of the British naval mission, their army in such a chaotic state that they were urging the Germans to send them a military mission to whip them into shape, Foreign Inspectors General arriving to supervise the Armenian districts in order to satisfy demands made by outside people on behalf of the Armenians,-and the same set of men now thoroughly entrenched in the important posts of the Government, feeling that they are absolutely in control, and that they have successfully prevented their enemies from invading their large seaport towns and have almost succeeded to secure for their country recognition that they are still an important Power.117

Morgenthau received a cable in December 1915 from Washington that the State Department wished to send a committee to investigate the Armenian matter. Morgenthau opposed the suggestion on the grounds that the Ottoman authorities would not permit such an undertaking. Morgenthau explained in his reply that the Embassy and the missionaries could now reach many points, and hoped that the Committee would send him more funds for distribution.\textsuperscript{118}

Ambassador Morgenthau left Istanbul on February 1, 1916 and on the train to Sofia, he had a talk with German Admiral Uzidon. Uzidon said that that “they thought it was a wise military measure to move the Armenians from Armenia.”\textsuperscript{119}

President Wilson received Morgenthau on February 23, 1916, and during their talk the latter expressed his wish to resign from his post in Istanbul in order to assist Wilson in the upcoming presidential elections. Morgenthau wrote in his diary that Wilson talked to him at some length about the Armenian matter and said that if necessary Americans should go to war for “humanity’s sake.”\textsuperscript{120}

In May 1916, after some months of his arrival in America, Morgenthau became one of the leading public figures in supporting the American Board’s propaganda campaign for the Armenians. Despite the fact that he had decided to resign to take part in Wilson’s campaign for the upcoming presidential elections, Morgenthau declared to the press that the main reason for resignation was his desire to make the conditions of suffering Armenians known to American people. Dr. Barton, the president of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR), published in American press an

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\textsuperscript{118} Diary, December 3, 1915, reel 5, Henry Morgenthau Papers; passim. \\
\textsuperscript{119} Diary, February 1, 1916, ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{120} Diary, February 23, 1916, ibid.
\end{flushright}
interview with Morgenthau that emphasized that about one million Armenians and native Christians in the Near East were destitute and starving, and they needed American aid.  

The Ottoman Embassy at Washington informed the Sublime Porte of Morgenthau’s support for public campaign conducted by the pro-Armenian organizations in America. On several occasions the Sublime Porte conveyed to the U.S. government its disappointment about involvement of American officials as well as missionaries in the Armenian affairs.

During the time when America stood neutral in the war, despite the ups and downs occurring primarily owing to the British blockade measures at open seas, the Wilson administration’s attitude toward Great Britain and its allies had generally been friendly. The leading figures other than the President himself, like Col. House or Secretary of State Lansing, had been sympathetic to Great Britain. Lansing thought nothing in controversies with Great Britain must be brought to a head, and radical measures must be avoided. He regretted the pressure emanating from what he named the pro-German press, citing the Chicago Tribune as an example, which attacked the government officials by calling them “slaves of Great Britain.” Not this hostile press campaign, but Wilson’s own resentment at the British “invasion” of American rights was the main cause of concern for Lansing. By September 1916, Wilson was already embittered toward Great Britain. He even discussed, Lansing noted, bringing the British government “to book.” The approaching presidential election was the chief reason which held the President back from any action against Great Britain. In Lansing’s view, the President did not see that this was a struggle between autocracy and democracy, and the “principles” were at issue. All the President did care


\footnote{Osmanlı Belgerinde Ermeni-Amerikan İlişkileri, II, 207-8; 220-27.}
about was the violations of American rights by both sides. He brusquely wrote in his secret memorandum that German imperialistic ambitions threatened “free institutions everywhere” but this had not “sunk very deeply into his [Wilson’s] mind.” A few months later, Lansing felt certain that when America would go into the war, it must do so on the side of what he already called the allies, for the United States was a democracy.

It appeared that as early as the spring of 1915 Germany became already alarmed and anxious about American policy toward the belligerents. German officials revealed their unease in confidential reports as such that the situation was like their country was practically at war with the United States owing to the American delivery of arms “in the widest sense of the term” to the Entente powers, providing large loans and credits, complying with the British-imposed blockade and restrictions at open seas. They believed that the sameness of language as well as close personal, economic, and cultural ties with Great Britain were to account for this situation. On the other hand, the submarine war conducted by Germany was the main source of irritation in bilateral relations, as Ambassador Bernstorff reported on October 20, 1915.

That Col. House had been perhaps the most important personality who had the full confidence of Wilson was not also unknown to the German officials. Bypassing the State Department and reporting and counseling directly to the President, it would not be an overstatement to say that Col. House had actually directed American foreign policy during

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123 Confidential Memoranda and Notes, September 1916, Box 7 Folder 2, Robert Lansing Papers, MC083, Princeton University Library Manuscripts Division.
124 Confidential Memoranda and Notes, December 3, 1916, ibid.
125 See “the German Foreign Office Files” in Box 426, Folder 1 &2, and Box 428 in The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, MC178, Princeton University Library Manuscripts Division.
126 See Bernstorff’s report on his talk with the Colonel, December 18, 1915, “the German Foreign Office Files” in Box 426, Folder 1 &2, and Box 428, ibid.
this time up until the second half of 1919. He initiated diplomatic overtures and conducted, mostly behind the scenes, high-level talks with foreign decision-makers at the behest and on behalf of the President.

In the meantime, owing to its neutral status in the war, the American government chose to remain aloof regarding the Entente Powers’ war aims, as specified in their secret agreements, regarding partitioning the Ottoman territory; though the U.S. government was aware of these plans from the very beginning and had confidential exchange of views with Great Britain and France on them. Col. House visited London in January 1916 and reported to Wilson that he found the British statesmen he had talked to such as Lloyd George, Lord Bryce and others, “insistent that Turkey be eliminated and Germany and Russia take over certain parts of it.”

After London, Col. House proceeded to Paris to continue his discussions of the war situation. In his conversations with the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, House confidentially assured them (as he did in London) of the American support that Wilson would intervene in support of the allied cause should the circumstances require so. House commented to Wilson that America was the only power left on earth with sufficient power to lead the others, and once in the war, to bring it to an end. Colonel House remarked that Germany might be compensated for Alsace-Lorraine in Asia Minor, and thus it would

become neighbor with Russia, as the latter would take Armenia. House was definite with regard to Turkey in that “she must disappear.”

During the relocation of the Ottoman Armenians, Ambassador Morgenthau urged the State Department in September 1915 to ask Cleveland Dodge, Charles Crane, Stephen Wise and other representatives of the American Board and of the independent colleges to organize relief for the Armenians. Upon this initiative, Dodge and others established “the Committee on Armenian Atrocities” which started a large-scale public campaign to raise funds from the American people as well as business groups. In November 1915, this Committee was renamed as the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR) under the chairmanship of James L. Barton, the senior secretary of the American Board and former president of Euphrates College at Harput.

In Anatolia and Syria the American relief workers, usually missionaries or personnel under their control, established soup-kitchens and orphanages, and provided clothing, and food supplies to the displaced population. American consular officials supervised the operation and distribution of the relief material. Mission hospitals, schools, buildings and homes were used as shelters and service centers.

Pointing out the difficulties of the winter of 1915-16 in eastern Anatolia and Caucasus, the American missionary publications reported that epidemic diseases and hunger were already exacting a heavy toll upon hundreds of thousands of Armenians who had fled into Russian Transcaucasia. By February 1916, the missionaries testified that there were 194,900 refugees in Transcaucasia and in the areas in eastern Anatolia occupied

129 House to Wilson, February 9, 1916, ibid., vol.36, 147-151; also fn.1, 148.
130 Daniel, American Philanthropy, 150-1.
131 Ibid., 152.
by Russia. Another missionary gave the registered number of Armenian refugees in
Caucasia and northern Iran in March 1916 as 234,000, of whom 88,000 were children
under 15 years of age. When the Russian army captured Erzurum, Bitlis, Van and Muş in
the winter 1915-16, many of the Armenian refugees started to return to these districts.
Many others were coming forth from their places of “concealment,” or from Muslim
houses in these regions. W.W. Peet, the treasurer of the ABCFM at Istanbul, sent
information to the State Department on March 17, 1916 that there were at least 800,000
hundred thousand Armenian refugees in the Ottoman Empire who were in need of help.
One half or more of these were reported by the American Consul at Aleppo to be in the
districts of Damascus, Deir-el-Zor (Dayr al-Zawr) on the Euphrates, and Aleppo. Consul
Jackson’s dispatch of February 8, 1916 was summarized in the missionary bulletin which
showed that about 500,000 Armenians were in Syria between Aleppo, Damascus and the
surrounding country along the Euphrates River as far as Deir-el-Zor. In May 1916, there
were also tens of thousands of Armenians in Anatolia who were relocated and distributed
in numerous districts or those who were allowed to remain in their places. The
missionaries appealed for sending relief to these people as well, for instance in Maraş,
Antep, Adana, Harput, Merzifon, Sivas, Konya, etc.132

The Ottoman Empire officially permitted American missionary and relief
organizations to continue operating in the country during the war and thereafter to bring
humanitarian aid to the relocated and displaced Armenian population. American
missionary institutions, headed by the ABCFM and the ACASR (the ACASR was
incorporated and renamed as Near East Relief –NER- in 1919 by a Congressional act) were

132 “Latest News Concerning the Armenian and Syrian Sufferers,” May 24, 1916, Bulletin No.5, ACASR,
reel 23, Henry Morgenthau Papers.
in charge of humanitarian relief in the Ottoman territories, even after the severance of Ottoman-American diplomatic relations in April 1917. The Wilson administration provided generous assistance to ABCFM and NER. With the funds and relief material collected and delivered by NER, the American missionary societies and philanthropists managed to carry out what would become the largest and longest relief operation in this period. This humanitarian relief to help the Ottoman Armenians continued from the autumn 1915 up until 1930s. The humanitarian assistance administered by NER was valued at more than 116 million dollars at the time.

Yet, in order to raise funds, the missionaries fomented extremely hostile views in a well-orchestrated public campaign throughout America against the Ottoman Empire, despite the fact that there was no belligerency between the two countries. All through the Great War and in the postwar period, American public opinion on the Armenian question had been largely shaped by the influence of this missionary-led propaganda. It was essentially the missionary organizations and interests who had introduced the American public opinion to this issue and brought to bear great impact on U.S. policymaking towards the Ottoman Empire. American missionaries, on the other hand, emerged as the main pillar of the British wartime propaganda carried out to influence American public opinion in support of British (Entente) war effort. This relationship

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133 The Memoranda of the Executive Committee of Near East Relief to the Secretary of State, November 11, 1919, FRUS, 1919, II, 821-23. For a comprehensive survey, based upon Ottoman archival sources, concerning the Ottoman government’s favorable attitude toward the American relief work see: Fatih Gencer, Ermeni Soykırım Tarihinin Oluşum Sürecinde Amerikan Yakın Doğu Yardımcılık Komitesi (İstanbul: Alternatif, 2006), 138-44; passim.


continued during the critical period of the peace conference when a mandate system for the Near East was under consideration.

Lord Bryce was perhaps the most prominent figure of the British wartime propaganda on the Armenian question. In November 1916, Bryce wrote Col. House informing him of the British determination to prosecute the war to the end. Bryce expressed his bitterness for what he termed the “pacifist type” who offered mediation for peace, and added: “the Armenian massacres, which the German Government could have stopped, have heightened our indignation against them as well as against the Turks, whose rule over Christians must be extinguished, once and for all.”\(^{136}\)

Colonel House responded to Bryce with no little enthusiasm that the “flow of sentiment” in favor of the Entente had been steady and increasing rapidly, notwithstanding the resentment felt in Great Britain and France towards America. He wished to see Bryce in person to explain how things were working and to what an end which he would not dare write “except cryptically.” Nonetheless, he assured Bryce that his faith in the President was fully justified and that the future would prove it.\(^{137}\)

\(^{136}\) Bryce to House, November 26, 1916, Box 20, Folder 656, *Edward Mandell House Papers*, MS466, Yale University Library Manuscripts and Archives.

\(^{137}\) House to Bryce, December 10, 1916, ibid.
Among the belligerent states, it was Great Britain that had developed and used the most successful propaganda organization. The British propaganda organization started as the War Propaganda Bureau in August 1914, which later came to be known as Wellington House. Prime Minister Asquith asked C.F.G. Masterman to direct the organization. The staff of Wellington House was consisted of 203 individuals. A News Department was formed at the Foreign Office to deal with the press. These two agencies gradually came under the authority of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Department of Information was formed on February 20, 1917. In August 1917, its director, Sir Edward Carson, became a member of the War Cabinet. Finally, on March 4, 1918, the Ministry of Information was constituted to take over the whole organization of the Department of Information, with the exception of political intelligence branch, which had already been transferred to the Foreign Office.138

The British propaganda machinery developed subtle techniques to manipulate facts through media to suit different audiences around the world. It had conducted its work in strict secrecy and taken every precaution in order to make it appear that it was not connected with the British government. Wellington House created and disseminated such myths that the Great War was a struggle between “civilization” (as represented by Great Britain) and “barbarism” (an attribute labeled on Germany and its allies), and through

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atrocity stories (for example, the Bryce Reports) it successfully disseminated these stereotypes in various countries.\footnote{Mark Wollaeger, Modernism, Media, and Propaganda: British Narrative from 1900 to 1945 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 130-3. According to Wollaeger, the success of this secret British propaganda organization and the most effective techniques it had invented were so impressive that even the Nazi Germany based its propaganda work on this British precedent.}

Well-known authors or historians, including Arthur Conan Doyle and Arnold Toynbee were on the payroll of Wellington House to produce books, articles and pamphlets. Wellington House subsidized with secret government funds their publications through commercial and university press. It arranged the dispatch of these publications abroad to prominent public figures and influential individuals. As such, Wellington House printed or circulated propaganda publications, including dailies and magazines, in numerous countries, including the United States, France, Italy, Spain, China, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, etc.\footnote{“Report of Proceedings” at Wellington House, November 14, 1917, INF 4/11; also for more detailed information: “The Organization and Functions of the Ministry of Information,” 1918, INF 4/9.} The propaganda agency also subsidized publishers abroad.\footnote{Statement by C.F.G. Masterman, November 9, 1917, INF 4/11.}

None of the literature, produced or sponsored by Wellington House, bore overt marks of its origin, with the exception of official publications. Apart from embassies or consulates abroad, a large part of the distribution was done through British steamship companies, business firms, local propaganda committees, religious societies, railway companies, etc. In America, in close cooperation with Geoffrey Butler, Wellington House funded the George H. Doran Co. for the printing of its publications. Sir Gilbert Parker and
Professor Norman Kemp Smith of Princeton University coordinated the propaganda work of Wellington House in the United States.¹⁴²

Professor W. Macneile Dixon of Wellington House, who was in charge of propaganda books and pamphlets, revealed one of the most striking aspects of British propaganda in the United States. Dixon said that they were under special obligations to Professor Smith of Princeton University, because he was a personal friend of President Wilson, and both before America entered the war and since he had been of utmost value to Wellington House, as he was able to advise them “with regard to every move.” Dixon also indicated that the writings of certain English authors such as Professor Gilbert Murray and Lord Bryce made a special appeal to the United States.¹⁴³ Professor Smith, on the other hand, who had worked first for the Admiralty Intelligence Department for a year until he took up his position at Wellington House, explained that the great bulk of the literature that they distributed in America was printed in the United States, but a certain proportion was also printed in Great Britain. He said there were 170,000 Americans on their mailing list. They had also 5,000 agents scattered across the United States who arranged the distribution of the propaganda material.¹⁴⁴

As a shrewd measure, from its start, the British Embassy was kept out of any direct propaganda activity in the United States, though Ambassador Sir Cecil Spring-Rice knew, and in some instances steered, it. This, of course, did not mean that the Embassy pulled altogether out of the task, as it continued its usual work such as distributing news items to selected correspondents, arranging interviews, etc. The Naval Attaché, Capt. Gaunt, who

¹⁴² “The Activities of Wellington House during the Great War 1914-18,” INF 4/1B.
was based not in Washington, but in New York, was the head of what the British preferred to call “publicity work” in America. While Wellington House directly communicated with Capt. Gaunt through the British Consulate General in New York, intelligence officer Thwaites at the Embassy coordinated the work with Capt. Gaunt.145

Ambassador Spring-Rice suggested to the News Department that instead of sending a professional newspaper man to Washington, it was better to employ an American correspondent in London, and not “propaganda” but simply “stories” the sort of which would suit American public must be supplied to him.146 Under the direction of the News Department of Foreign Office, Sir Gilbert Parker, while performing as the head of the propaganda section in charge of America, continued to write in the *Morning Post*.147

The Irish-Americans were the primary cause of concern for the Foreign Office which would undo any British propaganda towards the American public, if not properly handled. For instance, in a memorandum it was stated that “the bad effect” on the American public opinion was not so much due to the Irish rebellion and its severe suppression through executions but to “some quite avoidable accidents of publicity.” It was emphasized that in order to avoid repetition of such a bad impression on an “impressionable people,” the careful management of the news was a critical factor.148

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147 Montgomery to Gilbert, June 16, 1916, ibid. See, the letter to Parker from H.A. Gwynne, June 2, 1916, ibid.
148 “Memorandum,” June 12, 1916, ibid.
Spring-Rice cabled a very noteworthy assessment on America and American public opinion on June 27, 1916 which should be quoted here, as it was reflecting the state of mind of some British statesmen on the United States:

Many papers such as the Times and the Herald have certainly shown great courage in taking the part of Great Britain in a somewhat unfriendly world....We have no right to count on the good will of Americans. They could count on ours but we cannot count on theirs. The reason is that we wrongly suppose because they talk our language they are an Anglo-Saxon people. As a matter of fact they are a foreign nation or rather several foreign nations. None of these nations is particularly friendly to us and those of them who are of our race have very particular reasons for disliking us. It would be wiser to bear this in mind and to treat the American people not as cousins still less as brothers, an attribution which they would greatly resent, but as English-speaking foreigners, some of whom most agreeable companions and talk a most sympathetic language. 149

As soon as America entered the war, the British government reorganized its propaganda campaign and in April 1917 created the Department of Information. Lloyd George appointed Colonel Buchan as its director who was to report back to Sir Edward Carson, a member of the War Cabinet. Hubert Montgomery of Foreign Office was one the deputy directors and he was in charge of all the geographical sub-departments including the United States. All the propaganda material, including the publications and cinema films, was produced, examined and distributed under the direction of the Department of Information. A similar system was also introduced into France and Russia by the same department. 150

The entire civil propaganda network of the British government was under the direction of Lord Northcliffe, who paid special attention to the publicity campaign toward

149 Spring-Rice to Newton, June 27, 1916, ibid.
America, including hiring U.S. correspondents for disseminating news suitable for the specific parts of the country.\textsuperscript{151}

The extent of the British propaganda machinery went beyond the creation of this enormous network. It included first encouraging, and after its inception, steering the process of American home propaganda as well. As of the beginning of 1917 the News Department tried to explore more effective ways to “educate” the American mind about the problems in the Near and Middle East, and to “awaken” in America interest in the issues of war. As the work regarding Germany was about to get a “satisfactory settlement,” it was suggested for the moment to focus on the Eastern problems.\textsuperscript{152} Some American writers were considered useful for conveying the desired message to the American mind. One of them was Norman Hapgood, a prominent magazine writer in America, who arrived in London in January 1917 and had conversations with Secretary Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil. The British took an interest in him, as Hapgood was evidently much impressed by the Near Eastern question. He seemed to the British officials “a muddleheaded” though honest person, “with a sublime ignorance of geography.” The News Department arranged for Hapgood a meeting with Sir M. Sykes as it was considered desirable to “instruct” him on these matters.\textsuperscript{153}

Lord Bryce was influential in the selection and implementation of the propaganda methods in America. In January 1917, Lord Bryce suggested to the Foreign Office to help organize an American group to advocate the war aims to the American public. George W. Pepper from Philadelphia wrote Bryce that he and some other Americans established a

\textsuperscript{151} Parker to Montgomery, January 1, 1917; Steed to Montgomery, January 4, 1916; Spring-Rice to Lord Hardinge, ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Minutes of the News Department, January 8, 1917, ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} Note to Montgomery, January 8, 1917, FO 395/65; FO letter to M. Sykes, January 6, 1917, ibid.
committee for organizing lectures throughout the country. Bryce considered such an organization run by the Americans for educating the American public opinion to be much more preferable than a British-run effort toward the United States.  

On February 8, 1917, Ambassador Spring-Rice informed the Foreign Office that the scheme was already on foot for an American Committee with branches in all the principal towns of America, and in the universities and colleges, to acquaint American public opinion with war aims of the allies through qualified lectures. The American Committee would have no connection with the Embassy, but communicate requests and suggestions through the Naval Attaché. M. Timothy Herrick, former U.S. Ambassador to France, would be the chairman of the Committee. Funds for its activities were subscribed from American sources and the object of the association was “purely American.” The Naval Attaché in New York confirmed to Montgomery that they had a very successful meeting of about 50 people, including lawyers, churchmen, editors, and businessmen, to consider how best to put Allies’ cause before the United States. The Committee was formed as Herrick its chairman, Colonel Robert Monroe, a prominent Democrat, secretary, W. Harris, late editor of the Sun, paid secretary. He said he urged that the names of Cravath, Coudert and Beck should not be put on the list so as not make it appear being in Allied pay. In his letter to Montgomery, Capt. Gaunt cheerfully commented:

First, propaganda. You will have seen the Ambassador’s telegram as to Cravath’s committee. I have thoroughly discussed it with them and I think it is the very thing that we want, i.e. an American show run by Americans for Americans and financed in America, but really controlled by me, though I will not appear. Herrick is to be chairman of the first committee. I saw Cravath and Otto Kahn and picked all the holes in it that I could, complained that it was only a thin veil for a republican

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154 Bryce’s letter to FO, January 23, 1917; FO to Spring-Rice, January 30, 1917, ibid.
155 Spring-Rice to FO, February 8, 1917, ibid.
156 Bayley to Foreign Office, February 21, 1917, FO 395/66.
organization working against the administration, or, at least, likely to be construed
as such. They came back at me with assurances from both Lansing and Polk that
they thoroughly approved and understood the game. They will have an Office in
New York and will control all the principal towns, emphasizing the West and
middle-west. Through this all lecturers and paperwork should go, I will just ask you
to forward what we want.\textsuperscript{157}

The so-called Herrick Committee took under its scope of activity across the United
States 125 cities with 50,000 or more inhabitants, 1,280 cities having a daily newspaper,
119 “first-class” universities and colleges, 396 other universities and colleges, 2,200 daily
newspapers, 3,600 libraries, 3,000 Chautauqua assemblies (summer schools).\textsuperscript{158}

Some authors maintain that the American public opinion led to the U.S. entry into
the Great War in 1917, and that this “attitude of mind” in America was the product of a
systematic British propaganda throughout the opening years of the war.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{157} Gaunt to Montgomery, February 10, 1917, ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} Paul Cravath to Gaunt, February 15, 1917, ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} H.C. Peterson, \textit{The Campaign against American Neutrality, 1914-1917} (Norman: University of Oklahoma
For British strategic planners, the “destruction” of the Ottoman Empire would be a
decisive step in the war, as it would remove a dangerous challenge to Great Britain’s vital
interests in the Near East, Iran, Afghanistan and eventually in India. Their strategy hinged
on inciting a well-coordinated anti-Ottoman propaganda among the Arabic-speaking
peoples and stimulating an Arab demand for the Caliphate, working on the “disunion”
between Sunni-Shia, “squashing without hesitation” any article or even paragraph in any
newspaper that would be sympathetic to the Ottomans, and attacking the Ottoman
government on the score of “injustice, crime, unorthodoxy, and hypocrisy” in both the
British and native press.  

As for the British propaganda on the Armenian issue, American public opinion
constituted its main audience. As a matter of fact, in the early part of the Great War, Great
Britain’s interest in the Armenian question seemed to have focused on using this issue in
its effective war propaganda directed at public opinion in neutral countries, most of all in
the United States. The loss of life and suffering that occurred during the relocation of the
Armenian population provided useful propaganda for Great Britain and its allies.

According to Sanders and Taylor, in order to counter the influential Jewish
community in the United States, British propaganda vigorously used the Armenian
question to turn the public’s attention away from Russia’s policy of persecution of the

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160 Memorandum, titled “Policy in the Middle East,” dated November 15, 1915, written by M. Sykes to
Director of Military Operations and submitted to the War Committee, FO 371/2486.
Jews. The British government’s main objective was to carry out a systematic propaganda campaign in America to garner public sympathy for the Entente cause by using the Armenian question at a critical juncture when Great Britain and its allies were in need of material assistance from the United States. Moreover, an effective propaganda campaign against the Ottoman Empire would exploit the age-old religious and racial prejudices such as the “civilized world vs. the monstrous barbarians,” or “good vs. evil,” as abundantly disseminated by the relevant publications.

Lord Bryce coordinated the propaganda work on the Armenian question towards America. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, aka The Blue Book,* which was published under his name, was perhaps the most effective propaganda publication. It had an enduring influence on American public opinion as regards the Armenian question. On May 9, 1915, Lord Bryce urged Boghos Nubar, the chairman of the Armenian National Delegation, to appeal to the President of the United States, as the head of the biggest neutral state, asking him to issue an effective warning to the Ottoman government, by referring to American missionaries scattered all over Asiatic Turkey. Bryce’s second move was his letter to Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador in Istanbul, on August 7, 1915, requesting to allow him to see the American missionary reports on this issue. Ambassador Morgenthau supplied to Lord Bryce not only missionary reports, but also copies of the official correspondence of American consuls in Anatolia and Syria. This

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164 See footnote # 218.
American material constituted the basis of various propaganda publications issued and circulated by Wellington House.¹⁶⁶

These publications, authored or edited by Toynbee,¹⁶⁷ were part of Wellington House’s systematic “atrocity propaganda” directed against the Central Powers.¹⁶⁸ They were printed and circulated simultaneously in London and in New York, and this fact clearly shows that American public opinion was the principal addressee of these British propaganda efforts.¹⁶⁹

Working at Wellington House under the direction of the Foreign Office, Arnold J. Toynbee collected, edited and authored many propaganda publications aimed against the Ottoman Empire. The Blue Book, which Toynbee wrote, was issued as a government (parliamentary) paper. The material Toynbee used in this publication consisted mainly of American missionaries’ letters, the reports of the U.S. ambassador and consuls on the Armenian events in 1915.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Toynbee to Bryce, June 30, 1916; Toynbee to H. Montgomery, August 1, 1916, FO 96/206.
Toynbee kept secret the names of persons from whom these reports had originated, and altered the titles of all documents. This was a particularly sensitive issue, for the United States at the time was still neutral, and many missionaries, whose statements Toynbee took as the main source of propaganda material, were still in the Ottoman Empire engaged in relief work throughout this time. Dr. Barton of the ABCFM and ACASR, which were essentially the same institution located at the same address, supplied to the Wellington House the bulk of the material with the assistance of the State Department.¹⁷¹ The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in America also provided material to Toynbee for the same purpose.¹⁷² Toynbee informed Dr. Barton at the beginning that their objective in this scheme was to rouse public opinion on the Armenian question in such a way as to prepare a program for the future of the “Armenian vilayets” in the general settlement after the war.¹⁷³ Lord Bryce wrote Dr. Barton on June 8, 1916 that they were almost ready to publish The Blue Book and expressed his pleasure of Morgenthau’s public speeches in favor of “the Eastern Christians.” Would it be possible for Dr. Barton to get the American government make any appeal to the Turks, he wondered.¹⁷⁴

While collecting and editing the material Toynbee collaborated closely with Armenian nationalist and revolutionary organizations as well as American missionary leaders.¹⁷⁵ Toynbee’s list of contacts included such names as Herbert Adams Gibbons, who

¹⁷¹ Barton to Toynbee, March 6, 1916, FO 96/205.
¹⁷² Scott to Toynbee, April 5, 1916, ibid.
¹⁷³ Toynbee to Barton, February 1, 1916, ibid.; Toynbee to Barton, March 8, 1916, ibid.
¹⁷⁵ See Toynbee’s correspondence in this regard in FO 96/205 & FO 96/206. For instance, K.M. Ohanian to Toynbee, June 7, 1916; Boghos Nubar to Toynbee, June 28, 1916; Paelian to Toynbee, July 8, 1916; Toynbee to Nubar, July 14, 1916; Toynbee to W.W. Rockwell, July 14, 1916; Toynbee to Barton, July 20,
was closely associated with Boghos Nubar and was publishing numerous pamphlets and articles in support of the Armenian cause.\textsuperscript{176} Although Toynbee apparently did not spare any effort to make the book as appealing to public consumption as possible, some careful eyes reading the manuscript at his request caught interesting aspects that could put the credibility of the “eyewitness accounts” into serious question. Sir John Simon, who quickly skimmed the draft, wrote Toynbee one such example: “On page 40, Miss Knapp observes of the Turkish evacuation of Van: ‘It all reminded one of the 7\textsuperscript{th} chapter of II Kings;’ and on page 69, Mr. Rushdouni, referring to the same matter declares that it was the story of the 7\textsuperscript{th} chapter of the Fourth Book of Kings that was repeated word for word. This is not going one better, but two better!”\textsuperscript{177}

Dr. Barton, who was the key person in compiling and transmitting the missionary and consular reports to Wellington House and in later distributing the Blue Book and other propaganda publications in America, cautioned Toynbee that for any public use it was necessary to conceal the fact that the material came through the American government and the Embassy in Istanbul.\textsuperscript{178}

One of the most influential missionary figures, William W. Rockwell, who was a member of the board of the ACASR and taught at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, helped Wellington House to carry out its propaganda campaign in the United States. He was also instrumental in the publication of numerous propaganda pamphlets in

\textsuperscript{176} Toynbee to Gibbons, February 22, 1916, FO 96/205. Gibbons authored “The Blackest Page of Modern History: Armenian Events of 1915.” “Destruction of the Armenians in Turkey,” etc. Yet, Gibbons admitted that he had used indirect sources such as newspaper articles or a verbal account which he was not able to give as a “direct and fairly detailed narrative.” Gibbons to Toynbee, April 18, 1916, ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} Simon to Toynbee, August 11, 1916, FO 96/206.

\textsuperscript{178} Barton to Toynbee, August 8, 1916, ibid.
America on the Armenian as well as Assyrian and Nestorian issues. Rockwell provided German Orientalist J. Lepsius with documents and other material which would help the latter create a “sensation” on this issue. While waiting impatiently for the publication of *The Blue Book*, Rockwell requested its delivery on time, otherwise, he warned, they would not be able to get “that concentrated explosion” which was necessary to stir up the public opinion. Dr. Barton also shared the enthusiasm of Rockwell in order for *The Blue Book* to have the widest possible publicity. Dr. Barton went further by hoping and expecting that *The Blue Book* would prove to the world “the incapacity of Turkey as a nation” and would be “the last argument for eliminating Turkey from the list of nations.”

*The Blue Book* was distributed in America to libraries, Y.M.C.As., clubs, historical societies, newspapers and individuals. Dr. Barton requested Lord Bryce for its quick delivery in order to make use of it in the press campaign launched by the American Relief Committee. Creating a favorable effect upon the American public opinion for the Entente cause was considered critical in the autumn of 1916 as the presidential elections in America were drawing near. In view of the importance of German-Americans’ vote in the elections, Lord Bryce drew Masterman’s attention to necessity of immediate publicity of *The Blue Book* in America. The theme of the “Armenian atrocity” would thus serve a useful political purpose in the most significant neutral country. Bryce shared Masterman’s opinion that such a publication might materially help to “color Turks and Turcophiles out of the water,” and make it impossible for the allies to conclude any separate peace with the

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179 Rockwell to Toynbee, August 19, 1916, FO 96/206; Rockwell to Toynbee, August 22, 1916, ibid.; Barton to Toynbee, August 24, 1916, ibid.; Rockwell cited among his publications the following: *Armenia: a list of books and references* and *The Pitiful Plight of the Assyrian Christians in Persia and Kurdistan*, see: Rockwell to Toynbee, December 29, 1916, FO 96/207.
Ottoman Empire. British officials’ high expectations from The Blue Book were fully shared by the American missionaries as well. Having no doubt that they would be able to secure wide publicity for the book, Dr. Barton assured Wellington House that it would have a “mighty influence in shaping public opinion as to the worthiness of Turkey to remain as an independent government ruling over non-Muslim subjects.”

It was clear from the very beginning that the United States was the main addressee of The Blue Book, as was the case with other publications by Wellington House. Out of 35000 printed copies, the bulk was distributed to selected institutions and individuals in America. The head of Wellington House thought that the reception of The Blue Book by the American press would depend almost entirely on whether or not it was presented with a cover letter signed by Lord Bryce.

Confirming the expectations of Wellington House, the publication, The Blue Book, achieved the desired result by creating an immense impact on the American public opinion. In a letter to Toynbee, Bryce expressed his appreciation of measures that were being taken to secure the widest possible publicity in America. Dr. Barton informed Toynbee that the ABCFM would handle three thousand copies of the book, which, he said, would be of substantial help in their public campaign for relief in support of both Armenians and Syrians. While Wellington House was busy in arranging the printing and distribution of the book, Dr. Barton hastened to publish a pamphlet, based on The Blue Book material,

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182 Barton to Toynbee, November 22, 1916, ibid.
183 Toynbee’s notes on the Blue Book, September 30, 1916, ibid.
184 Bryce to Toynbee, October 10, 1916, ibid.
without waiting for the arrival of the printed copies from Great Britain. Barton also arranged a favorable review of *The Blue Book* in *The New York Times.*

British officials were very satisfied by the fact that they had the sympathy of the leading American press organs. The letter by Charles V. Vickrey, executive secretary of ACASR, to Toynbee showed the extent to which *The Blue Book* had reached in America in terms of publicity. Vickrey’s letter was also noteworthy in that it contained information about the inner workings of British propaganda machinery in the United States. Vickrey wrote that they had immediately sent the copies of the Blue Book to some 280 or more papers and magazines whose names had been given by Wellington House. The ACASR had also sent it to at least two hundred other publications that were not on the Wellington House list, as well as to about a thousand influential men in public life. Vickrey added that he was endeavoring to see that every editor and “moulder of public opinion” in America had a copy.

The fact that the American Board paid for the propaganda material of Wellington House was perhaps one of the most astonishing aspects of this coordinated activity.

Apart from enjoying the effective assistance of Ambassador Morgenthau and the State Department, the British authorities did not also miss any chance at making use of offers for assistance by individual American officials. One such occasion arose when Lewis Einstein, former secretary of American Embassy at Istanbul, volunteered to write an

185 Barton to Toynbee, October 5, 1916 & October 9, 1916, ibid.
186 Bryce to Toynbee, November 1, 1916, ibid.: *“The New York Times has done us good service.”*
187 Vickrey to Toynbee, January 6, 1917, FO 96/207.
188 Barton to Toynbee, November 22, 1916, FO 96.206: Barton wrote: “...We expect for the uses of our Committee 3000 copies, as I understand, 2000 for which our Committee is to pay at the rate of 50 ¢ a copy, and 1000 complimentary...;” Toynbee to Barton, December 28, 1916, FO 96/207.
article on the “treatment of the Armenians.” Wellington House arranged for its publication in British press,\footnote{Toynbee to Einstein, January 18, 1917, \& Einstein to Toynbee January 24, 1917, ibid.} of course without reference to America or his official position.\footnote{Toynbee to the Editor of the \textit{Contemporary Review}, January 25, 1917, ibid.}

British propaganda pamphlets prepared and distributed by Wellington House in America focused on the delivery of a single message to the public mind: due to its treatment of the Armenians, the Ottoman state (the pamphlets repeated the political discourse of Western officials at the time by continually terming it as the “Turkish Empire”) “ought not to be left with any power over other races.” In order to stir religious sentiments, this propaganda campaign was introduced as an effort at helping “the Christian cause in Turkey.”\footnote{Toynbee to Barton, January 26, 1917, ibid.}

In 1916, with the help of British propaganda organization and material, the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR) under the direction of the American Board succeeded in stirring up American public opinion to support the Armenian cause. Rockwell cited among the successful achievements by the ACASR a supportive resolution of the Senate and a proclamation of the President in October, Thanksgiving Day drive in November, and Christmas offerings in December as the result of which they were able to send a “Christmas ship” to Syria. However, as the public interest in this matter was bound to quickly diminish, resulting in a rapid drop in donations, the ACASR needed British assistance again in helping to organize another appeal to the public in the spring of 1917. The ACASR asked Wellington House’s assistance in securing a number of brief articles penned by influential names from the other side of the Atlantic to
be used through religious press and syndicated articles in daily American press. The request was exactly describing what Wellington House had been established for. Its raison d'etre was to carry out such tasks as was unwittingly described in ACASR’s letter for assistance. Wellington House started right away getting messages from men of public standing, including Balfour, Sir Mark Sykes, etc. to help ACASR’s public campaign.

While essentially targeting the public opinion “moulders” in America and other neutral countries, the British propaganda machinery did not omit other areas of attention, which were as equally significant as the former if not more; that was the “home-front” and the public opinion in the allied countries. The British government allotted a considerable amount of human and financial resources for this propaganda work as well. As to the propaganda at home, the Armenian issue offered a useful theme to mobilize people’s feelings in support of the war effort. Wellington House and its prolific propagandist Toynbee wrote and edited pamphlets, press articles, speech texts, etc. One of the organizations to which Wellington House provided constant assistance in producing propaganda material was the well-known Armenian Refugees Fund, i.e. the Lord Mayor’s Fund.

Another noteworthy aspect of British propaganda was its careful political discourse not to provoke Muslim susceptibilities in the British Empire, but simultaneously to make maximum use of anti-Ottoman and anti-Muslim rhetoric in America. For enlisting Muslim

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192 Rockwell to Toynbee, January 19, 1917, ibid.
194 Armenian Refugees Fund to Toynbee, November 4, 1915; see also the Fund’s open letter to public requesting donations, FO 96/205. Toynbee, for example, sent hundreds of copies of his pamphlet the “Armenian Atrocities” to Lt. Col. G. M. Gregory, member of the executive committee of the Fund for distribution. Gregory to Toynbee, November 30, 1915, ibid.
support in India and Egypt to the war, Great Britain resorted to anti-Ottoman rhetoric in the press campaign by manipulating such sensitive issues as to whom the Caliphate must belong to, or whether the Ottoman declaration of holy war was compatible with Islam while its being an ally of a Christian power. It served to cultivate Muslim sympathy and claim religious legitimacy for Sherif Hussain’s revolt. British diplomacy also collaborated with its Entente allies for coordinating propaganda work to influence “Mohammedan thought” in the colonial dominions.195

195 For propaganda objectives and Entente cooperation see for instance: Bertie to Grey, January 4, 1915, FO 371/2480; passim; British Ambassador Bertie forwarded to FO McMahon’s reports on the latter’s meetings with French officials for coordinating propaganda toward the Muslims in the colonies.
CHAPTER III: AMERICA AT WAR AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE
ARMENIAN QUESTION (1917-18)

Non-Belligerents at War: America and the Ottoman Empire

America remained neutral until 1917, and as a neutral power it had benefited immensely from foreign trade and financial relations from the beginning of the Great War. The Entente blockade, particularly the British control of sea commerce and communications, at times seriously strained the relations between America and the Entente powers. However, Germany’s submarine warfare, including the sinking of American commercial ships, fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between the United States and the Entente powers. Nevertheless, when the United States declared war against Germany on April 6, 1917, its diplomacy was not constrained by the secret wartime agreements that the Entente powers had reached among themselves.

America’s war aims, in other words its program for the postwar world order, appeared to be principally different from those of the Entente powers. In his “War Message” of April 2, 1917, President Wilson underscored, among the American war aims, the establishment of a league of nations, and the principle of self-government which actually meant non-annexations. The Entente powers, on the other hand, were reluctant to give up their aspirations as specified in secret wartime agreements. In particular, the issue of partitioning the Ottoman Empire was the main subject of these secret treaties.

199 Seymour, American Diplomacy, 265; Mayer, 209.
As a matter of fact, long before its entry into war, the American government had been aware of the secret treaties of the Entente powers on the Ottoman Empire. During his visits to London in 1915 and 1916, Col. Edward M. House, Wilson’s personal adviser and confidant, discussed the possible peace terms. In his second mission, House had a meeting with members of the British War Cabinet, including Prime Minister Asquith, Lord Grey, Lloyd George, A.J. Balfour, and Lord Reading. They discussed the partition of the Ottoman Empire.200

British Foreign Secretary Balfour arrived at Washington, along with other Entente representatives, one week after America’s entry into the war to discuss war aims. In his confidential talk with President Wilson and Col. House in Washington on April 30, 1917 he discussed secret treaties201 on the Ottoman Empire, including the issues such as “the internationalization” of Istanbul. In separate meetings between Col. House and Balfour prior to the Washington talks, House observed that Balfour had been “very hazy” on the issue of the sphere of influence as mentioned in secret treaties and did not make it clear

    We all cheerfully divided up Turkey, both in Asia and Europe. The discussion hung for a while around the fate of Constantinople. George and Balfour were not enthusiastic over giving it into the hands of Russia, Grey and Asquith thinking if this were not done material for another war would always be at hand. I suggested the neutralization of Constantinople.

whether this meant permanent occupation or an exclusive right to exploit the resources in these areas. 202

In spite of this exchange of views, President Wilson and his administration were careful not to undertake formal commitment as regards secret treaties. 203 Wilson’s watchfulness in distancing the United States from the wartime engagements of the Entente powers continued in his references to America’s position in war not as “allied,” but as an “associate” power. 204 President Wilson was pursuing a deliberate policy in stressing the differences between the position of America and that of the Entente on war aims. He was confident that American influence based on its economic power would be sufficient to eliminate these secret treaties at the peace conference, and that the Entente powers must perforce accept American peace program. 205

Ray S. Baker, who was the chief of the press bureau of the American delegation at Paris and later wrote a three-volume book as the record of the peace conference based largely on the material from the private files of Woodrow Wilson, believed that while the wartime secret treaties represented the “old diplomacy,” upon which rested the Old World’s imperialistic and militaristic system, Wilson’s announcements symbolized the “new diplomacy,” or “open diplomacy.” 206 According to Arno J. Mayer, the rise of “the new open diplomacy” aimed to alter the conventional concepts of war-aims and peacemaking. The “non-annexationist war-aims statements” of the new diplomacy put the

203 Mayer, _Political Origins_, 330-1.
204 Seymour, _American Diplomacy_, 271-2.
205 Seymour, _Intimate Papers_, vol. 3, 51, 282.
forces of the old diplomacy on the defensive, especially following the revelation by the Bolsheviks of the war-time secret treaties, and America’s entry into the war.\textsuperscript{207}

Indeed, when the Bolsheviks publicized the wartime secret treaties and engaged in peace talks with the Central powers at Brest-Litovsk, Wilson felt that it was necessary to draw a detailed peace program in Europe. Thus, on January 2, 1918, he announced to Congress the Fourteen Points as a statement of war aims. Apart from some specific territorial proposals in particular for the Ottoman Empire, Wilson’s Fourteen Points consisted of some general and vague conceptions such as the self-determination of peoples, peace with no annexations, freedom of the seas, removal of economic barriers (the open door), limitation of armaments, and an association of nations (a league of nations) to guarantee world peace.\textsuperscript{208}

President Wilson’s peace program introduced an anomalous situation with regard to the Ottoman Empire. Although the United States was not at war with the Ottoman Empire, President Wilson was openly proposing in the point XII of His Fourteen Points the actual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. In an earlier draft, Wilson had even proposed that the Ottoman Empire be wiped off the map.\textsuperscript{209} In fact, President Wilson’s animosity toward the Ottoman Empire and the Turks was perhaps the most permanent characteristic of his diplomacy. Even before the United States entered the war, while discussing his war aims and possible peace terms, President Wilson told Col. House on January 3, 1917 that “Turkey should be effaced” and its dismemberment left to the Peace

\textsuperscript{207} Mayer, \textit{Political Origins}, 4-8.
House suggested that instead of partitioning among the belligerents, Ottoman territories must be divided along racial lines.\textsuperscript{211}

Wilson discussed with Col. House on October 13, 1917, formulating a paper to announce his war objectives and a peace plan, in the preparatory phase of his famous Fourteen Points. House noted in his diary that Wilson later changed his mind about “effacing Turkey” and he wrote on the margin of the Inquiry Report on: “The Turkish portions of the present Turkish Empire must be assured a secure sovereignty and the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule must be assured full opportunity of autonomous development.”\textsuperscript{212} According to a memorandum prepared by Secretary of State Robert Lansing, the American government was convinced in its strategic calculations that the Ottoman Empire must be deprived at least of control of the Straits.\textsuperscript{213} That the Turks must be expelled from Europe, Istanbul and the Straits was a fixed conviction of the Wilson administration, as it was to persistently advocate this view at the peace conference period. Notwithstanding its antagonism, the Wilson administration did not declare war against the Ottoman Empire. Wilson’s position in this regard remained unchanged despite the constant pressure exerted by Congress as well as the Entente powers to the contrary.

Sir William Wiseman, British intelligence officer at Washington,\textsuperscript{214} wrote Sir E. Drummond on Wilson’s views about the Ottoman Empire that Wilson had no sympathy or liking whatsoever for the Turks, but he believed that the presence of American missionaries and others had prevented massacres which would otherwise have occurred.

\textsuperscript{210} Seymour, \textit{Intimate Papers}, vol. 2, 414-5.
\textsuperscript{211} Evans, \textit{United States Policy}, 36.
\textsuperscript{212} Seymour, \textit{Intimate Papers} vol. 3, 323-4.
\textsuperscript{213} Evans, \textit{United States Policy}, 38.
Advisers whom Wilson trusted were mostly connected with various educational and religious organizations in the Ottoman Empire. These advisers had convinced him that “a terrible outbreak of savagery” would follow a declaration of war. This reason, which Wiseman found “curious,” added to the fact that Wilson could not see any direct military advantage to be gained.\textsuperscript{215}

Wiseman’s observation of the missionary influence on Wilson’s mind was undoubtedly confirmed time and again by the President’s own remarks. To the British officials with whom he talked, President Wilson adamantly reiterated his view that “the Turk must go, bag and baggage,” and there should be “the total extinction of Turkish official rule over Turks as well as Christians in Asia Minor.” He also supported the establishment of the Armenians “in the vilayets of the Old Kingdom.”\textsuperscript{216}

Aside from his approval for hostile propaganda, and despite his well-known anti-Ottoman feelings as well the pressures on him to take military action for supporting the Armenian cause, President Wilson refrained from declaring war on the Ottoman Empire. In the literature, it is frequently argued that it was not strategic or military concerns, but the missionary-relief circles, particularly Dr. James L. Barton, president of the ACASR (later NER) and senior secretary of the American Board (the ABCFM), and Wilson’s close friend and philanthropist Cleveland H. Dodge, who were influential in persuading Wilson not to declare war on Turkey with a view to maintaining their network of schools and hospitals in Anatolia.\textsuperscript{217} Indeed, American missionary interests tried to prevent the anti-Ottoman and pro-Armenian feelings, which ironically existed largely as a result of their

\textsuperscript{215} Wiseman to Drummond, August 28, 1918, \textit{W. Wiseman Papers}, FO 800/225.
\textsuperscript{216} Reed to Balfour, undated, but probably toward the end of 1918, \textit{Arthur J. Balfour Papers}, FO 800/211.
propaganda, from being used to have the United States declare war on the Ottoman Empire.218

Aside from this missionary influence, however, the Wilson administration was not materially prepared, and felt no immediate strategic or military exigency to declare war on the Sublime Porte. In response to the calls for war in the Senate, Secretary of State Lansing explained in his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee that there were important missionary, philanthropic and educational interests in the Ottoman Empire, and safeguarding these institutions in itself was of sufficient importance to justify the administration’s policy. Besides, Lansing underlined, the Ottoman Empire had not attacked the United States, and there was no particular advantage to be gained by declaring war. The United States could not, at this time, provide a significant military force to fight on the Mesopotamian and Palestinian fronts. Moreover, he warned, in the event of war, “Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire might become the victims of new massacres.”219

Pressure on the Wilson administration for a declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire increased particularly following the Bolshevik Revolution up until the end of the war. The Entente states, and most of all Great Britain at the forefront, were pressing to induce America to help salvage the precarious situation in southern Russia and the Caucasus in the aftermath of the collapse of Russian Caucasian front. In response to this pressure, Secretary Lansing again pointed out to the importance of a century-long American investment in missionary institutions in the Ottoman Empire, and maintained

218 Daniel, American Philanthropy, 154-5.
219 Fromkin, Peace 259-60; Evans, United States Policy 38-9.
that acquiescing to such calls for war against the Ottomans, no matter how desirable it might sound, would also mean to discard all the relief work, which was being carried on in the Ottoman Empire since the beginning of the war. Lansing further underlined that the Entente’s calls for a war stemmed entirely from military reasons, as they were striving to prevent the Ottoman advance in the Caucasus and upper Euphrates by encouraging a resistance formed by the Caucasians. Besides, the Ottomans had committed no acts of war against America, Lansing reiterated. He frequently used these arguments in defending no-war policy in Congressional committees.  

As for the Ottoman position, following the American declaration of war against Germany, the Ottoman Empire was compelled to break its diplomatic relations with the United States. It obviously had nothing to gain to declare war on America. German pressure was effective in Turkey’s decision to sever diplomatic relations with America. The Ottoman Foreign Ministry assured Ambassador Abram I. Elkus that the rupture of diplomatic relations would not affect the American missionary schools and other institutions, allowing them to operate as they did before. In March 1917, referring to some anti-Ottoman reports in the Western press such as news claiming that the American missionaries had been interned in the empire, Elkus stressed that these were unfounded. He believed that the Entente countries and Germany might have disseminated such baseless news to provoke enmity between the Ottoman Empire and the United States. One of the Ottoman Cabinet ministers told Elkus that the way the Entente powers had published their

220 Lansing to Wilson, 8 May 1918, FRUS, Lansing Papers, II, 124-9.
221 Trask, United States Response, 21.
peace terms was a “most stupid piece of business,” for there were so many people in the empire who were against the war and longed for peace, and yet the Entente powers’ aim to give Istanbul to Russia, now made them support the continuation of the war.223

In stark contrast to the position of American press, leading Ottoman press organs, such as Tanin and İkdam, took a generally favorable attitude toward America and its social and political affairs during the war. The same positive attitude was shown to American organizations, philanthropic activities and educational institutions operating in Ottoman territory.224

Prior to the severance of diplomatic relations, extensive American relief work towards the Armenians had been coordinated under the supervision of the American Embassy in Istanbul. The consulates and missionaries in the interior of the country had conducted the distribution of food, relief material, and money. American relief work was not affected by the rupture of relations, and continued unabated. Through its relief operation the ACASR was able to help hundreds of thousands of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Caucasia.225

In March 1918 former Ambassador Elkus informed Col. House that the Ottoman government, particularly Grand Vizier Talat Pasha and Finance Minister Cavid Bey, had kept its promise regarding American institutions and citizens in the empire honorably, as

223 Elkus to Lansing, March 2, 1917, FRUS, Lansing Papers, I, 789-90.
224 Elkus to Lansing, January 29, 1917, microfilm roll 2, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29.
corroborated by communications of L. Heck, who had been a secretary in the Embassy and was left in Istanbul in charge of American affairs after the rupture of relations.\textsuperscript{226}

During an exchange of views between the British and American policymakers on how to weaken the Central powers’ war effort, detaching its allies from Germany seemed to be an effective way, if it were successful. Col. House spoke with Balfour on April 22, 1917 about this plan and the latter was in sympathy with it. Balfour asked the Colonel what he thought of the Ottoman Empire in this regard. House said “scrapheap,” to which Balfour agreed.\textsuperscript{227} Nevertheless, in May 1917, at the initiative of Henry Morgenthau, the former U.S. Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, President Wilson approved a secret mission to sound out the Ottoman government a separate peace in order to detach it from Germany. The Morgenthau mission, and its ultimate failure, was important as a case demonstrating British influence upon American policymaking.

Morgenthau first revealed his plan to Secretary Lansing that the war conditions and famine had made life unbearable in the Ottoman Empire, increasing the people’s resentment against the CUP government. The Ottoman government under the control of the powerful triumvirs, Enver, Talat and Cemal, was already “heartily sick of their German masters,” yet they felt desperate because of the presence of German cruisers in the Bosphorus, and of German officers in the capital. The time was ripe to make secret peace overtures to the Ottomans. If successful, this would separate the Ottoman Empire and eventually Bulgaria from Germany. According to Morgenthau’s plan, he would go to Switzerland to meet the two members of the former Ottoman Cabinet. Arshag

\textsuperscript{226} Elkus to House, October 13, 1917, Box 41, Folder 1299, \textit{E. M. House Papers}.
\textsuperscript{227} House to Polk, April 23, 1917, Box 92, Folder 3164, ibid.
Schmavonian who had been Morgenthau’s dragoman in Istanbul, was at the time in Switzerland, apparently to help arrange the proposed meeting. As for Schmavonian’s part in this initiative, Morgenthau told Lansing that Schmavonian was with Elkus at Berne, and he was the man who was constantly in touch with the Ottoman authorities, and would know more about their plans and inclinations than anyone else. Morgenthau requested Lansing to allow his former assistant to accompany him in this mission.228 Secretary Lansing revealed the plan to his British counterpart, Balfour, who was still in Washington. Balfour replied that he had nothing very definite on the subject, but was aware that the Ottomans were “nibbling.”229

In his confidential notes, Lansing gave interesting details about Morgenthau’s secret mission. Morgenthau explained to him that his plan was based upon “the peculiarly cordial and intimate terms” that had existed between him and Enver and Talat, when he was ambassador. He then unfolded the particulars of his plan saying that he would seek to attain them by making promises of generous peace terms and by “any other means,” i.e. money as Lansing understood it, to persuade them to a separate peace deal. After Wilson’s approval of Morgenthau’s secret mission, the British Foreign Office gave its consent, but suggested that, since Switzerland was “simply overrun with spies,” Morgenthau go to Egypt instead, where he could easily get in touch with the Ottoman officials. Agreeing to the British suggestion, Morgenthau told Lansing that a very plausible excuse for going to Egypt would be to attempt to alleviate the conditions of the Jews in Palestine. This would conceal the real purpose of his visit. In order to put the public “off the scent,” and to make

228 Morgenthau to Lansing, June 1, 1917, microcopy no. 353, roll 46, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-29.
229 Lansing to Wilson, May 17, 1917, FRUS, Lansing Papers, I, 17-19.
it real to the American Jews, however, it was necessary to have a Zionist to accompany him. He suggested Felix Frankfurter, who was an aide to War Secretary Baker. Meanwhile, Lansing discussed the matter with Justice Brandeis, who was the leader of Zionist movement in America. Finally, Morgenthau and Frankfurter sailed for Gibraltar, where they would meet secretly representatives of the British and French governments.230

Morgenthau’s entry in his diary, though extremely brief, stated that when he arrived at Gibraltar on July 2, 1917, Schmavonian, who met him there, seemed discouraging and unhopeful. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader in Great Britain, arrived there on July 4 and they got right down to talk, including on the topic Zionism. The next day, after meeting with Monsieur Weyl on behalf of France, Morgenthau sent his “fatal telegram” to the State Department, and from there he headed to Paris via Madrid. He received a telegram from Frank L. Polk on July 16, instructing him to confine himself to Jewish point of mission.231 Weizmann announced during the Gibraltar meeting that the British war aims against the Ottoman Empire were the “separation from Turkey of territory containing subject races, in effect Armenia and territory south of Taurus.” In his report dated July 8, 1917 Morgenthau made it clear that a “full report of Schmavonian” as well as a “thorough canvass of the situation by the British and French” had convinced him that the time was not ripe for undertaking the peace initiative.232

It seems that American peace initiative apparently conflicted with the plans of the British and French governments, who succeeded in preventing Morgenthau from

231 Diary, July 2, 4 & 16, 1917, reel 5, Henry Morgenthau Papers.
232 FRUS, 1917, Supplement 2, vol. 1, 120-22, The Special Agents (Morgenthau, Frankfurter) to the Secretary of State.
proceeding to the Near East. On June 14, 1917, i.e. before Morgenthau set out his journey to Gibraltar, the British Foreign Office communicated to the British Ambassador at Washington that Armenians and Zionist Jews had called at the Foreign Office to protest against Morgenthau’s proposed mission. Foreign Office further noted that they seemed “to have full information” as to the scope and objects of the mission, and as the secrecy on which success depended was no longer possible, it would be wiser to postpone the mission. Curiously, again before Morgenthau landed at Gibraltar, the members of the Armenian national delegation in Great Britain sent a letter to Ambassador Page, dated June 29, 1917, saying that the rumors had reached them to the effect that Morgenthau was endeavoring to bring about a separate peace with the Ottomans, which they condemned. The letter was signed by H.U. Mordetcheua and James A. Malcolm.

According to some views, Morgenthau’s mission had ultimately failed because it interfered with the plans of the Zionists, and the latter managed to thwart Morgenthau’s peace mission. Weizmann, the Zionist leader who had a considerable influence upon Great Britain’s policy toward the Ottoman Empire, did not want the Turks to be given any guarantee of territorial integrity that would deprive the Jews of a future homeland. In any case, the failure of Morgenthau’s Ottoman mission frustrated President Wilson and his special adviser Colonel House. House noted that “Morgenthau’s trip had turned out to be a fiasco.”

234 Note from the British Embassy, June 14, 1917, microcopy no. 353, roll 46, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-29.
235 Page to Secretary of State, July 6, 1917, ibid.
President Wilson felt the need to explain to the British government somehow apologetically the “misunderstanding” regarding the Morgenthau mission. He told Wiseman that Morgenthau was sent to the Near East for “relief work,” and if opportunity arose to get in touch discreetly with the Ottoman leaders, to sound them on the subject of peace. Wilson requested Wiseman to assure Balfour that Morgenthau had not been authorized to express Wilson’s views to anyone, or to approach the Ottoman leaders officially, and as regards his (Wilson’s) views on the “disposition of Turkey,” he had already explained them to Balfour.238

During this period, the Armenian leaders continued with their effort to bring their nationalist aspirations to the attention of the American administration. They were able to do it with relative ease through America missionary circles. In a memorandum that Dr. Barton transmitted to the State Department, Boghos Nubar stated that there was no other possible solution but “the release of Armenians from the Turkish yoke,” and the Reform Act of February 8, 1914 could no longer be an option as it had been torn up by the Ottomans. He reiterated that if constituted according to their aspirations, an Armenian state would be a buffer state between the “future Turkish state in Anatolia” and Russia, Iran, Mesopotamia and Syria. Nubar asserted that the Armenians had controlled 60% of the import, 40% of the export, and more than 80% of the domestic trade in the Ottoman Empire in the prewar period. He further declared that “notwithstanding the large number of the victims of massacres and deportations, most of the Armenians” had been able to

238 “Notes of Interview with ‘Ajax’ [President Wilson],” July 13, 1917, Box 4, Folder 93, William Wiseman Papers.
escape, and that 1,500,000 Armenians survived in the Ottoman Empire. Morgenthau, too, was instrumental to present the Armenian claims directly to the top level of American policymaking. For instance, in March 1918, he forwarded a letter of G. Pasdermadjian (aka Armen Garo, the former deputy from Erzurum to the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies who had led one of the Armenian volunteer regiments against the Ottomans) to Col. House, saying that he was visiting America as the special envoy of the Armenian Catholicos.

In the meantime, Bolshevik propaganda on the principle of nationality and the right to self-determination gave rise to fears and heated debates about its possible impact on international relations. Despite Wilson’s reference in his peace program to the principle of nationality and self-government, American officials, too, were concerned about the potential effect of this notion on world order, and they evidently assumed a selective approach regarding its application. In a letter to Wilson on January 2, 1918, Secretary of State Lansing invited the President’s attention to the fact that the Bolshevik discourse on the rights of nationalities without defining what nationality meant might well appeal to the average men. In Lansing’s view, if the Bolsheviks intended to suggest that every community could determine its allegiance to this or that state or become independent, international order would be shattered and anarchy would ensue. He further underscored that though founded entirely on the assertion of legality, “the right of communities within a constituted federal union to determine their allegiance was denied by the government of the United States in 1861 and the denial was enforced by military power.” He maintained that as a nation, America was committed to the principle that “a national state may by force

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239 Barton to William Philips (Assistant Secretary of State), October, 25, 1917, microcopy no. 353, roll 46, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29. In the enclosure of his letter Barton forwarded a copy of Boghos Nubar’s memorandum, titled “The Armenian Question and the Peace Conference,” that Nubar had previously sent to President Wilson.

240 Morgenthau to House, March 15, 1918, Box 82, Folder 2778, E.M. House Papers.
if necessary prevent a portion of its territory from seceding without its consent especially if it has long exercised sovereignty over it or if its national safety or vital interests would be endangered.” He believed that the suggestions of the Bolsheviks in regard to Ireland, India, and other countries which had been and were integral parts of “recognized powers” were utterly untenable if it was desirable to preserve the concept of sovereign states.241 In Lansing’s mind, putting the idea of a right to self-determination into the minds of “certain races” would be dangerous and bound to create trouble in many lands. As to these races, Lansing cited the Irish, the Indians, the Egyptians, the Boers, and the “Mohammedans of Syria, Palestine, Tripoli, and Morocco.” Moreover, Lansing underscored, as to the Near East, it could not be harmonized with Zionism, to which Wilson was practically committed.242

The same Lansing, prepared in September 1918 a detailed sketch of territorial partition based upon the notion of nationality for the Ottoman as well as Austro-Hungarian empires. In Lansing’s verdict the Ottoman Empire was to be reduced to Anatolia and have no territory in Europe. Istanbul and the Straits were to be placed under an international protectorate. Other Ottoman lands were also to be detached and put under some power’s control. Armenia and Syria should be first “erected into protectorates of such government or governments;” but both would be given self-government as soon as possible.243

In America, notwithstanding Wilson’s enthusiastic plans for active participation in the shaping of new world order in the aftermath of the war, the Republican majority and many members of the Democratic Party in the U.S. Congress were averse to any American

241 Lansing to Wilson, December 10, 1917; January 2, 1918, Box 2, Folder 5, Robert Lansing Papers.
242 “Certain Phrases of the President Contain the Seeds of Trouble,” December 20, 1918, Box 7, Folder 2; “Self-Determination and the Dangers,” December 30, 1918, ibid.
243 “Memorandum on Territorial Arrangements after the War,” September 21, 1918, ibid.
involvement in European diplomatic wrangling and rivalry. Nor was the war popular in American public opinion. This was a source of serious concern to the British government.244 Fully aware of this situation, the Wilson administration took action to stir up public support for the war cause. Drawing lessons from the effective British precedent of public propaganda, the American government set out to create a huge propaganda organization toward this end. President Wilson ordered on April 14, 1917 the creation of a Committee on Public Information (CPI) and appointed George Creel its Chairman. Secretaries of State, War, and Navy were the CPI’s ex officio members. The CPI functioned until August 21, 1919 and was engaged in extensive public propaganda activities in America and abroad. The CPI gathered together three thousand historians to produce pamphlets and maps; hundreds of artists to produce movie films, draw posters; organized a “Four Minute Men News” campaign by employing and training more than 50,000 personnel for explaining to the American people Wilson’s war aims in public gatherings, including in movie theaters. President Wilson showed a keen interest in the work of the CPI and generously supported it, including giving advice.245

From the records of the period, it appears that the idea regarding the importance of public propaganda to bolster American public’s support to the war effort was strongly inspired by the British authorities through various channels. In this regard, Ambassador Morgenthau again played a prominent part in introducing the British-originated methods to the administration. In a letter to Secretary Lansing, Morgenthau informed him that

Pomeroy Burton, the manager of the *London Daily Mail*, one of Lord Northcliffe’s newspapers, came to America to give conferences on the war to select audiences. In this connection, a group of prominent New Yorkers consulted him concerning important and necessary activities about the war. He explained that, apparently as a result of this consultation, Vance C. McCormick had submitted to the President a plan, under which someone was to be appointed to take charge of the new bureau to be established for disseminating information throughout the country. Morgenthau informed Lansing that Burton, who had been to America “by the courtesy of Lord Northcliffe, had rendered great service in arousing the communities in which he had spoken,” and requested Lansing’s intercession for the extension of Burton’s stay for another three months.246

Nonetheless, Morgenthau’s mind was still “cassandric” in late 1917 due to the lack of enthusiasm in America for the war effort. Mobilizing people’s support for the administration was also crucial for the upcoming Congressional election. Although he appreciated the efforts made by the Democratic Committee, the George Creel Committee (the CIP), Morgenthau admitted pessimistically that many people were still opposed to the war, and a vigorous public campaign must be launched to “educate” the American people about the war. He suggested to Wilson that a very specific task must be undertaken “to concentrate the public mind upon certain facts,” especially on the story of Germany’s “intrigue and perfidy.” Morgenthau planned to do this not by directly targeting Germany, but through a propaganda attack against Ottoman Turkey through the Armenian question. He then rancorously remarked as follows:

246 Morgenthau to Lansing, June 1, 1917, microcopy no. 353, roll 46, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-29.
It can easily be shown that Turkey was the cancer in the life of the world, and, not being properly treated, has now grown into the greater cancer of Central Europe. If the Turks have, for four hundred and fifty years, constantly endangered the peace of Europe, what will happen to the world if Germany and Turkey now assume the role of tyrant and troublemaker together?²⁴⁷

Morgenthau’s idea was to execute this task by writing a propaganda book. After obtaining Wilson’s approval, Morgenthau set out his work. His book, which was first serialized in a popular magazine and newspapers with combined circulations of 2,630,256, later published under the title of *The Story of Ambassador Morgenthau.*²⁴⁸ It was a product of officially sanctioned teamwork. Secretary of State Lansing examined its draft, and Arshag K. Schmavonian and Hagop S. Andonian,²⁴⁹ Morgenthau’s Armenian assistants since his Istanbul days, were the main source of information. Morgenthau’s goal was to contribute to America’s war effort by convincing the American public of the “necessity of carrying the war to a victorious conclusion” through arousing anti-Turkish feelings. In Heath Lowry’s words, it attained that goal “in a manner which must have exceeded even his wildest expectations.”²⁵⁰

In the meantime, Morgenthau informed Wilson in June 1918 of the progress of his book project and of his intention to make a movie out of it as an effective anti-German propaganda. Wilson, however, did not consent to Morgenthau’s plan of turning the book into movie, and added:

We have gone quite far enough in that direction….Movies I have seen recently have portrayed so many horrors that I think their effect is far from stimulating…

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²⁴⁷ Morgenthau to Wilson, November 26, 1917, reel 8, *Henry Morgenthau Papers.*
There is nothing practical that we can do for the time being in the matter of the Armenian massacres,… and the attitude of the country toward Turkey is already fixed. It does not need enhancement.  

Dr. Barton, the president of ACASR and foreign secretary of the American Board (ABCFM), felt confident enough to write Boghos Nubar in March 1918 that everyone in the United States from the top officials in the government to the common people were of the same opinion that in the future settlement of Ottoman affairs the non-Muslim people must be given absolute freedom “from the misrule of the Turks.” That was the doctrine, he underlined, the ACASR was promulgating and had already succeeded much in “shaping public opinion to that end.” There was also a very curious point in Dr. Barton’s letter to Nubar. He revealed that he was a member of a “special American Committee, appointed at the request of the State Department, on affairs in the Ottoman Empire.” Of course, he would not disclose to Nubar the other members of the Committee, but he assured him that they all were men of high standing in the government and in the country. He further pointed that they (the special Committee) were taking up this matter. Overly confident about the outcome of their planned endeavor, Barton stated that there was a sentiment gaining ground in America that the Ottoman Empire was “incapable of ruling over even Turks,” therefore it would be in favor of “eliminating the Turkish government absolutely.”

Dr. Barton’s revelation to Nubar seemed to be curious in view of the fact that, he proposed to the State Department the creation of such a special committee five days after

252 Barton’s letter to Nubar, March 13, 1918, Armenia Collection 1916-1923, C1221, Box 1, F.1., Princeton University Library, Manuscripts Division; passim.
he had sent his letter to the Armenian leader. Therefore, although Barton wrote as if the so-called special committee had already been founded with the blessing of the State Department, he had yet to ask for such a favor after he had written to Nubar. To the State Department, Barton explained that in conference with the representative of the Armenian National Committee, Miran Sevasly (he was representing in America Boghos Nubar’s national delegation), and the special envoy of the Catholicos, D.G. Pasdermadjian, it was suggested that Cleveland H. Dodge, Charles R. Crane, Elihu Root, William W. Peet and himself be the members of a special committee to coordinate efforts and formulate conclusions regarding the Armenian affairs as well as American missionary interests in the Ottoman Empire.253

Dr. Barton’s assurances to Nubar about their adherence to the Armenian cause at times went beyond declaring the support of his missionary circles and assumed the character of speaking on behalf of the American government itself. In his letter of November 2, 1918, he referred to his meeting with the Secretary of State on the subject of Armenia, and said that he was informed without hesitation whatever by the Secretary that neither the Armenians nor the friends of the Armenians needed any fear that Armenia, with the approval of the United States, would be left under Ottoman rule.254

What made Dr. Barton’s part in the Armenian question still more astonishing was his disclosure to Col. House in January 1918 that for the past two or three years he had been collaborating with Lord Bryce upon a plan “for a free government in the eastern part”

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253 Barton to Lansing, March 18 & April 4, 1918, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29, microcopy no. 353, roll 46. Pasdermadjian and Sevasly sent Secretary of State Lansing a memorandum on the Armenian aspirations on March 25, 1918, ibid.
254 Barton to Nubar, November 2, 1918, Box 1, Folder 1, Armenia Collection; Barton to Nubar November 22, 1918, ibid.
of the Ottoman Empire. He further revealed that at Bryce’s request he had prepared a plan which was submitted to the British government for its consideration when the war should end.  

As for public propaganda, Dr. Barton carried on advocating his well-known views. He wrote in July 1918 that the real object of the conflict, if not its center, was in the East not in the West, i.e. it was the destiny of the Ottoman lands, whose resources had not been developed “under the 500 years of Mohammedan rule.” Barton suggested America assume temporarily the control of Istanbul and the Straits “in the interests of European peace.” As regards the Armenian aspirations, Barton, though acknowledging that its boundary was not clearly defined and the Armenians had not constituted the majority of the population of in eastern provinces, the area must be organized as a separate government with having outlets on the Black Sea and on the Mediterranean, under America’s control. The fact that Dr. Barton made these suggestions as early as in July 1918 could be taken as an early sign of missionary agenda in peace conference.

William Yale, who was a diplomat and later a university professor, was appointed to Cairo in September 1917 as a special agent of the State Department to report on the affairs in the Near East. Before going to Egypt, he stopped over at London and Paris. At Paris, he saw Boghos Nubar. The latter told Yale that the Armenian question was tied up with the question of the Arabs and that the only solution to the Eastern Question would be the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Nubar said he would like to see America play

255 Barton to Colonel House, January 8, 1918, Box 11, Folder 325, E. M. House Papers.
the part in Armenia that it had played in Cuba and was playing in the Philippines, until Armenia could take care of itself.257

In the summer of 1917 at Col. House’s initiative and with the approval of President Wilson a group of experts, called the Inquiry, was formed in order to prepare American plans and programs for the peace conference. House selected the members of the Inquiry. Dr. Sidney E. Mezes of New York City College was at the head of the organization and the group consisted of historians and specialists. Dr. Isaiah Bowman became executive officer of the Inquiry, and Walter Lippmann, the editor of the New York World, was its secretary. Its membership included prominent academicians such as Professors James T. Shotwell, Charles Seymour, David Hunter Miller, David Magie, and Clive Day. W.L. Westermann was in charge of the affairs related to the Ottoman Empire. The group prepared reports and memoranda, including maps for the consideration of the American government. Incorporated later into the American delegation at the peace conference, the Inquiry provided political analyses and technical advice to the delegates. Since its inception, it operated under the control of Col. House.258

There is no doubt that Col. House was the most important political figure after President Wilson in the making of U.S. foreign policy in this period. Notwithstanding the fact that he held no official title or position in the administration, as a personal friend and confidant of Wilson, he was actually at the head of America foreign policy.259 As for Wilson’s feelings toward the Colonel, the President had once told Sir Wiseman that

257 Yale to Leland Harrison (the State Department), September 30, 1917, Box 2, Folder 3, William Yale Papers; Diary Notes, September 29, 1917, Box 2, Folder 3, ibid.
Colonel House knew his mind entirely and on many problems he was the only person Wilson could consult.\(^{260}\)

On January 2, 1918, the Inquiry Director Dr. Mezes and two other Inquiry officials, David H. Miller and Walter Lippman, submitted a report to President Wilson regarding “War Aims and Peace Terms.” This report was the origin of what was to become Wilson’s Fourteen Points which he declared in his address to the Congress on January 8, 1918.\(^{261}\)

What made the Inquiry relevant in terms of the Armenian question was the fact that its experts prepared reports, plans and statistics on the possible partition of the Ottoman Empire, including the districts that had long been the object of Armenian nationalist aspirations. Drawing mostly on European and Armenian sources, the Inquiry specialists produced maps regarding the Near East on ethnographic distribution, railroad network, economic activity, and demographic density in connection with their policy recommendations.\(^{262}\)

In one of its papers on the population, the Inquiry depicted the “Asiatic Turkey” as a sparsely populated country as compared to the European countries, including the former Ottoman provinces in the Balkans. Population density, according to the June 1916 issue of *The Nineteenth Century*, was 28.0 per sq. mile in the Ottoman provinces in Asia, whereas it was 372.6 on Great Britain, 310.4 in Germany, 189.5 in France, and 64.6 in European Russia. The same publication gave the total population for Asiatic Turkey as 19,383,900 as compared to 45,370,530 in Great Britain, 64,925,993 in Germany, 

\(^{260}\) *Notes of an Interview with the President* by Wiseman, October 16, 1918, Box 185, Folder 1/240, *E.M. House Papers*.


\(^{262}\) See the numerous maps, sketches and tables in: Boxes 34-36, *The Inquiry Papers*, MS8, Yale University Library Manuscripts and Archives.
39,601,509 in France, and 182,556,700 in European Russia. In another table, the Inquiry provided the following figures as to the percentage of Armenian population in the six vilayets, according to the French Yellow Book on Armenian affairs (1895-97) quoted in L’Asie Française’s April 1914 issue:\footnote{263} Sivas: 17 %, Erzurum: 30 %, Bitlis: 33 %, Mamuret ül-Aziz (Harput): 12 %, Diyarbekir: 17 %, Van: 19 %.

The Inquiry also held conversations with Armenian leaders on the prospects of creating an Armenian state and explored the possible geographic and demographic boundaries of such an imagined political entity. The Inquiry spoke with Pasdermadjian and the latter provided a rough sketch of an Armenian state with extravagant territorial claims. Pasdermadjian, who was sent to America by the Catholicos to lobby for the Armenian cause, also declared their willingness for an American protectorate in the contemplated Armenia during the first twenty years of its “autonomy,” by referring to the type of American control in Cuba.\footnote{264} It seems that through such technical preparations the Wilson administration seriously studied the possibilities for a political engagement in the Ottoman geography.

Apart from its political concerns over the issues of nationality, as mentioned earlier, the American government viewed the Bolshevik Revolution with increasing anxiety. Lansing said to Wilson that the elimination of Russia would prolong the war for two or three years, with a corresponding demand upon America for men and money. The only hope was to set up a military dictatorship backed by loyal troops. The group of generals with General Kaledin, the hetman of the Don Cossacks, appeared to be the only

\footnotesize{263 “Population, Turkey, Abstracts,” Box: 28, Folder: 84, ibid.  
264 “From Conversation of Dr. Pasdermadjian to L.D.,” January 17, 1918, Box: 28, Folder: 84, ibid.}
option to sufficiently oppose the Bolsheviks.\textsuperscript{265} It seems that the Wilson administration acted swiftly by suggesting to the Cossacks cooperation with the allies. American involvement also included support for the Armenian armed units being formed at the end of December 1917. The primary purpose was to check the spread of the Bolshevik movement.\textsuperscript{266} Walter H. Page, American Ambassador at London, cabled to Lansing that the British government had already instructed its agents to make financial offers to various Russian and Armenian groups, and that it would be imprudent if American participation in such schemes should be known.\textsuperscript{267}

\textit{British Pressure and the Revival of the Armenian Issue}

The February Revolution in the Russian Empire unleashed forces of political and social unrest plunging the country into turmoil. Until America’s entry into war, Russia’s effective withdrawal had seriously weakened the Entente side. The Entente powers’ situation further deteriorated in 1917 because of the increasing casualties, economic crises, and the subsequent war weariness.\textsuperscript{268} While its material resources and manpower were drained as a result of the war and its contributions to its allies, Great Britain’s treasury was on the brink of bankruptcy. One-sided trade with the U.S. for supplies during the war had further worsened its financial situation. Under these circumstances, the British Foreign Secretary Balfour appealed to Col. House on June 30, 1917: “You know I am not an alarmist, but this is serious. I hope you will do what you can in proper quarters to avert calamity.”\textsuperscript{269} Despite Wilson’s apprehensions about the Entente war aims, particularly

\textsuperscript{265} Lansing to Wilson, December 10, 1917, Box 2, Folder 2, \textit{Robert Lansing Papers}.
\textsuperscript{266} Smith (American Consul at Tiflis) to Lansing, December 18, 1917, Box 2, Folder 3, ibid.
\textsuperscript{267} Page to Lansing, December 19, 1917, ibid.
\textsuperscript{268} Mayer, \textit{Political Origins}, 170.
\textsuperscript{269} W.B. Fowler, \textit{Role of Sir William Wiseman}, 8, 44.
British ambitions, the Entente’s dependence on the United States increased, as the American contribution to the war effort grew.

Notwithstanding these hardships in the ongoing war and their growing dependence on America, Great Britain and its allies continued to specify their secret plans on partition of the Ottoman Empire and the division of their respective territorial spheres. There was no doubt that their territorial schemes were aimed at fulfilling strategic interests and imperialist aspirations of each power. In their scramble for geopolitical supremacy in the Near East, the Entente powers, later joined by the United States, preferred to frame their goals in a sort of “white-man’s burden” rhetoric with a strong emphasis on religion, race, and above all perhaps, on the dichotomy of “the civilized vs. the barbarous.” That such discourse was utilized not just in public campaigns but also during the exchange of views in secret diplomacy was an astonishing fact of this period. This attitude would continue to mark the allied discourse toward the Ottomans during the peace conference as well. British Foreign Secretary Balfour provided an illustrious example of this attitude when he informed the Italian Ambassador of British recognition of Italian claims to southern Anatolia. Balfour wrote that if the war should break the power of “the Turk,” he should rejoice that Italy would bear a great share “in restoring to civilization the neighboring lands which the Turk has so long laid waste.”

One of the noteworthy aspects of Anglo-American relations during this period was the fact that, unlike extensive British network of influence on both the American policymaking process as well as on the public opinion, Wilson’s hands were somehow tied owing to the lack of a corresponding mechanism at his disposal. Moreover he viewed his

270 Balfour to the Marquis Imperiali, April 12, 1917, FO 371/3043.
Ambassador at London incompetent. Becoming increasingly wary about the soundness of his assessments, Wilson believed that Ambassador Walter H. Page was too pro-British. Sensing that something wrong was going on, Page appealed to Lansing asking his advice on how to get the President to answer his letters and whether his recall or continuance of his service in London was desirable.\textsuperscript{271}

Wilson’s dislike of Ambassador Page’s pro-British penchant did not make much difference for the British authorities, as they had an unparalleled opportunity and capability to reach the highest level of American decision-making through the Great War and the Paris Peace Conference. They made use of these discreet channels of communication effectively at critical junctures to extract the best possible results for British strategy. Through their extensive network established over the war period the British had uninterrupted access to American policymakers as well as leading public figures. With the missionary societies’ collaboration, the British influence on the American public as well as on political process acquired remarkable proportions.

Within this context, the part Sir William Wiseman played in Anglo-American political interaction was noteworthy. Intelligence officer Wiseman was able to cultivate the full confidence and friendship of both President Wilson and Colonel House. He acted as a direct confidential channel of communication between the British leadership and President Wilson as well as Colonel House. No one, including British Ambassador Spring-Rice, wielded such a privileged position as Wiseman did, and it appears that he did perform his task quite well. He reported to Balfour that the Colonel was extending to them “prompt

assistance” in urgent matters and had confidential relations with the President.\textsuperscript{272} Col. House wrote British Premier Lloyd George that no one had a better opportunity than Wiseman to obtain insight into the purposes of the American government. He had the Colonel’s “entire confidence.”\textsuperscript{273}

Indeed, Sir William Wiseman was appointed to Washington under a diplomatic status, but he was at the head of the British intelligence network operating in the United States during the war. Wiseman was also a member of the British delegation during the peace negotiations at Paris, and acted as the primary liaison between the British and American delegations. Lord Northcliffe, who visited Washington in July 1917, wrote Winston Churchill that Wiseman was the only person, English or American, who had access to Wilson and Colonel House at all times. He observed that the American administration was entirely run by these two men, and Wiseman’s access to both of them provided the British government an invaluable asset in Washington. Northcliffe also underlined that the war could not be won anywhere but in America. Wilson’s political power at home was unchallenged and Col. House was a wise assistant to him. He believed that, notwithstanding the cross-currents against Great Britain, both Wilson and House were pro-British.\textsuperscript{274}

Former Ambassador James Bryce’s role in this regard has been mentioned earlier. When American relations with Germany deteriorated in the beginning of 1917 portending war, Lord Bryce wrote Col. House that the “moment” seemed to be approaching when the “contingency” they discussed in London in May 1915 would become a fact. He had two

\textsuperscript{272} Wiseman to Balfour, October 7, 1917, Box 10, Folder 287, \textit{E. M. House Papers}.
\textsuperscript{273} House to Lloyd George, July 15, 1917, Box 70a, Folder 2340, ibid.
\textsuperscript{274} Northcliffe to Churchill, July 27, 1917, Box 3, Folder 56, \textit{Sir William Wiseman Papers}, MS666, Yale University Library Manuscripts and Archives.
suggestions to make to the Colonel. The first one was a naval action, probably a landing, by the United States against the Ottoman Empire, particularly along the Mediterranean coastline. Claiming that many American missionaries were at the mercy of the Turks, Bryce proposed to the Colonel to inspire “fear,” as fear was the only motive, he alleged, to which “vile ruffians Talat, Enver and the rest of the gang” were open. Bryce’s second suggestion was that the dispatch of American soldiers to France in the spring would give a powerful moral influence.\(^{275}\)

For his part, Col. House clearly identified American interests with those of the Entente by expressing an amazing degree of allegiance to the allied cause even before the official proclamation of war, as reflected in his reply to Lord Bryce. He said he was of the opinion that America should constitute itself into “a huge reservoir of money, munitions and men to supply the Allies with whatever they lack.” Col. House would personally prefer that instead of raising a large army in America thereby cutting off supplies to the allies, they should encourage enlisting in America so that “the ranks of the British and French armies could be filled where needed.” Let their officers “whip new men into shape.”\(^{276}\) When Wilson proclaimed his Fourteen Points, Bryce assured Col. House that there seemed to be no real difference of view as to the most important points between America and Great Britain, and he underlined especially the application to southeastern Europe of the principle of nationalities and the “deliverance of Armenia and Syria from Turkish yoke.”\(^{277}\)

Regardless of Col. House’s proclivity to the allies, and prior to Balfour’s visit to America in April 1917, however, Wiseman informed the British government that Congress

\(^{275}\) Bryce to House, February 16, 1917, Box 20, Folder 659, *E. M. House Papers*.

\(^{276}\) House to Bryce, March 21, 1917, Box 20, Folder 659, ibid.

\(^{277}\) Bryce to House, March 15, 1918, Box 20, Folder 660, ibid.
was showing the effect of a “manifest reluctance” of the American people to the war, and that there was also a propaganda attack on the President by “the pacifists and pro-Germans” who claimed that Great Britain had “inveigled” the United States into the war for its selfish interests. He underscored that the antagonism of Americans to Great Britain emanated from the “fear of being thought to be relapsing into the condition of a colony.” Wiseman warned that the Americans would resent very much for being considered under British control or as a part of a British campaign.278

During his visit to America, Balfour gave Lansing a copy of minutes of the Imperial War Council that also included a statement by Balfour elaborating British war aims. In his statement Balfour openly declared that “the practical destruction of the Turkish Empire” was one of the objectives which the British Empire desired. In a future settlement, the Ottomans should lose Arabia, as understood in a larger sense, the Valley of Euphrates and Tigris, Istanbul, Syria, Armenia and southern parts of Asia Minor. What was left out of it might be “in a more or less independent position,” reserved for the Turks in Asia Minor.279

In the summer of 1917, Wiseman reported that there were still two essential problems in Anglo-American relations: The first problem was about how quickly and effectively to bring the full might of the American power to the war; and the second one related to reaching an agreement between the two countries upon the war aims or peace terms. In view of Wiseman, the President of America was executively almost an autocrat and the war situation only increased his power. Wiseman described Wilson as a Scotch

278 Cable by Wiseman, April 13, 1917, Box 4, Folder 93, William Wiseman Papers.
279 Balfour to Lansing, 18 May 1917, FRUS, Lansing Papers, II, 19-32.
Presbyterian by descent and a radical by conviction, yet he had the greatest confidence in the future of the “Anglo-Saxon race,” and believed that the security of the world could be best maintained by an Anglo-American understanding. Although America did not like the idea to follow the lead of Great Britain, it was true that it was “unconsciously” holding on to British traditions and would more readily accept the British than any other point of view. Wiseman thought the foreign policy of America for many years to come was in process of formation, and very much depended on the confidential exchange of view between the leaders of the two countries.280

Toward the end of 1917, considering the uncertainty and turmoil in the Russian Empire caused by the Bolshevik Revolution, Great Britain and its allies were inclined to give encouragement to what they termed as the Trans-Caucasian movement. At the talks with the Entente Prime Ministers in Paris on December 1, 1917, Col. House considered such a course dangerous for it would add to the internal disorder without having any definite program in mind or any force to back up it on the part of the allies. At the meeting with the prime ministers, a decision was taken to send a French and British military mission from Romania to Tiflis to Kaledin’s headquarters to ascertain what his program was. Colonel House promised money to Great Britain, France and Italy if they would decide to lend assistance to this movement. House explained to Lansing that by following such an indirect course, America would be in a more favorable position in case the scheme proved to be a mistake.281

280 Memorandum on Anglo-American Relations, August 1917, Box 4, Folder 110, William Wiseman Papers.
281 House to Lansing, December 1, 1917, Box 69, Folder 2275, E. M. House Papers.
To British policymakers, the collapse of the Tsarist Russia and the armistice between the Bolsheviks and the Central powers in December 1917 appeared to be the beginning of alarming circumstances. The deal with the Bolsheviks would help relieve the critical food and fuel situation in the Ottoman Empire. With increased German assistance, the Ottomans could check the British advance in the south. According to British calculations, under such conditions the Germans could carry out their plan to link with the Turks of Asia Minor with “the Turkish populations of eastern Caucasus, northwestern Persia, and Turkestan in a Pan-Turanian combination” which would be a “most serious threat” to the whole British position in the east. Yet, in fact, the Ottoman army was rapidly petering out; its communications and general condition were hampered by lack of rolling stock, coal, fuel oil, etc. They knew that the population of the Ottoman Empire had suffered more than that of any other country in the war, with their morale at its lowest ebb. At this juncture, Lloyd George’s adviser L. S. Amery suggested to press hard upon the Ottomans at all points and push forward simultaneously from Bagdad and Palestine, possibly with French landing on the Syrian coast. Amery also referred to a British scheme of an Armenian organization which was apparently being prepared for use in such an operation.282

In Caucasia, following the February and October revolutions, Russian military and political control withered away quickly, causing major ethno-national communities to feel uncertain about their political future and to look for solutions to address the issue of local administration, however timid and makeshift it might appear. The actual elimination of Tsarist imperial authority over the region also gave rise to the resurfacing of old ethno-

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282 Amery to Lloyd George, December 26, 1917, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/2/1/9.
religious rivalries and territorial disputes making a region-wide political settlement more difficult. With the prodding of Great Britain, the former members of the Duma from the region set up at Tiflis the Republic of Trans-Caucasia. The American officials termed it a “makeshift” government which was able to operate only until May 26, 1918, when Georgia declared its independence. Azerbaijan and Armenia followed suit and declared their independence two days later. According to American reports, all the ministers save one in the Armenian Cabinet, and the majority in the parliament were partisans of what they called “the terrorist or extreme left party, the Dashnaktsutiun,” while the moderate Armenians had generally left Erivan.283

In British strategic thinking, it was of the utmost importance for the future that Germany should not be allowed to dominate Russia and the Ottoman Empire in a political, economic or military sense. In order to prevent this eventuality, first Russia should be recreated as new federal state on anti-German, or at least on non-German lines; second through military and political offensive the Ottomans must be forced into a separate peace, which should in the first place “liberate the Armenians and Arab regions,” and detach the Ottoman Empire from “German domination.”284

Considering the exigent situation in Russia, the British opted for the moment for a separate peace with the Ottomans. Unlike its negative attitude to Morgenthau’s secret peace mission during the summer, London thought more favorably of a peace deal with the Ottoman Empire since the turmoil in Russia, and particularly the situation in Caucasia, was rapidly developing into a menace to British interests. In a secret cable, marked as “very

283 “Confidential Memoranda on Armenia, August-September 1919,” by Robert Davis, ARC Commissioner, Box 22, Folder 115, Frank Lyon Papers, MS656, Yale University Library Manuscripts and Archives.
284 Amery to Lloyd George, December 30, 1917, “The Turkish and South Russian Problem,” LG/F/2/1/10-11.
confidential” and addressed only to the President and the Secretary of State, Ambassador Page reported that Lloyd George considered the time might now quickly come when an energetic effort ought to be made to detach the Ottomans from the Central powers. In Lloyd George’s opinion America could do this since it was not at war with the Ottoman Empire. He hoped that there was some “proper American” now in Europe to whom such a mission could be entrusted. The task must be begun, of course, informally and most secretly, he desired, and a formal procedure would follow should the scheme turn out to be successful.285 It seems that Wilson and Lansing considered former Ambassador Elkus for the task proposed by Lloyd George.286 However, the plan proved inconclusive due to rapidly changing circumstances in the region.

At the same time, considering that the perilous situation in Caucasia would clear the road for a quick German and Ottoman penetration eastward, the British authorities immediately organized a military mission under General Dunsterville to send them to Caucasia to organize and lead the forces being raised there. The British tried to cobble a coalition of motley groups to keep the Caucasian front against the Ottomans from total collapse. It appeared that the British authorities clandestinely launched this “organization,” though not very successfully they admitted, with the Armenians constituting its main force. The Armenian assaults on the Muslims in the region and their hostility with the Georgians hampered British scheme’s prospects. British efforts to persuade Georgians and “Tartars” [i.e. the Azerbaijanis] to join in were not received with much enthusiasm. Curzon remarked to Balfour that it was curious how the Armenians seemed to be hated in that part of the world. He further stated that they were financing the Armenians to organize an “army” and

285 Page to Lansing, December 19, 1917, Box 69, Folder 2275, E. M. House Papers.
286 Lansing to House, December 22, 1917, ibid.
at the same time trying to persuade Georgians and Tartars “to reserve their massacre
temper for the Turks.”\textsuperscript{287}

British efforts in this regard included recruiting Armenians in America for using
them in Caucasia in the formation of an Armenian army. Upon the query of Balfour,
Wiseman suggested to dispatch from America small but useful units such as machine-
gunners, wireless sections or medical detachments.\textsuperscript{288} In the meantime, British military
authorities continued to supply and assist Armenian armed groups and irregular bands
against the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{289}

From Cairo, special agent William Yale commented to the State Department in
January 1918 about British concerns as to the prospect of an extension of Ottoman
influence towards Caucasia and Central Asia. Such a “neo-Turanian” movement, with the
support and encouragement of Germany would pose a serious threat to the eastern
possessions of the British Empire. The British officials told Yale that the continuity of the
“pan-Turkish Belt of one nation” as proposed by “the neo-Turanians” was interrupted by
the “Armeno-Kurd, Caucasian and Persian Groups,” a point which appeared to be entirely
neglected by the “neo-Turanian propagandists.”\textsuperscript{290}

\textsuperscript{287} Curzon to Balfour, January 8, 1918, Arthur J. Balfour Papers, FO 800/207.
\textsuperscript{288} Wiseman to Balfour, October 29, 1917, Arthur J. Balfour Papers, FO 800/209.
\textsuperscript{289} See the correspondence about Andranik and Sokrat as leaders of armed bands: DMI to FO, March 8,
1919, FO 371/3657; G.H.Q. (Istanbul) to DMI, February 2, 1919, ibid.; G.H.Q. (Istanbul) to DMI, March 3,
1919, ibid.; passim. Andranik, one of the leaders of the Armenian bands operating in the region, wished to go
to Great Britain following the disbandment of his troops as his continued presence in the region was
considered dangerous for his safety. The British officers, who were to oversee such bands, were instructed to
arrange for Andranik to hand in arms and ammunition of his band. Another Armenian band of 5,000 strong
under a leader, named Sokrat, in Shusha region, was ordered to assist the British in maintaining order. As for
subsistence of Andranik when he would arrive in Great Britain, Foreign Office suggested to the military
authorities to approach Boghos Nubar and the Armenian Committee, as they would financially assist
Andranik who was “a sort of national hero” for them.
\textsuperscript{290} Report No.11, January 21, 1918, Box 2, Folder 14, William Yale Papers; Report No.13, February 4, 1918,
Box 2, Folder 16, ibid.
The anxiety felt by the British vis-à-vis a pan-Turanian movement was also visible at their vigilant attitude regarding the publications to this effect. For example, an article, authored by Tekin Alp (aka Moiz Cohen) and titled “The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal” which was published in Germany, was immediately translated into English for the British Foreign Office and supplied to the Intelligence Department. Agent Hale sent a copy to the State Department. In his comments on Tekinalp’s piece, Hale, probably drawing his views on what he was hearing from the British, said that although the great mass of Turks were not imbued with this artificial and superficial new idea or even scarcely heard of it, this should not mean that the Pan-Turanian movement would not play an important role in the future developments on the Near East.291

A Foreign Office memorandum on southeast Russia, which was circulated to the King and the War Cabinet, underscored as the most immediate and vital concern for Great Britain in the beginning of 1918 the formation of “an Armenian cordon” strong enough to hold back Turks. If established successfully, with the help of such a cordon, the British could protect the flank of their Mesopotamian force, keep Iran clear from hostile penetration, and prevent the spread of an “anti-British Turanian-Muslim movement, working in German interests, from Turkey into the heart of Central Asia.” According to the British view, Armenians, like the Poles, were prepared to fight for the allied cause. In order to help Armenians organize themselves, the Foreign Office defended the continued support to the leader of volunteer force, Andranik, for this purpose.292

291 Report No.15, January 21, 1918, Box 2, Folder 18, ibid.
292 “FO Minute on S.E. Russia,” January 4, 1918, Arthur J. Balfour Papers, FO 800/211.
On March 3, 1918 Bolshevik Russia and the Central powers concluded a peace treaty at Brest-Litovsk. Russia agreed to complete the evacuation of the Anatolian provinces, including Batum, Kars and Ardahan, which had been lost to Russia in 1878. Hovannisian argues that with the conclusion of the treaty of Brest Litovsk between the Central powers and the Bolsheviks, the Armenians felt abandoned by Russia and that in an attempt to maintain a common front with their Georgian and Muslim neighbors they assented in April 1918 to the separation of Transcaucasia from Russia and to the founding of the Federative Republic of Transcaucasia as a defense against the Ottomans. As the Ottoman army drove deep into the region, he claims that the Armenians were deserted by the Georgians and the Muslims, and were compelled to declare the independence of Armenia in the areas still unoccupied by the Ottomans. When the Ottomans took under their control most of the strategic areas in the region, he said, they also recognized the Republic of Armenia, and asserted that the Ottomans did so due to their unwillingness to concentrate more troops against this small state. As for the Armenians, he maintains that they were compelled to “simulate friendship to the aggressors.”

In view of these unfolding developments in Caucasia, a Foreign Office memorandum again proposed in March 1918 to induce the Ottomans for a separate peace by offering them favorable terms, for detaching it from Germany could determine the outcome of the war. Among other points, it suggested that the Armenian question could only be resolved if Great Britain could agree with the Ottomans to undertake the expatriation of the remaining Armenians, and to bear the expenses of settling them either

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in Mesopotamia or East Africa. At this time, the British mind oscillated between to induce the Ottomans into a separate peace, or persuade America to declare war against the Ottoman Empire. In May 1918 British Foreign Secretary Balfour pressed the American government for a declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. Balfour said the American attitude was encouraging to the Entente’s enemies, and had a very discouraging effect on the Armenians, Serbians and Greeks. More important perhaps was Balfour’s warning to the effect that as long as America refrained from a declaration of war, this would mean a settlement of the Eastern Question without its intervention at the peace conference.

In order to bolster British efforts against the Ottoman Empire, Nahum Sokolow, one of the Zionist leaders in London, wrote Louis D. Brandeis, who was a close friend of President Wilson. He asked Brandeis to support British efforts to persuade America to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. Sokolow attached to his letter a memorandum, prepared by James [sic. Lewis] Einstein, an American diplomat formerly served in Istanbul. Sokolow requested Brandeis to bring Einstein’s memorandum to Wilson’s attention. The memorandum included several arguments exclusively based upon the Armenian issue and urged for an American declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire.

Above all, the British felt that the break-up of Tsarist Russia gave rise to favorable conditions for the Ottoman Empire, as well as for Germany, to play with Panturanist and Panislamist ideas in Caucasia and Central Asia. The discussion whether the British anxiety

294 “Memorandum on the Possibility of Detaching Turkey from the Central Powers,” March 20, 1918, Arthur J. Balfour Papers, FO 800/211.
295 Balfour to Lord Reading, May 18, 1918, Box 10, Folder 290, E. M. House Papers.
296 Letter from Sokolow to L.D. Brandeis, January 4, 1918, CAB/24/40.
or such considerations of the Central powers were realistic or not seems to be of secondary importance. Because what did matter at the time was that the British became extremely alarmed by these new circumstances brought about by the unpredictable conditions in the Russian Empire.\textsuperscript{297} The Ottoman advance in Transcaucasia during this period further provoked such fears. Contrary to Arnold Toynbee’s characterization of Panturanism and Panislamism as “the megalomaniac visions,”\textsuperscript{298} the new geopolitical situation thus presented a suitable, though quite short-lived, opportunity for the Central powers to reconsider their strategic calculations. The opening of new strategic prospects toward the East raised the hopes of the Ottoman leaders for bringing the war to a successful end.\textsuperscript{299}

It appears that up until the Armistice, the prospects of an Ottoman control of the Caucasus, and perhaps of the Trans-Caspian region, continued to feed the British concerns. In 1922, the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defense made an analysis of the geopolitical context of Ottoman war aims toward the region and tried to find out the reasons as to what led the Ottoman High Command to concentrate a considerable force on its Caucasian front, which had already been abandoned by the Russians, instead of taking obviously a more requisite measure of reinforcing its hard-pressed Syrian and Mesopotamian fronts. The British analysis argued that Pan-Turkism gained preponderance on the Ottoman war aims and policy during the war. The British analysis underlined that Armenian sympathies were so actively pro-Entente as to give “armed assistance when occasion offered, as it did on the Turko-Russian border in Caucasia.” The paper also indicated that there was “some truth” in the Ottoman argument that after the Ottoman

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{297} See, for example, BNA “\textit{Report on the Pan-Turanian Movement}, by Intelligence Bureau of Department of Information, No.2, October 1917, CAB/24/33, 82.
\item \textsuperscript{298} Arnold Toynbee and Kenneth P. Kirkwood, \textit{Turkey} (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1925), 65.
\item \textsuperscript{299} Hanioğlu, \textit{Brief History}, 182.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
defeat at Sarıkamış in January 1915, sporadic risings by Armenians broke out in the eastern vilayets in the rear of the Ottoman armies, whose communications were, in consequence, seriously endangered. However, the British memorandum claimed that by the removal of Armenians from Anatolia, the Ottoman government aimed to deal with the Armenian problem in such a way that it should cease to exist and be incapable of resurrection. It further asserted that the removal of the Armenians from the eastern vilayets was essential to the execution of “Pan-Turk aims.”

In brief, the British fear, whether real or presumed, for a Panturanist-Panislamist block extending from Turkey via Caucasia, Persia to Central Asia, prompted the Lloyd George government to devise new political initiatives to forestall such a potentially dangerous situation. Ottomans’ quick advance into Caucasia would outflank the British forcing them out of the Near East. As Michael Reynolds puts it, however, the Ottoman advance into Caucasia following the disintegration of the Russian army was driven not by some romantic desire to unite with ethnic brethren and co-religionists, but rather by “sober” concerns such as the need to create a buffer zone for the security of the Eastern borders of the Ottoman state. The fact that strategic concerns, not ethno-religious zeal, were at play in Ottoman actions became clear by the CUP government’s encouragement of the Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis to resolve their hostility toward one another and consolidate their independence.

To British policymakers, securing sea communications of its “Oceanic Empire” was Great Britain’s principal war aim. Among the ways to accomplish this was to drive the

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300 “Influence of Pan-Turkish Political Aims on Turkish Military Policy, 1914-1918,” 1922, CAB/1/30.
302 Reynolds, Shattering Empires, Chapters 6-8,
Ottomans out of Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia. As on the Western front, in the east an effective barrier in the east must be created from sea to sea extending from the Black Sea or the Caspian to the Mediterranean.303

Following the Mudros Armistice, British forces occupied Baku in November 1918, Batum and Tiflis in December 1918. Nevertheless, on the eve of the peace conference, considering the precarious situation in Russia and Caucasia, America’s possible role in the Ottoman settlement, particularly in the Armenian question, preoccupied British strategists’ mind more often than not. In inducing the United States to take a political engagement for a territory, its interests and sentiments must have been taken into account. In British view, America’s intrusion in the region should be so calculated as to prevent any friction and misunderstanding with Great Britain. Great Britain should let no other power control the through route between Egypt and Mesopotamia, which was essential for the security of eastern possessions. On the other hand, as an advantageous point for the inducement of Washington, the Americans had a long established missionary interest in Armenians. The only obstacle to an American engagement in that region was France’s aspirations toward Cilicia and the Gulf of Iskenderun. America had also large missionary and educational interest in Istanbul and the remaining territory in Anatolia. Meanwhile even if America would be tempted to create a great navy in the Mediterranean, and acquire a dominant position, this should not create a major problem as long as America was in harmony with Great Britain. Besides, the American presence at Istanbul and the Straits would meet any

new military challenge in Europe, while the British would continue their control of the Straits of Dover and Gibraltar.  

Stimulating American interest, particularly at official quarters for a possible political engagement was becoming increasingly a priority in British policy. At Foreign Office, Sir Mark Sykes controlled and coordinated the communication between the Armenian Committee at London and Boghos Nubar. More significantly, Sykes was directing the production and dissemination of propaganda material, prepared under the name of Boghos Nubar’s Armenian national delegation, to be sent to the United States, particularly to official and influential circles. These materials were dispatched to America through diplomatic cargo.

One week before the Mudros Armistice, Dr. Barton of the American Board hastened to inform Lord Bryce of Wellington House that they were preparing to dispatch a relief commission to the Ottoman Empire with the double purpose of distributing relief and investigating the economic and sanitary conditions in the country. With perhaps one or two hundred personnel they were also planning to release those missionaries and relief worker who had remained at their posts in the empire. Barton further said that, if Great Britain would favor the United States’ taking a responsibility in Armenia, then he would advise

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305 James Malcolm to Sykes, May 30, 1918, Mark Sykes Papers, FO 800/221.
306 James Malcolm to Sykes, June 7, 1917, ibid., FO 800/221; see: “Memorandum on the Armenian Question,” which was pretended to be issued by the Armenian national delegation, ibid.
that Great Britain and France should ask America to assume this responsibility. Barton felt that there would be a fair chance of America responding favorably.\textsuperscript{307}

A little later, Rabbi Stephen Wise of New York drew Balfour’s attention to a plan for “the American management of the Turkish Empire, excluding Arabia and Mesopotamia.”\textsuperscript{308} However, Sir R. Borden informed Lloyd George that according to a very confidential information that he received from a reliable source, President Wilson’s attitude toward Great Britain was far from being cordial or even friendly; and he was expected to create “difficulties” at the peace conference, and was “obsessed by his indefinite formula respecting freedom of the sea” which no one seemed to understand.\textsuperscript{309}

On the other hand, while trying to encourage America to assume a political responsibility for the Armenians, Great Britain considered its own commitment vis-à-vis the Armenian question in quite limited terms. Apart from military contingency or propaganda necessities, the British authorities did not feel like they were bound by what they termed “contractual obligations” to the Armenian cause during the war, as explained by a Foreign Office memorandum using the profusely rich and elastic vocabulary of British diplomacy.\textsuperscript{310} This was to be the official understanding of the British government in formulating and implementing its policy in the post-war settlements, as well.

\textsuperscript{307} Barton to Bryce, October 22, 1918, Folder 204, \textit{The Papers of Viscount James Bryce}, 1826-1958; MSS Bryce, University of Oxford, Bodleian Library.

\textsuperscript{308} Wise to Balfour, December 30, 1918, \textit{Arthur J. Balfour Papers}, FO 800/210.

\textsuperscript{309} Boden to Lloyd George, October 31, 1918, ibid., FO 800/211.

\textsuperscript{310} Memorandum by H.G. Nicholson on \textit{British Diplomatic Obligations}, February 6, 1918,BDFA, Part II, Series H, vol.3, Doc.197; it read: “\textit{We are not bound by any valid contractual obligations, although we are morally committed to the Armenians not only by article 61 of the Berlin Treaty of 1878, but also by the many public statements made on their behalf.”
CHAPTER IV: NEW vs. OLD DIPLOMACY: A MANDATE PLAN (1919)

American Attitudes toward an Armenian Mandate

By the end of October 1918, the Great War ended with more devastation than the world had ever seen. Nevertheless, the capitulation of the Ottoman government to the Entente powers by the Armistice, signed on October 30, 1918 at Mudros, was not to bring peace to the Ottoman lands for four more long years. The Ottoman Empire with its untapped resources, including petroleum deposits, was “by all odds the richest spoils of the war” in the eyes of both America and the Entente powers. 311 That the Ottoman Empire presented the “richest spoils” of the war was further enhanced by its vulnerable image. It had been engulfed in an uninterrupted succession of wars since 1911, and weakened in every conceivable way. At the peace conference, Entente powers’ wartime secret agreements on the Ottoman lands were going to create a bitter controversy, revealing the fact that their ostensible acquiescence to Wilson’s Fourteen Points as the basis of the peace was no more than a lip service. 312

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, notwithstanding their non-belligerency in the war, President Wilson’s peace program, as laid out in his Fourteen Points, envisaged an outright partition of the Ottoman Empire. In his Point XII, Wilson indicated sovereignty “for the Turkish portion” of the Ottoman Empire, “an unmolested opportunity for autonomous development for the non-Turkish nationalities,” and the free passage for ships of all nations through the Straits. Considering Wilson’s earlier proclamations about the principle of nationality, and his frequent reference to the notion of justice or a just peace, a

311 Parsons, Wilsonian Diplomacy, 151-2.
312 Baker, Woodrow Wilson, I, 70-1.
large section of Ottoman elites interpreted Point XII optimistically and embraced it as a way out from the contending territorial ambitions of the Entente powers. The American administration was also aware that the Ottomans viewed the principles of nationality and self-determination in Wilson’s the Fourteen Points, as their “chief hope” in the anticipated peace settlement.313

Some leading Ottoman intellectuals and public figures formed the “Turkish Wilsonian League” in Istanbul following the armistice, hoping unwittingly that America, under the moral obligation of the Fourteen Points, would act to undo the wartime designs of the Entente, especially of the British. They signed a joint letter addressed to President Wilson in which they declared that the purpose of the league was to ask for America’s aid and experience “for the solution of the problem of the heterogeneous religions and races in Turkey.” They clearly stated that their nation needed to be put “under the guidance of foreign instructors” for a fixed period of minimum 15 years to maximum 25 years. They hoped that “the President of the great American Republic” would look favorably on their appeal. What they asked for was not a tutelage that would limit independence but “a period of instruction that would elevate an undeveloped and backward people to an honored position in the family of nations.” They laid out their demand for assistance in several articles the first of which envisaged that the sovereignty of the Sultan and a constitutional form of government should be preserved. Regarding the “territorial limits of the Turkish Empire” for which they asked for American guidance, they submissively said these should be fixed by the peace conference. The following were among the names (the newspapers or position they were affiliated with are given in parenthesis) who signed the appeal on behalf

313 FRUS 1919, II, 282.
the League’s Committee: Halide Edib, Ahmed Emin (Vakit), Yunus Nadi (Yeni Gün), Ali Kemal (Sabah), Velid Ebuzziya (Tasvir-i Efkar), Celal Muhtar (former minister), Celal Nuri (Ikdam), Necmeddin Sadık (Akşam), etc.\textsuperscript{314}

Later, these prominent Ottomans exerted considerable pressure on the Turkish national movement and Mustafa Kemal to persuade him to accept the American mandate, instead of struggling for independence, because, they thought, the country had already exhausted in the war and needed a disinterested foreign power for survival.\textsuperscript{315} Halide Edib once asked the president of Robert College, Caleb F. Gates: “If America were to assume a mandate for Turkey would she give the country back to us when she had placed it on its feet?” The latter replied that America did not want Turkey. Gates wrote that nothing came of the Wilsonian idea in Turkey- largely because Mustafa Kemal was opposed to a mandate in any form.\textsuperscript{316}

The ensuing developments were to demonstrate that the Ottomans had been utterly mistaken as to Wilson’s vision for the Ottoman Turkey. Neither the Ottoman elites’ hope for Wilsonian principles, nor Mustafa Kemal’s diplomacy to achieve America’s support for the National Independence Movement yielded any favorable results for the Turks until after the Lausanne Peace Conference.\textsuperscript{317}

Wilson decided to be personally present at the peace conference, at which the new world order was to be created, and he was absolutely confident that America’s might in

\textsuperscript{314} Professor Philip M. Brown of Princeton University who visited Istanbul brought with him the Wilsonian League’s letter which ended up in Colonel House’s personal archive. See: Letter from the founders of the Turkish Wilsonian League to President Wilson, December 5, 1918, Box 207, Folder 2/824, E. M. House Papers; see also: Halide Edib, Turkey Faces West, 174. Ahmed Emin Yalman, Turkey in My Time (Norman: Oklahoma UP Press, April, 1957), 73-4.

\textsuperscript{315} Mustafa Kemal, Speech, 83-100.

\textsuperscript{316} Frank Caleb Gates, Not To Me Only (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1940), 253-4.

\textsuperscript{317} Armaoğlu, Atatürk Döneminde, 286.
economic and military fields, particularly in the light of the exhaustion in Europe owing to war, would provide him with the opportunity to have an upper hand in peacemaking and in the shaping of postwar order. Actually, he was to be the only head of state to take part in the conference. Wilson’s new diplomacy proclaimed adherence to the principles of non-annexation, the creation of a league of nations, open door, and nationality which would pose a formidable challenge to Entente powers’ imperialist war aims at the peace conference.

On his way to Paris, President Wilson held preliminary talks with British statesmen in London. According to minutes of his talks, the British side got the impression that the question of a league of nations was “the only thing” that Wilson really cared much about. Curzon noted that in Wilson’s opinion, the question of giving a mandate to certain powers in certain territories could not be settled unless there was a league of nations to authorize it. Yet, they realized that the president had no definite formal scheme for the league in his mind. Perhaps the only thing Wilson was clear about was his antagonism against the Ottomans. Lloyd George informed the Imperial War Cabinet that President Wilson was strongly in favor of the “Turks being cleared out of Europe altogether,” but displayed some reluctance to the idea of taking up a mandate at Istanbul or elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, depicting it as a burden. To this Lloyd George and Balfour had replied by asking Wilson who was then “to undertake the burden of finding the troops to prevent the Armenians from being massacred.” President Wilson did not seem yet at the point of accepting the argument. Wilson explained that if the League of Nations were constituted and the peace conference convened, the United States might possibly be “less reluctant to

consider the question of mandatory intervention.” Lord Curzon explained to the Imperial Cabinet that the Eastern Committee had only discussed, but not recommended that Istanbul should be entrusted to America. Lloyd George considered it “dangerous” to give Istanbul and the Dardanelles to the United States. He explained that this was suggested by Balfour. His was related only to Armenia, for an American mandate for it.319

Prior to Wilson’s talks in London, Col. House held some preparatory discussions with the allied representatives in Paris on peace program. House sent a dispatch to President Wilson stating specific suggestions, prepared with the assistance of the Inquiry experts. An Armenian state having a port on the Mediterranean under a protecting power was among the proposals. As for the “protecting power,” House said France might claim it, but the Armenians would prefer Great Britain. He informed the President that Syria had already been allotted to France by agreement with Great Britain. His opinion was that Great Britain was “clearly” the best mandatory for Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia. What was noteworthy in this communication was the fact that in addition to its favorable stance vis-à-vis British aims in the postwar arrangements a copy of his cable apparently found its way into the hands of British Cabinet members at this early date revealing to them the possible American course of action in the peace conference.320 Further, it appears that the British intelligence was somehow able to tap correspondence between the American delegation at the peace conference and Washington which must have put the British policymakers in a comparatively advantageous position. In the Lloyd George

319 Draft Minutes, Imperial War Cabinet 47, December 30, 1918, Box 9, Folder 215, William Wiseman Papers; see also: A Memorandum on Imperial Cabinet Meeting, December 30, 1918, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.53, 558-69.
320 House to Lansing, October 29, 1918, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/60/1/7.
Papers, the American correspondence that attracted British attention seemed to be mostly related to the partitioning of and the mandate schemes on the Ottoman Empire.  

Despite the ambiguous impression he left in London, Wilson’s peace program, especially the mandate concept and open door principle, was aimed at invalidating outright annexations or unilateral exploitation of the occupied territories by the European powers, and attaining unimpeded access to American businesses and interests in these regions. Upon an American initiative at the conference, Wilson’s Fifth Point referring to the mandate concept was included in the Covenant of the League of Nations (Article 22) to govern the territories detached from Germany and the Ottoman Empire.  

As the work of the peace conference progressed, Wilson expressed himself increasingly in favor of an American mandate for Istanbul, the Straits, and possibly the whole country as it stood at the time of the armistice. The recommendations of the American missions (the King-Crane Commission, and the Harbord Mission) sent to the region during the peace conference for establishing a mandate encompassing Istanbul (including the Straits), Anatolia and Armenia would give America control over “access to Russia’s most heavily used ports, to the Black Sea ports of Turkey and Transcaucasia, and to the mouth of the Danube.”

At Paris, the modalities of a mandate system to be instituted under the League of Nations were discussed and adopted at the meeting of the commission on the League of Nations on February 8, 1919, while Wilson was in chair. Excepting its verbiage with regard to humanist assertions, the Commission decided to place such Ottoman lands as it

321 See some copies of the American correspondence in M.I.1, August 25, 1919, & August 27, 1919, etc., ibid. LG/F/60/1/19-20. It looks like the British intelligence was also able to tap the correspondence between the American Embassies in London and in Istanbul and the State Department at the time when negotiations on the mandates were moved to London in August 1919. See, ibid.
323 Parsons, Wilsonian Diplomacy, 185-7.
chose to name as “Armenia, Kurdistan [sic], Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Arabia” under the tutelage of mandatory powers until such time as they were able to stand alone. The “advanced nations” to whom these territories should be entrusted would exercise their tutelage on behalf of the League while no mention was made yet of which territory should be assigned to whom.  

Astonishingly enough, on the same date of the meeting on mandates, President Wilson assumed a bellicose stance toward the Ottoman Empire, and considered seriously the idea of occupying certain parts of the empire, particularly Istanbul, Armenia and Mesopotamia to garrison them pending the final determination of the conference. Wilson even weighed the option of including what he called Syria and the Arabian countries in this scheme, though he realized that the latter portions would be less acceptable to American public opinion. In a very secret and urgent cable to Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, he explained that as the British forces was obliged to maintain most burdensome responsibilities, it would be fair for Americans to consider the possibility of sharing the burden of occupations, and instructed Baker to give his advice on the feasibility of this idea. Wilson was confident that the interest of America in Robert College and in the pitiful fortunes of the Armenians was so great that the occupation of Istanbul and Armenia would not strike the American public opinion as unreasonable or undesirable.  

Baker’s reply three days later was less than forthcoming. He said he had no doubt as to the legality of sending troops to the Ottoman Empire for garrisoning as the president had already authorized the use of the army to prevent disorders. Nevertheless, Baker

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324 Minutes of a Meeting of the Commission on the League of Nations, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.55, 4-9.
325 Wilson to Baker, February 8, 1919, ibid, 27-8.
explained, American public opinion was very insistent upon the return of troops from Europe and this attitude appeared not only in the Congress, but also in the press. He suggested postponing the decision to send the army to the Ottoman Empire until Wilson could return to America and persuade the public and the Congress. If, however, the President felt obliged to decide without delay, Baker thought the American troops “should in no case go beyond Turkey proper and Armenia,” since American opinion was already well formed on these territories “to favor the protection of Christians.” As for Mesopotamia, Baker cautioned that it was known only as a field of British influence and ambition.326

Toward the end of February 1919, Republican senators stepped up their criticisms against the draft Covenant of the League of Nations. Senator Lodge maintained that membership in the League would entail nothing less than a fundamental change in the foreign policy of United States which would mean the abandonment of the long-cherished principles of Washington’s Farewell Address and of the Monroe Doctrine.327

In view of the mounting congressional criticism and apparently taking into account Secretary Baker’s suggestion to prepare the American opinion for his interventionist plans in the Ottoman Empire, Wilson returned to Washington. Speaking to members of the Democratic National Committee on February 28, 1919 with the marked vigor of a grand strategist designing the post-war world, he laid out his plan. He underscored that establishing peace in Europe necessitated breaking up the multinational Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires and cutting back Germany’s imperialistic potential. In their stead,

326 Baker to Wilson, February 11, 1919, ibid., 81-2.
327 Ibid., fn.1, 312.
small nation-states extending as an axis from Central Europe to the Mediterranean, weak and absolutely dependent for their survival on the guaranty of the contemplated new international system (the League of Nations), would be created. They would serve as a safety valve against the resurrection of an imperialistic German power. Turning to the crux of the matter, Wilson expounded on the reasons for America to assume the mandate over a region consisting of Istanbul and the Straits and Ottoman Armenia. To Wilson, consenting to the Entente’s request to undertake such a mission would mean sharing the burden, rather than putting it on the “bankrupt states of Europe,” as America was the only state capable to do it. A contrary attitude would be like observing with a “pharisaical cleanliness and not to take anything out of the pile.” He further explained his position on this issue in the following manner:

Personally, and just within the limits of this room, I can say very frankly that I think we ought to [to wit, accept mandates]. The whole heart of America has been engaged for Armenia. They know more about Armenia and its sufferings than they know about any other European area... And I am not without hope that the people of the United States would find it acceptable to go in and be the trustees of the interests of the Armenian people and see to it that the unspeakable Turk and the almost equally difficult Kurd had their necks sat on long enough to teach them manners.328

President Wilson also invited to the White House the members of Congressional committees on foreign affairs to discuss these issues. Among other topics, he put forward that “the United States would feel that it should at least take a prominent part in the policing of Armenia until proper conditions could be restored there.”329

Wilson then took his advocacy for a mandate in the Ottoman Empire to the public space by delivering speeches to American audiences in which he stressed that it was the civilizational and humanitarian duty placed upon the United States to undertake such a responsibility. In order to strengthen his argument he extensively utilized the Armenian question, which had already been ingrained deeply in American mind, for instance, as in the following:

The Austro-Hungarian Empire has gone to pieces and the Turkish Empire has disappeared, ... The nations that have long been under the heel of the Austrian, that have long cowered before the German, that have long suffered the indescribable agonies of being governed by the Turk, have called out to the world, generation after generation, for justice, for liberation, and for succor, and no cabinet in the world has heard them.330

In his speeches at various places in America, Wilson urged the American people to take action in support of the Armenians.331 There was no doubt that the Wilson administration’s interest in the Armenian question had started long before the Mudros Armistice, and its political involvement dramatically increased during the peace conference. President Wilson considered his devotion to the Armenian cause to be a “sacred trust of civilization.”332 His attachment to the Armenian cause immensely encouraged the Armenian leaders in nurturing nationalist aspirations.

Boghos Nubar, head of the Armenian national delegation in Paris, through his numerous letters vigorously lobbied for the American support to the Armenian aspirations during the conference. Nubar stated in his letters and memoranda that the Armenians had

330 An Address at the Metropolitan House, March 4, 1919, ibid., 414-5.
331 See, for instance: An Address in Boston, February 24, 1919, ibid., 238-45. Wilson remarked: “...have you thought of the sufferings of Armenia? You poured out your money to help succor Armenians after they suffered. Now set up your strength so that they shall never suffer again.”
been de facto belligerents ever since the beginning of the war, as they had fought on all fronts by the side of the Entente powers and suffered immensely on account of their “unshakable attachment to the cause of the Entente.” In his view, the Armenians possessed a degree of culture and civilization which gave them the right to self-determination under the aegis of the Entente powers and America. Nubar reiterated Armenian aspirations in a letter addressed to President Wilson in February 1919 and requested American mandate for a temporary period to assist the “integral Armenia” until it would stand alone.333

In the meantime, Nubar regretted the fact that “Armenia, despite its unquestioned loyalty to the Allied cause from the very first day of the war, had not been permitted to be represented at the peace conference.” Wilson replied that among the delegates to the peace conference he found the most sincere and outspoken sympathy with the Armenians; however it was difficult to assign representatives to political units that had not yet been received into the family of nations. But he assured Nubar that this would not mean the slightest neglect of the interests of Armenia, which was being fully considered “as if they were represented in form.”334

Although the conference did not allow its official participation, the Armenian delegation presented to the conference on February 12, 1919 a statement putting forth its territorial aspirations. The Armenians explicitly favored an American mandate during the conference.335

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333 Nubar to House, November 9, 1918, Box 83a, Folder 2878, E. M. House Papers; Nubar to House, December 11, 1918; Nubar to Secretary of State, November 30, 1918; Nubar to President Wilson, February 6, 1919, ibid.
334 Wilson to Nubar, January 23, 1919, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.54, 226; also: ibid., 227 fn.2.
In America, the former American Ambassador to Germany, James W. Gerard and his Armenian associate V. Cardashian had formed the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA) to lobby for the Armenian cause in political circles and in public campaigns. At the time of the peace conference at Paris, the ACIA appealed repeatedly to American delegates for the consideration of Armenian claims. To several telegrams sent by Gerard asking for support to the Armenian aspirations, Col. House replied that the “Armenian cause” was being well taken care of at the conference, and everything possible was being done for the future of Armenia.336

Hovannisian, while pointing to the contrast between the Entente’s wartime annexationist agreements and the allied “promises” to the Armenians, refers to the public utterances or parliamentary statements by government officials at various times as the manifestation of these promises. Yet, he notes that the British implied, “without specifically stating,” that Armenia would be established as a separate country. What Hovannisian called “a separate country” was vaguely depicted as “separate national condition” with reference not only to Armenia, but also to Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Palestine. The general reference included in Wilson’s Fourteen Points was also no less ambiguous than the Entente statements on the Armenians.337 Further, David Hunter Miller explained that the Point XII did not necessarily mean that “Armenia would be severed from Turkey.”338

Regardless of this vagueness in allied references, Hovannisian underlines that the euphoria created during the Peace Conference, mostly by the encouraging statements of

336 House to Gerard, March 17 & April 26, 1919, Box 3, Folder 88, E.M. House Papers.
337 Hovannisian, Allies and Armenia, 147-8; 151-2.
338 Miller, Origin of the Mandates, 277-89.
American officials, led to aggrandized demands engulfing even the delegation of the Armenian Republic, which, he says, was under the instructions to remain silent about Cilicia.339

In the opinion of Dr. Dillon, who was one of the leading journalists following the peace conference, the Armenian cause found a forcible pleader in Boghos Nubar, whose exposé was appreciated by President Wilson and Clemenceau. Nonetheless, Dillon observed that the Armenians asked for a vast stretch of territory with outlets on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, for which their population was insufficient. Besides, their claim to Cilicia clashed with one of “the reserved rights” of France. “The ice, therefore, was somewhat thin in parts,” Dillon continued, but Nubar “skated over it gracefully.”340

Dr. Mezes, who was in charge of keeping in touch with by Boghos Nubar and Aharonian, the chairmen of the two Armenian missions at Paris, reported on March 8, 1919 of their demands for an independent Armenia. They wished that the Peace Conference should recognize the Armenian Republic, and that it should authorize the repatriation of the Ottoman Armenians in Caucasia to eastern Anatolia as well as the dispatch of troops to “Turkish Armenia” for the protection of the Armenians. Aharonian informed Mezes that the Armenian Republic had at its disposal some 30,000 well-armed troops, and it was ready and anxious to send them under allied control.341

Wilson’s personal attachment to the idea of the league was being manipulated by the Entente politician at the conference. On May 1, Lansing complained to Polk, Acting...
Secretary of State, that the notion of the League of Nations had become a “veritable millstone” about their necks. The Entente powers were exploiting it to obtain their goals. Whenever they threatened to defeat it, a compromise was reached by acquiescing to their claims and they were using the same tactics all through the negotiations. He criticized Col. House owing to his aloofness, and added that because of Colonel’s isolation from his colleagues, all the principles as laid down in Wilson’s Fourteen Points had been destroyed by such compromises and concessions. As a result, a victor’s peace rather than a just peace and the Entente powers’ such tactics controlled the situation. He disapprovingly stated that at Paris the state of affairs was one of confusion and barter, “everybody grabbling and squabbling and increasing the tangle into which they have got.”

In May 1919, the negotiations on the Ottoman settlement at the peace conference started gaining specific a character with regard to delimiting the possible spheres of control under the mandatory system. At a council of four meeting on May 13, 1919, President Wilson said he would like Izmir, the adjacent district and the Dodecanese to be united to Greece, and a mandate be given to Greece for the remainder of the territory claimed by Venizelos. Availing himself of this opportunity, Lloyd George promptly made his suggestion that the United States take a mandate for Armenia and Istanbul. Lloyd George stressed that according to the plans the allies had made, Armenia would be extended. Clemenceau remarked that its administration would be an arduous task for the Americans and added: “It is a country where massacre is a chronic disease.”

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342 Lansing to Polk, May 1, 1919, Box 3, Folder 17, Robert Lansing Papers.
343 Hankey’s and Mantoux’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, May 13, 1919, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.59, 84-103.
The following day Wilson informed the allies that he would accept a mandate for Armenia and another for Istanbul and the Straits, subject to the concurrence of the Senate. While discussing the fate of the Turkish population at the same meeting, President Wilson spoke grimly. He said he had in mind the Muslim feeling which apparently made him come to the conclusion “about not wiping out the Turkish race.” Now, his idea was to set up a Turkish state in the north of Anatolia and to put it under the supervision of France.344

Wilson pursued an active policy concerning the fate of the Ottoman Empire during the conference. He forcefully opposed the extension of Italian occupation toward the western Anatolia, but strongly supported the Greek military occupation, and sent in the American navy to assist, along with the British and French forces, the Greek landing at Izmir on May 15, 1919.345

Admiral Bristol pointed out that up to the time of the Greek occupation of Izmir, “…the Near East was as peaceful a part of the world’s battlegrounds as any part of Europe or Asia.” The Izmir occupation disturbed this relative calm.346 Moreover, American participation in the Greek invasion of Izmir caused great resentment and indignation in Turkey against the United States.347

Meanwhile, the bargaining on the partition of Ottoman lands, particularly between Great Britain and France, reached a point of crisis, due to a growing mutual mistrust. On May 21, Lloyd George informed the council that in view of British position vis-à-vis the Mohammedan world, the further partition of Anatolia into two parts under the French and

344 Hankey’s and Mantoux’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, May 14, 1919, ibid., 136-48.
346 Howard, The King-Crane Commission (Beirut: Khayat, 1963), 135.
347 Peter Michael Buzanski, Admiral Mark L. Bristol and Turkish-American Relations, 1919-1922 (Berkeley, California: unpublished dissertation, University of California, 1960), 119.
Italian control, with the exception of Istanbul, the Straits, and Armenia, did not seem desirable. He further said Great Britain would prefer America to assume the mandate for entire Asia Minor, including Istanbul and the Straits. President Wilson, with some reservations, supported Lloyd George’s position. In response, Clemenceau acrimoniously criticized Lloyd George’s new suggestions. He threatened to drop out if Great Britain and America would go in Asia Minor at the expense of French and Italian claims. In an effort to calm down Clemenceau’s opposition, Wilson remarked that other than Istanbul and Armenia, an American mandate over entire Asia Minor might not be acceptable for the American people. Further discussion of the matter was deferred for a while.348

David Magie, a professor of classics at Princeton University, who was also a member of the Inquiry as well as staff member of the American delegation at Paris, and William L. Westermann, another member of both the Inquiry and the delegation, complained to Wilson on May 21 that for the past eighteen months as a group of men they had been working in Princeton and in Paris gathering information in order to give technical advice to the American Peace Commission regarding the “disposition of the Ottoman Empire,” but they had yet no knowledge as to what was being negotiated.349 The next day they had an interview with Wilson. The President pointed out that the chief problem was the status of Anatolia. He said he was planning to propose an American mandate for “Armenia and the State of Istanbul,” explaining that American sympathy for Armenia would be conducive to the adoption by Congress of this burden, whereas the acceptance of the Istanbul mandate seemed doubtful. Yet, he stressed that if America held mandates over Armenia and Istanbul, it would be in a strategic position to control that part of the world,

348 Hankey’s and Mantoux’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, May 21, 1919, ibid., 322-46.
349 Westermann and Magie to Wilson, May 21, 1919, ibid., 59, 349.
including to overseeing the actions of other mandatories through the League of Nations in other Ottoman territories.\textsuperscript{350}

There was a serious disagreement between Wilson and his Secretary of State over the issue of mandates. Lansing opposed the inclusion of the mandatory arrangement in the League of Nations system, which was, however, one of the most important pillars of Wilsonian new diplomacy at the peace conference. Lansing was convinced that this issue was being manipulated at the expense of American interests. He believed that those, who advocated an American mandate over Armenia and the municipality district of Istanbul, had in reality taken advantage of the “altruism and idealism of President Wilson and the unselfishness of the American people,” for these areas would be a burden, militarily and financially; while desirable territories like Mosul rich in natural resources were being divided among the Entente powers. He thought Wilson was misled by his own idealism and did not realize that “actual propaganda was going on” in favor of America assuming such burdensome mandates. Lansing’s judgment was rather severe in its wording: “His [Wilson’s] high-mindedness and loftiness of thought blinded him to the sordidness of purpose” in the mandates question.\textsuperscript{351}

Apparently, Lansing was not alone in his resentment for the allied (British) plans for an American mandate over Armenia. Some other American officials also very strongly felt that only the poorest regions were being eventually assigned to the United States. Furthermore, these officials disliked the fact that, “whilst during the war British leaders

\textsuperscript{350} Interview with President Wilson, May 22, 1919, \textit{David Magie Papers}, Box 1, Folder 5.

\textsuperscript{351} Robert Lansing, \textit{The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative} (Boston and New York: The UP Cambridge, 1921), 156-61.
had issued a Blue Book and made many promises, they were now trying to pass the responsibility [for the Armenians] onto the United States.”

Admiral Bristol believed that “sinister influences” played a substantial role behind the proposal for an American mandate over Armenia. He thought the British, the French, and the Greek wanted the United States “to become embroiled in Near Eastern affairs, and to act as buffer between the Turks and Bolsheviks, while Great Britain and France could exploit the eastern parts of the Ottoman Empire and Greece the western portion.” Admiral Bristol defended the view that America should assume the “Ottoman mandate.” He maintained this view from 1919 until the critical year 1922 when the conditions in Turkey were fundamentally altered with the definite Turkish victory against the Entente making such considerations meaningless. The Harbord and King-Crane missions, which were sent to the region during the peace conference, arrived at similar conclusions that a single mandate over the whole of the Ottoman Empire would be the only plausible option.

Indeed, the majority of American officials and influential missionary leaders in Near Eastern affairs supported an American mandate over the whole of Turkey and they vigorously opposed the Armenian mandate idea. In addition to Bristol, Frank L. Polk, the Acting Secretary of State and the head of the American Peace Mission in Paris after Wilson and his entourage left in the summer of 1919, James L. Barton, the secretary of the ABCFM and the president of NER, and Caleb F. Gates, the president of Robert College, were among the leading figures who supported the idea of a single American mandate over

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the whole of Turkey, excluding the Arab provinces.\(^{354}\) Conversely, William L. Westermann, chief of the Near-Eastern division of the American peace commission, believed that Congress’s rejection of the Armenian mandate weakened the American position in all Near Eastern affairs.\(^{355}\)

In the opinion of the Intelligence Section (formerly the Inquiry) of the American Mission at Paris Peace Conference, one of the greatest difficulties in solving the Armenian question was that within the contemplated borders the Armenians would constitute only from 30 to 35 per cent of the whole population. Therefore, it recommended that a “liberal interpretation of self-determination was to be applied in case of Armenia in order to right historic wrongs’ done to the Armenians.”\(^{356}\) Nevertheless, upon the instructions of President Wilson, Dr. Mezes coordinated with Dr. Westermann as well as with British officials the work to determine the boundaries of the contemplated Armenian state. He informed President Wilson in May 1919 that the western boundary of Armenia had been worked out by Dr. Westermann together with British specialists and it had received the approval of himself and Sir Louis Mallet.\(^{357}\)

President Wilson’s anti-Ottoman feelings seem to have affected his judgments on the Ottoman Empire throughout the peace conference. While discussing “the Turkish problem” at Paris with Lloyd George and Clemenceau on June 25, 1919, before his departure for Washington soon afterwards, Wilson’s proposal was to “cut off all that Turkey was to give up; and oblige Turkey to accept any conditions with regard to over-

\(^{354}\) Gates, *Not To Me Only*, 252-3.
\(^{356}\) Masis, *Question of the American Mandate*, 46.
\(^{357}\) Dr. Mezes to Wilson, May 15, 1919, Box 1, Folder 89, *Sidney Edward Mezes Papers*, MS 657, Yale University Library Manuscripts and Archives.
sight or direction.” He thought a mandate over Turkey would be a mistake, but “some Power ought to have a firm hand.” “Constantinople and the Straits should be left a neutral strip for the present,” and they were already under the occupation of the Entente powers. Wilson “would make the Sultan and his Government move out of Constantinople.” He “had studied the question of the Turks in Europe for a long time, and every year confirmed his opinion that they ought to be cleared out.” The next day, at the Council of Four meeting, Wilson agreed to present a plan for an American mandate for Istanbul and the Straits to the United States Senate, and he did not forget to note that “Constantinople was not a Turkish city; other races were in majority.” On June 27, 1919 the Allied Council agreed to suspend the further consideration of the treaty of peace with the Ottoman Empire until “such time as the Government of the United States could state whether it was able to accept a mandate for a portion of the territory of the former Turkish Empire.”

Bristol continued to oppose the plans for an Armenian mandate and the contemplated schemes about repatriating hundreds of thousands of Armenians from Caucasia into eastern Anatolia. He had visited the Caucasus and eastern Anatolia and saw the conditions prevailing in these regions. He also talked with General Milne, military commander of British forces in the Ottoman Empire, about them and came to the conclusion that the idea of repatriating the Ottoman Armenians from the Caucasus to eastern Anatolia by force would bring about an “explosion” in the Muslim world, and the Muslims would lose faith in the allied and associated powers, as this would appear to them simply another Izmir incident. He also said that he had a conversation with Khatisian, the acting President of Armenia, and the latter insisted to Bristol that repatriation of the

358 Howard, King-Crane, 158-9.
Ottoman Armenians was a political necessity, and if not done they would not have control in the eastern Anatolia. According to Bristol, although the idea of repatriation as soon as possible was correct, this should not be carried out until the whole of Turkey was occupied by military force so as to preserve order and the settlement by Peace Conference to retain the country as a whole under one mandatory was achieved.\(^\text{359}\)

In his memoirs, Ambassador Morgenthau refers to a report, prepared by him, W.H. Buckler and Professor Philip M. Brown, which they submitted to Wilson recommending a triple mandate over Armenia, Anatolia, and Istanbul. Morgenthau reveals that “thus we would banish the Turk from Europe and limit him to Anatolia.” They recommended that the triple mandate should be assumed by the United States. Morgenthau defended his views about an American triple mandate in Turkey in a long article in *The New York Times* on November 9, 1919. He warned the American public that “unless the United States accepts a Turkish mandate the world will again lose the opportunity of solving the problem that has endangered civilization for 500 years.”\(^\text{360}\) For Morgenthau, no one could sanely hope for peace “unless America establishes at Constantinople a center from which democratic principles shall radiate and illuminate that dark region of the world.”\(^\text{361}\)

Morgenthau wrote later that he was slightly instrumental in persuading the President for the Armenian mandate, and this would not be a mandate for Armenia alone, but a triple mandate (Istanbul, Anatolia and Armenia), since a sole Armenian mandate would be unwise for America. Morgenthau further stated that Lloyd George, Arthur J. Balfour, Earl Curzon, and Earl Grey, in other words, everyone he met in the British

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\(^{359}\) Bristol to Walter George Smith, June 28, 1919, Box 31, *Papers of M.L. Bristol*.

\(^{360}\) “Mandates or War,” *The New York Times*, November 9, 1919; see: the text in Morgenthau’s *All in a Lifetime*, 423-37.

\(^{361}\) Morgenthau, ibid., 425.
Cabinet- had persistently asked Morgenthau to use his influence to have America take the Armenian mandate. He clearly acknowledged that he and the British statesmen worked together on the mandate issue and then outlined the details of a triple mandate to the President. Morgenthau then explained that it was through Near East Relief that they had stirred up a tremendous sympathy for the Armenians in America.362

Between May and September of 1919, two American missions appointed by President Wilson with the approval of the Council of Five, were sent to the Near East to investigate the local conditions on behalf of the Allied Supreme Council and come back with suggestions for establishing mandates. One of them was the King-Crane Mission whose primary goal was to study the situation in Syria and Palestine. Because of the controversy between France and Great Britain over the assignment of the Syrian mandate, the King-Crane Commission consisted of only American officials. Yet, this commission also made suggestions based on its observation regarding the Armenian mandate proposal. The second mission, headed by Major General Harbord, was to investigate political, military, economic, administrative, and other considerations involved in possible American interests and responsibilities in an Armenian mandate.

Prior to the mission’s departure for the region, Henry C. King and Charles R. Crane penned a memorandum expressing their views on the Near East settlement. They claimed that the Ottoman Empire should definitely cease to exist, for the Armenian and Syrian massacres had already demonstrated its “age-long incapacity for good government.” They further asserted that “the age-long and hideous misrule of the Turks, coupled with their

occupation of territory of critical importance to the world,” made unusual restrictions necessary in their case.\footnote{363 A Memorandum by Henry Churchill King and Charles Richard Crane, May 1, 1919, \textit{Papers of Woodrow Wilson}, vol.58, 322-6.}

Following their tour in the region, Charles R. Crane telegraphed to Wilson the main conclusions of their enquiry at the end of August. Their most striking finding was that “vital human facts” in the region were not in harmony with many things the Allies were doing or planning to do. Crane said that outside of Armenia and Istanbul “the former Turkish state” must be kept for the Muslim world or there would be no peace. A general American mandate would be received with such joy by all kinds of people that little trouble and few troops would be required to administer it. The mission, Crane maintained, recommended that Syria, Palestine and Lebanon be kept a unity according to desires of great majority, Zionist program be seriously modified, America be asked to take the single mandate for Syria, if not, then mandate be given to Great Britain, the latter also take Mesopotamian mandate. Last but not least, America should take the “composite mandate” for non-Arabic speaking portions of the Ottoman Empire, with subordinate mandates under governor generals for the regions to be organized as separate states, i.e. international Istanbul state, Armenian state, Turkish state. No independent territory should be given to Greeks.\footnote{364 From Charles Richard Crane, August 31, 1919, ibid., vol.62, 607-8.}

Curiously enough, some prominent Turks in Istanbul who had talks with the King-Crane Commission were somehow convinced that the American government was disinclined to create an Armenian state in Turkish territory, but instead a single mandate over the whole of Turkey which would be established along the Wilsonian principles (the
Fourteen Points). The King-Crane Commission apparently suggested to these Turks to persuade the National Movement in Anatolia to support an American mandate over Turkey and to convey such demands as soon as possible to the American government in order to help Wilson with his mandate campaign.\(^\text{365}\)

Buzanski depicted the population study made by the King-Crane Commission concerning the proposed Armenia in Turkish territory as one of the most careful studies for the region. The report cites the following figures for the year 1914 and the end of the World War I as the total population of the Turkish vilayets proposed for an Armenian mandate.\(^\text{366}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>1,375,000</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>472,000</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>153,000</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of World War I:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>1,101,000</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>236,000</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{366}\) Buzanski, *Admiral Mark L. Bristol*, 130, footnote #111.
The Harbord Mission, officially called the American Military Mission to Armenia, was sent to the region in September 1919. Following a six-week long travel during late September and early October in Turkey and Transcaucasia, Major General Harbord, the head of the Mission, submitted his final report to Lansing on November 14, 1919. Although it did not point out a clear preference whether a mandate by America should be assumed or not, the general tone of the report could be interpreted as suggesting that an American mandate in any part of the Ottoman Empire would be a challenging task. The Harbord report estimated huge military and financial expenses needed for establishing an Armenian mandate. The necessary number of mandatory troops could vary greatly, -from twenty-five thousand to two hundred thousand for providing security. The possible financial burden for a five-year period would be around $756 million. Its main conclusion was that because of the economic interdependence of the different regions of the Ottoman Empire and of Caucasia, a single mandatory power should control the entire area, Anatolia, Rumelia, Istanbul, and the Caucasus.\(^{367}\)

The Harbord report pointed out that there were about half a million refugee Armenians in Caucasia to eventually begin life anew to which others, who might return from other lands, would be added. The report also drew attention to the Turkish side of the border where the Armenians had returned and started gradually to recover their property, and in some cases received rent for it, but generally found things in ruins. The report

\(^{367}\) FRUS 1919, II, 841, the text of the Harbord Report is available on p. 841-89.
observed no danger to the Armenians who had returned to their homes in Turkey. Actually, en route from Istanbul to Adana, the Harbord Mission stopped briefly at İzmit, Sapanca, Geyve, Afyon-Karahisar, Akşehir, Konya and other towns where Armenian repatriates led by priests welcomed the Americans and expressed their hopes. The mission saw in Adana and other towns in Cilicia the work of American relief agencies under British and French supervision to accommodate thousands of Armenians who were brought to the region after the Armistice.368

The Harbord report scantily touched upon the plight of the Turks, yet it found the magnitude of the destruction the war inflicted upon the country appalling: “scarcely a village or city exists which is not largely in ruins…not over twenty percent of the Turkish peasants who went to war have returned.” The report also repeatedly noted “an appalling lack of people, either military or civilian,” throughout Turkey. General Harbord stated that as far as the Armenians were concerned, “the Turk has had his day and further uncontrolled opportunity would be denied him.” Harbord finally concluded that a single mandatory for the Ottoman Empire and the Transcaucasia would be the best economic solution, ruling out an option of an Armenia only mandate as prohibitive under region’s trying conditions.369

General Harbord also argued that Turkey would not object to a single “disinterested power” taking a mandate over its territory, and even the National Movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha would not object to a single disinterested mandatory, preferably America. Harbord was aware of the evolving situation in Turkey with the

368 Ibid.
369 FRUS 1919, II, 856-7.
growing importance, in political and military sense, of the National Independence Movement aiming to preserve the unity of Turkey. The fall of the Ferid Pasha Cabinet in October 1919 had already testified to this fact. Harbord arrived in Sivas on September 20, 1919, after the National Congress had just ended at that city. He met Mustafa Kemal two days later. According to Shaw, Mustafa Kemal told Harbord that Turkey would indeed accept an American mandate if limited to advice.370

In response to Harbord’s stated concern regarding the Armenians, Mustafa Kemal told him that the National Movement would provide full equality for citizens of all races and religions. He also gave Harbord a detailed memorandum about the conditions in Turkey and the goals the National Movement. Harbord attached to his report Mustafa Kemal’s memorandum, dated October 15, 1919 which also included several statements and reports in its enclosures. However, contrary to General Harbord’s assertion, the memorandum of Mustafa Kemal did not include any reference or demand for an American mandate, but merely asked for American help toward the realization of the declared national aims.371 Mustafa Kemal later stated that he categorically rejected the mandate proposal as it would be no different than “abject servitude” and the Turkish nation “would prefer to perish rather than subject itself to the life of a slave.”372 The minutes of the Sivas Congress indisputably show that Mustafa Kemal Pasha did not support the idea of a mandate, whether American or not, and viewed independence and liberty as the only

370 Shaw, From Empire, II, 454-5.
371 FRUS, 1919, II, 875-85.
372 Kemal, Speech, 18.
option to follow. The final communiqué of the Congress did not include any provision regarding the mandate.\(^{373}\)

On the other hand, the National Congress at Sivas adopted a resolution on September 9, 1919 appealing to the United States Senate asking the latter to send a committee of its members to investigate conditions as they actually were in the Ottoman Empire before permitting the “arbitrary disposal of the peoples and territories of the Ottoman Empire by a treaty of peace.” General Harbord enclosed this appeal of the National Congress to his report as well.\(^{374}\)

On June 28, 1919, the Council of Four approved of Hoover’s proposal to Wilson to appoint a resident commissioner to Armenia, who should have the full authority of the United States, and the Entente powers, in all their relations to the de facto Armenian government.\(^{375}\) On the same day, following the official talks, Wilson left Paris to return home. He was planning to start at once his campaign to prepare the American public opinion to support the League of Nations Covenant and his mandate project in Istanbul, the Turkish Straits, and Armenia. Before his departure, he remarked to American correspondents that he had no right to make a personal decision without consulting the American people, yet he said he was personally inclined to favor accepting a mandate for Armenia and Istanbul. He stated that the importance of Istanbul was like Panama Canal: it was about “keeping the Black Sea passage open.” Besides, he underlined, American


presence at Istanbul would keep it out of European politics and of their self-interests, for
the benefit of the whole world.376

Taking stock of what Wilson was able to accomplish at Paris, Lansing sounded
gloomy when he commented that the President had lost much of the prestige which he had
enjoyed when landed at France in December 1918. His fame as the great champion of the
rights of all peoples in accordance with the Fourteen Points had utterly waned, as his
ability to meet the maneuvers of Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando, and to deal with
the intricacies of secret diplomacy proved insufficient.377

376 Notes of Press Conference, June 27, 1919, ibid., 240-52; also: from the Diary of Ray S. Baker, June
27, 1919, Ibid., 252-4.
377 “Loss of Prestige by the President,” June 29, 1919, in Confidential Memoranda & Notes, Box 7, Folder 3,
Robert Lansing Papers.
Missionary “Diplomacy,” Repatriation and Humanitarian Relief

Dr. James L. Barton declared that around two hundred American missionaries (or 25-30 percent of the total American missionaries who had been in the Ottoman Empire at the outbreak of the war) remained in the Ottoman Empire all through the war, and they were exclusively engaged in delivering relief to the exiled people. About five percent of those who had remained died during the war period, mostly from epidemics like typhus, typhoid, and cholera.378

American missionary societies, particularly the American Board, while engaged in the relief work in the Ottoman Empire and Caucasus prior to armistice, continued their anti-Ottoman propaganda campaign in the United States to raise funds for their operations. Missionary leaders, most of all Dr. Barton, advocated the idea of an independent Armenia to be carved out of the Ottoman Empire during the war and supported the Armenian publications in America, including writing their introductory sections.379

Throughout this period American missionaries under the American Board relying upon their vast outreach to American public opinion wielded an immense capacity to influence policymaking at Washington. They utilized this power to the maximum extent possible to achieve American involvement in the political resolution of the post-Ottoman Near East, including the Caucasus. In Wilson they found what they had been looking for, a President who was only too willing to support their cause. Their overenthusiasm became hard to conceal, and perhaps understandable, especially in the aftermath of the armistice. With a crumbled Ottoman Empire at the mercy of its enemies, the door to any political

379 Bertha S. Papazian, The Tragedy of Armenia (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1918), ix-xii.
scheme was thrown wide open, even in the most fantastic terms. The hour of reckoning
with the “Turks” seemed to have finally arrived. Parsons’ prophesy a century earlier to
“demolish this mighty empire of sin,”380 or Dr. Barton’s joint scheme with Lord Bryce of
Wellington House to create a Christian state in eastern part of the empire381 appeared now
rather an attainable objective than a whimsical idea.

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the war and separation of Arabia along
with the sacred places of Islam-Mecca and Medina-, Islam, according to Barton, had lost
its Caliph and was now headless. He believed that the organic religious and political unity
of the Islamic world had thus been shattered. Claiming that the conditions for Christian
missionary work among the Muslims had never seemed so favorable, he called for a united
Christian endeavor to accomplish this colossal task.382

As soon as the Mudros Armistice was signed, Dr. Barton, Cleveland H. Dodge and
other leaders of the American Board called for allied military occupation of the Ottoman
Empire and the formation of an Armenian state extending from Erivan to the
Mediterranean. Dr. Barton proposed a sort of ethnic cleansing through forced expulsion of
the Turks (to western Anatolia) and Kurds (southward over the Taurus Mountains) from
these areas and immigration of the Armenians from around the world into this proposed
state. Barton contended: “This land belongs to the Armenians by right of occupancy for
centuries and they now constitute the only people there morally and intellectually capable
of self-government.”383

380 Grabill, Missionaries amid Conflict, 2.
381 Barton to Colonel House, January 8, 1918, Box 11, Folder 325, E. M. House Papers.
382 Barton, Effect of the War, 17-18.
Only a few weeks prior to the Mudros Armistice, Dr. Barton was busily collaborating with former U.S. Consul Jackson (in Aleppo), Morgenthau’s assistant Schmavonian who was working at the Near East Division of the State Department, and William W. Peet, Barton’s assistant at the ACASR, for the preparation of a plan on establishing such “an Armenian province.” In Peet’s explanation the main purpose for creating such a state was as follows:

[T]o block the way Turkey through the Caucasus to the Taurian [sic. Turanian] people in Central Asia and also to have it serve as a buffer territory between the Turkish residuary state and Western Persia. This state would join British Mesopotamia and with that province entirely cover the western boundary of Persia.  

Cleveland H. Dodge, as the treasurer of the ACASR, requested Wilson to issue an appeal to the American people, as he had done twice during the war, for the work of the ACASR. Dodge invited his friend’s attention to their meeting at Riverdale in October 1918 at which they had spoken about “the plans for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Christian races in Asia Minor.” Now the way was open, Dodge underlined.

As indicated earlier, the ACASR had been established in Cleveland H. Dodge’s office in New York on September 16, 1915, upon the urgings of Ambassador Morgenthau to raise funds for the relief of the Armenians. It was incorporated by a special act of Congress in August 1919 under the name of Near East Relief (NER) with the general task

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384 Peet to Barton, October 4, 1918, reel 669, Papers of the ABCFM.
385 Dodge to Wilson, November 19, 1918, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.53, 134-5.
of administering relief in the region. The State Department gave full access to ACASR (or NER) of its records about the situation in the region throughout this period.\textsuperscript{386}

The incorporation act by the Congress greatly helped NER to benefit from governmental assistance. The Wilson administration gave indispensable assistance to NER. In addition to cooperation offered by the State Department, the War Department provided ships without charge to carry relief supplies.\textsuperscript{387} The American government contributed to NER’s work large amounts of relief material—flour and other foodstuffs worth $13 million. Former American ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau and Abraham Elkus were members of the NER Executive Committee. Aside from local helpers, the NER employed 500 American citizens in 1919 in the region for relief work.\textsuperscript{388}

The Wilson administration’s support to the missionary activity extended to the organization of public propaganda as well. For instance, quite long before Congress’s incorporation of NER, Wilson’s propaganda agency, the Committee on Public Information (CPI), took an active part in the production of visual material and pamphlets which were presented as missionaries’ own publicity work.\textsuperscript{389} U.S. government offices supported NER’s public campaign by displaying posters, distributing brochures, and helping collection activities.\textsuperscript{390}

Following the armistice, the ACASR (or NER) intensified its anti-Ottoman propaganda. Grabill notes that NER “riveted familiar Armenophile, anti-Turk ideas to

\textsuperscript{386} Barton, Story of Near East, 4-10.
\textsuperscript{387} Grabill, Protestant Diplomacy, 130.
\textsuperscript{388} FRUS 1919, II, 821-3, The Memoranda of the Executive Committee of Near East Relief to the Secretary of State, November 11, 1919.
\textsuperscript{389} Peet to Barton, March 30, 1918, reel 638, Papers of the ABCFM. Peet informed Dr. Barton that the CPI provided a catalogue of pictures. State Department official Schmavonian was helping in the press articles.
\textsuperscript{390} McCarthy, Missionaries, 37-8.
America’s mind.” While their publications attributed adjectives to Turks like “brutal, rapacious,” their propaganda ignored evidence that Armenians also had murdered Turks. Grabill refers to Barton’s recognition of this deception in his letter to Boghos Nubar:

There is no danger of any propaganda making the Americans feel that the Armenians are maltreating the Turks. The idea is universally established here in this country that the Armenians are the worst sinned against of any on the face of the earth, and that the chief of sinners is the Turk backed by the Teuton.391

The missionaries’ great influence on the American administration, and especially on the public opinion, never escaped British authorities’ attention either during the war or in the postwar period. They closely watched the activities of American missionaries in the Near East. British deputy high commissioner Admiral Webb reported in December 1918 that Dr. Gates, president of Robert College, who had considerable influence in America, had been approached by the Turks who sounded their desire for American protection, as they (Turks) thought, once they got that kind of protection, President Wilson would oppose any partition of the Ottoman Empire. To achieve their aims, Webb asserted that the Turks were working through Masonic Lodges, thus they were approaching Dr. Gates and others. Admiral Webb expressed surprise that those who were mainly interested in “alleviating the sufferings of Armenians and other oppressed races” were “so strongly pro-Turkish.” He thought the scheme must have originated with Jewish members of the CUP whose affiliations were well known.392 Notwithstanding the British apprehensions, American missionaries by no means stopped cooperating with the British authorities and presenting to them the needs of the Armenians. Dr. Gates, who was also the head of NER’s activities in the Ottoman Empire, presented to High Commissioner Calthorpe a report on the

391 Grabill, Protestant Diplomacy, 129.
392 Webb to Foreign Office, Box 9, Folder 215, William Wiseman Papers.
conditions of the Armenians in Caucasia. Gates stated that there were 710,000 Armenian refugees, mostly from eastern Anatolia, in the Armenian territory.\footnote{Calthorpe to Balfour, January 16, 1919, FO 371/3657. Dr. Gates gave the following figures: 250,000 from eastern Anatolia; 35,000 from Sürelmeli; 120,000 from Kars and Kağızman; 30,000 from Etchmiatzin district; 150,000 from Alexandropol province; 75,000 from Akhalkelek; 50,000 from southern districts of Erivan.}

The American missionaries’ dedication to their religious mission and cultural affinity usually cut across the diplomatic line that divided foreign policy interests of their own country from those of Great Britain. According to Dr. Barton, British rule in India had been benevolent, aiming at the development of the Indian people. During the Great War India had furnished more than a million men to Great Britain “to fight the war of the West for democracy.” India, which only fifty years ago “seemed nationally helpless and incapable of self-government” was now “uniting, the Hindu and the Mohammedan alike.”\footnote{Barton, \textit{Effect of the War}, 31-2.}

Meanwhile, NER’s propaganda campaign to vilify Turks gained a sophisticated character. With the help of Columbia University, NER sent a team to Turkey to prepare a movie version of Aurora Mardigonian’s story \textit{Ravished Armenia}. The movie \textit{Ravished Armenia} was shown at movie theaters in fifty cities across America. Scenes included “a flogging of girls who refused to enter Turkish harems, a nailing of twelve Armenian maidens to crosses.” The film was exhibited ten times to the public. A full-page NER advertisement in \textit{The New York Times}, reprinted from the \textit{Literary Digest}, presented two pictures: “the first was four million Armenian and Syrian Christians living in lands made
luminous by the footprints of Jesus, the second was Christ-led Americans rescuing needy Near Easterners.”

The movie *Ravished Armenia*, which was also dubbed as “*Auction of Souls*,” represented an interesting case to reveal differences in the purpose of public propaganda between Great Britain and the United States. From archival records, it appears that the movie was produced under the auspices of the League of Nations Union, of which Prime Minister Lloyd George and Foreign Secretary Balfour were honorary presidents, while Viscount Edward Grey was its chairman. Its scenario was based on Lord Bryce’s report, i.e. *The Blue Book*. As mentioned, it was first shown in America without any restriction and contributed greatly to missionary-led propaganda in whipping up American public opinion to support the Armenian cause. When the time came for showing the movie in Great Britain, the British Board of Film Censors and the Foreign Office intervened immediately for the alterations of its content (subtitles) and extraction of certain scenes. Subsequently the movie film was accordingly altered as such that nearly all its subtitles were changed. The main argument of the Foreign Office for the alteration was that the content and certain scenes of the film might be offensive to Muslim opinion. In its uncut form the movie film would likely produce a very bad effect on the Muslim world as proving that the British government was engaged in active propaganda against Islam. This might have very serious effects in India and elsewhere. A Foreign Office minute underscored that there was no race in Eastern Europe which had not committed horrible atrocities, and there was no point that any good could be done by singling out atrocities committed on Armenians as a suitable subject for faked photography at the moment when

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the Ottoman peace treaty was under consideration. Besides, the minute stated that the film was an artificial manufacture depicting faked atrocities, not actual events.  

In his memoirs, Herbert Hoover pointed out to the success of pro-Armenian propaganda by the missionaries and other American institutions as such:

Probably Armenia was known to the American school child in 1919 only a little less than Great Britain. The association of Mount Ararat and Noah, the staunch Christians who were massacred periodically by the Mohammedan Turk, and the Sunday School collections over fifty years for alleviating their miseries— all cumulate to impress the name Armenia on the front of the American mind.

The ACASR (NER) was extremely influential in American policymaking on the Ottoman Empire both during the war as well as the postwar period. For example, upon NER’s initiative and with the approval of the Council of Five at the Paris Peace Conference, Colonel William N. Haskell of the U.S. Army was appointed on July 11, 1919 by the President as High Commissioner in Armenia on behalf of the United States, British, French and Italian governments to direct relief work in Armenia. It was also former Ambassador Morgenthau, along with Herbert Hoover, the Chairman of the U.S. Food Administration, who first proposed to the State Department to send the Harbord Mission to the Near East.

On his way to the Near East as chairman of NER (or still called ACASR at the time) to investigate conditions and coordinate the relief work, Dr. Barton stopped over first at London, then at Paris for several weeks for consultation with the American and the British delegates. He requested the British assistance in permitting to transport and

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396 See the correspondence between the Foreign Office and various government agencies: December 1919- January 1920, FO 371/3672.
398 FRUS, 1919, II, 826, The Commission to Negotiate Peace to the Acting Secretary of State, July 5, 1919, 826; ibid., The Commission to Negotiate Peace to the Acting Secretary of State, 11 July 1919, 827.
distribute relief materials to the Armenian refugees in the regions under British control. Dr. Barton asked the British to intervene and expel the Kurds and “other intruders” who had violently dispossessed non-Muslims of their houses and lands, and to recover non-Muslim women and children seized by Muslims. The Foreign Office agreed to provide all possible assistance to NER, and instructed British missions in the region accordingly. Yet, as regards expelling the “intruders” and recovery of non-Muslim women, the Foreign Office elucidated in its instruction to Calthorpe that “intruders” could only be expelled from territory definitely “awarded” by peace conference to Armenia, and the recovery of women was a delicate matter, and should be handled carefully.

In Paris, Barton informed Col. House that upon his arrival in the Near East he would deal with the subject of returning the Armenian refugees to that part of the Ottoman Empire which would be Armenia. Pointing to the uncertainty about the location of this Armenia, Dr. Barton wished to have some “authoritative suggestion” as to just where that territory would be. It appears that Col. House provided a rough sketch, probably made by Dr. Mezes, showing the approximate boundaries of the contemplated territory.

As soon as Dr. Barton and his large entourage arrived in the Ottoman Empire, they set out helping the returning Armenians and orphans by distributing food, relief material, and reorganizing orphanages and other facilities. He reported that all the districts were perfectly accessible and they were coordinating their work with the British military authorities as well as the Ottoman government. He stated that Muslims were releasing

399 Barton to Sir R. Graham (FO), January 15, 1919, FO 371/3657; FO to Adm. Calthorpe, January 26, 1919, ibid.
400 FO to Calthorpe, February 27, 1919, ibid.
401 Barton to Col. House, January 21, 1919, Box 11, Folder 325, E. M. House Papers.
402 Armenia Map, Box 11, Folder 325, E. M. House Papers.
under pressure large number of Christian women and children for whose care he needed further support from America. 403

Dr. Barton’s relief expedition started on March 5, 1919 from Istanbul down the Baghdad railway line with a train of twenty-two cars loaded with supplies and with relief workers to be distributed along the districts. The supplies and workers were left at Konya, Adana, Tarsus, and Aleppo. As the British authorities did not permit the relief team to go directly from Aleppo to Diyarbekir, Dr. Barton proceeded to Cairo and obtained from General Allenby the permission to start for the other tier of his trip from Urfa, to Diyarbekir, Harput, Sivas, Malatya and other places. His travel covered 5000 miles. 404

In May 1919, Dr. Barton expressed his satisfaction with the progress of the relief work he was directing. The only concern in his mind was the uncertainty regarding the mandate issue as to who would assume it. If he only knew definitely, they would proceed with their plans. 405

With the new impetus of Barton’s mission in 1919, the American schools and missions rapidly expanded their work in Anatolia following the armistice, focusing again exclusively on the Armenian relief work. In Sivas province alone, for instance, as noted by Mustafa Kemal, Americans missions opened or reinstituted 25 missionary schools for the Armenians by July 1919, and in one of them students numbered around one thousand and five hundred. 406

403 See Dr. Barton’s telegrams from the Ottoman Empire during his long trip from January till October 1919: Papers of the ABCFM, ABC 1-91, vol.5 Near East 1860-1931, 86-101.
405 Dr. Barton to Rev. Cane, May 27, 1919, ibid., 94.
406 Kemal, Speech, 80.
Dr. Barton acted as a vigorous proponent of the Armenian aspirations at least until the signing of the Turkish-American Treaty in August 1923. He pressed the State Department to adopt the position that the “Turkish-Mohammedan rule over the Armenians races” had been a failure and must cease. Therefore, he actively lobbied for and welcomed President Wilson’s acceptance of Armenian independence, and viewed the scheme for an American mandate over the Ottoman Empire as a necessary first step.407

From Istanbul Dr. Barton suggested to Col. House that a single mandatory should be assigned for the entire country to act for the League of Nations as “trustee of all these nationally bankrupt peoples.” He elaborated that this proposal expressed the judgment of his colleagues and “leading Englishmen,” Americans, Turks, Armenians, and Greeks. He reiterated to Col. House the same point of view during his long tour in the Ottoman Empire, and did it with further clarification that large majority of all populations preferred America as mandatory for entire country.408 In June, Dr. Barton reported the conclusions of his tour urging immediate military occupation by the allied forces of the territory to be designated as Armenia.409

Thanks to the Congressional authority and Wilson administration’s unstinting support, NER employed American army officers on detached service as well as civilian personnel to direct the relief efforts in the Ottoman Empire and the Caucasus. By the end of 1920 the NER’s staff numbered 270 to deal with the needs of four million refugees, of whom 400,000 were children separated from their parents. In Anatolia and Syria, NER gathered homeless children in the mission stations reorganized as orphanages. For

407 Buzanski, Admiral Mark L. Bristol, 106.
408 Barton to Col. House, February 26, 1919, Box 11, Folder 325, E. M. House Papers.
409 Barton to Col. House, June 21, 1919, ibid.
instance, at Maraş, a town of sixty thousand, it organized five orphanages and a hospital to care for over a thousand children. Christian girls “rescued from Muslim harems” were placed in special homes. Dr. Barton estimated it would cost thirty million dollars in 1920 alone to provide food and clothing to the distressed.\textsuperscript{410}

In close cooperation with NER, Hoover’s American Relief Administration (ARA) also established its regional headquarters in February 1919 at the American Embassy in Istanbul. Howard Heinz was at the head of the organization assisted by American army officers and several civilians as well as soldiers. The ARA did a comprehensive survey of food situation in the region stretching from southern Russia bordering upon the Black Sea to Syria and Mesopotamia, from Istanbul to Transcaucasia. They found that the scarcity of food was most severe in Istanbul and in the vicinity of this city.\textsuperscript{411} In April 1919, Heinz, Captain Abraham Tulin, and Major E. Stoever investigated the conditions in Caucasia. They estimated the number of persons to be fed in the “newly organized Republic of Armenia” at 500,000, and the number of Armenians in other parts of the Caucasus in need of relief at 130,000.\textsuperscript{412}

As for Anatolia, although desultory and far from giving a complete account, Dr. Gates’ notes on the NER’s tour, headed by Dr. Barton, in Anatolia provide glimpses of scenes on the complicated process for returning the Armenians in 1919. American missionaries and Red Cross personnel were busily coordinating their relief to the Armenians in cooperation with British military officials, the Ottoman government agencies, and the Armenian organizations. American relief workers were able to have

\textsuperscript{410} Daniel, \textit{American Philanthropy}, 157-9.
\textsuperscript{411} Joseph Green (Tiflis) to Hoover, September 1, 1919, Box 206, Folder 2/749, \textit{E. M. House Papers}.
\textsuperscript{412} Letter from Abraham Tulin and Reuben Horchow to Hoover, May 4, 1919, \textit{Box 1, Folder 1, David Magie Papers}.
access anywhere, including in the remote parts of the country. Especially in northern Syria
where the bulk of the Armenians were waiting for the arrangements for their return, the
British authorities wanted to transfer the relief work to NER as soon as possible as they
lacked the necessary funds. In Aleppo alone, one Col. Tunbridge said that feeding 36,000
destitute Armenians cost about 2.00 piasters per day per head. The Armenian organizations
reported 97,500 refugees in Aleppo district out of whom 41,000 were receiving aid. There
were also large numbers of Armenians in several cities and districts of Syria in need of
relief. In southern and southeastern Anatolia, the Armenians were returning to their homes.
Yet, the rumors of the creation of an Armenian state as well as the misconduct of
Armenian soldiers in French uniforms were causing anxiety and tension between the
Muslim population and the Armenians.  

413

Following the armistice, the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Armenians
displaced during the wartime owing to relocation or fleeing to Caucasia or elsewhere
(Persia, Egypt, etc.) posed an immense challenge. It called for the allocation of
considerable financial resources and security personnel. Substantial relief assistance
provided from America mainly through the ARA and NER, aided in transportation and
security by the Ottoman authorities as well as the British, made it possible for hundreds of
thousands of Armenians to return to their homes. However, a considerable number of
refugees refrained from returning owing to concerns for their safety and political
uncertainty as regards the future of the entire Ottoman lands.  

414

A.C.R.N.E. Notes, March 1919, Caleb Frank Gates Papers, C0558, Princeton University Library
Manuscripts Division.

See: British High Commissioner’s report on the repatriation of the Armenians: Calthorpe to Balfour,
February 3, 1919, FO 371/3657.
Calthorpe forwarded to the Foreign Office a statement made by the General Staff Intelligence regarding the reported numbers of Armenians requiring famine relief in Trans-Caucasia in April 1919. According to these figures there were a total of 336,060 Armenian refugees to be repatriated to Asia Minor. The Armenians who were inhabitants of Trans-Caucasia and in need of famine relief numbered 318,714, making the total number of persons requiring relief 654,774. The British General Staff explained that these figures were mainly based on Armenian information, and were not reliable. A more reliable estimate would put the total requiring relief up to 500,000.415

Barton and Peet sent a telegram from Istanbul to Morgenthau at the end of June 1919 saying that relief work should remain as one unit and there were 100,000 orphans under NER’s care, and there were also 600,000 exiles to be repatriated to their homes in Turkey. These were equally divided between Syria and Russia. The Caucasus situation was well in hand, they said, and it could be easily and satisfactorily directed from Istanbul.416

Admiral Calthorpe cabled in July 1919 that the Ottoman Ministry of Interior estimated that there were about 300,000 refugees from the eastern provinces scattered over whole country, and there were efforts for repatriating small numbers from time to time. Yet, to support such a large concentration of refugees in the eastern provinces they had neither the means nor capacity at that time.417 British authorities’ reluctance for making any commitment as regards repatriation was somehow related to their knowledge on conditions in the region and immensity of the task it involved since the armistice. Although it was difficult to know the exact number and the locations of the refugees in need of help

415 Calthorpe to Balfour, April 19, 1919, FO 371/3658.
416 Barton & Peet to Morgenthau, June 28, 1919, reel 8, Henry Morgenthau Papers.
417 Calthorpe to Curzon, July 22, 1919, FO 608/78.
for repatriation, the estimates already pointed to huge figures. According to information
gathered by the British military intelligence, by March 1919, total number of refugees in
Erivan province alone was about 750,000, of whom 250,000 Armenian refugees came
from eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The refugees scattered as far away as in
Novorossiysk, Northern Caucasus, Baku, Batum, Tiflis, Zangezur, Shusa, Nakhchivan,
northern Iran, etc.418 Besides, repatriation started first for the return of Armenians from
Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt and other places to Anatolia, and the refugees from Caucasia
would double the strain of this task.

The British high commission in Istanbul was in charge of the political and security
aspects of the Armenian repatriation, and the Armenian and Greek section of the
commission was coordinating the process of repatriation with the representatives of the
Armenian and Greek Patriarchates as well as with the American Relief Commission.
Under this setup, while the British authorities at Istanbul had eventually the upper hand in
this matter, the responsibility for the relief work rested primarily with the American
organizations. The Armenian and Greek section met regularly along with Armenian and
American representatives to oversee and implement measures for rehousing, and relief. Dr.
Peet of the ACASR represented the American side in these sessions. The issues they
tackled included not only the repatriation but also making arrangements for turning out
Islamized persons and orphans from Muslim houses.419

In May 1919, the Armenian Patriarchal Committee, which was dealing with the
repatriation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, informed the British Relief Mission

418 Webb to Balfour, February 24, 1919, FO 371/3658. Webb forwarded a report, prepared by General
Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Salonica Force, on the Armenian refugees in the Caucasus.
419 Webb to Balfour, March 10, 1919, FO 371/3658.
that according to their figures, though not yet updated, 327,325 refugees had already been repatriated and given partial relief at a cost of L.T. 87,115. In the meantime, Patriarchal Committee’s scope of activity did not include the Armenian refugees in the Caucasus.  

The Armenian Patriarchal Committee (aka the Armenian National Relief Committee) supplied further figures to the British Relief Mission in Istanbul with regard to the estimated numbers of refugees and orphans in Turkey:

- Refugees (already registered) 325,000
- Refugees (expected from the Caucasus) 350,000
- Orphans (already collected) 10,000
- Orphans (scattered in Turkey) 40,000

Following the armistice, the Ottoman government established commissions of migration operating in the localities affected. Through these commissions, the Ottoman government organized the transportation of the returning Armenians and arranged for the recovery of their property. These committees were operating in coordination with the British officers as well as Armenian community’s representatives.

Dr. Barton’s letter to Lord Bryce corroborated the ongoing process of repatriation under governmental assistance, stating that at every locality he went, he saw an Armenian committee formed either by the government or by the Armenians themselves to defend the Armenian interests. Barton, however, urged Bryce to use his influence on British

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420 “Work of the ACRNE and Armenian Patriarchal Committee,” a report by G.S. Pears, Chief of British Food Mission, May 19, 1919, FO 608/79.
422 Webb to Balfour, March 16, 1919, FO 371/3658; Calthorpe to Balfour, March 26, 1919, ibid.
authorities for occupation of eastern Anatolia with a force of 50,000 for the repatriation of Armenian refugees in Caucasia. The Foreign Office, however, was of the opinion that if the Turks had an army of 30,000 and an “unlimited number” of demobilized men who could be used for guerilla operations, the number of troops Barton had suggested for occupation seemed an underestimate.423

In June 1919, Dr. Ussher of NER, who had been a leading American missionary at Van since pre-war period, presented to the British authorities a plan for the repatriation of the Armenians from the Caucasus. He stated that the allies must send them back to Turkey, as it was their responsibility because these people were Christians and friends of allies. Dr. Ussher did not omit to claim that “the Turk” had forfeited his right to rule even himself; Islam had demonstrated that it could not justly govern other races, nor wisely govern its coreligionists. He further remarked: “The Turk and Kurd are human beings, and as such entitled to our consideration.” His astonishing comments continued as follows:

An unproductive element or undeveloping element is as much of a menace to the body politic as to the body physical. Only where the Muslim is under the influence of other religions is he in any degree productive, he cannot live and grow by himself; nevertheless, he must live.424

The British authorities advised Dr. Ussher to proceed to Paris to present his plan directly to the conference. Indeed, Dr. Ussher went to Paris, and on July 1, 1919, he, ex-Ambassador Morgenthau, as well as W. George Smith called on Louis Mallet to discuss the Armenian refugees in Caucasia. They said the refugees could safely be repatriated if accompanied by British or American officers. But, even if they thus were to be repatriated, they would still starve unless concentrated in camps. During the conversation, Mallet

423 Barton to Bryce, June 27, 1919, FO 371/3659; FO Minutes, July 18, 1919, ibid.
424 Minutes of Foreign Office, June 16 &24, 1919; also: Calthorpe to Balfour, June 15, 1919; Ussher’s “Preliminary Statement,” FO 608/79.
carefully evaded Morgenthau’s attempt to raise the question of American mandate for the whole of the Ottoman Turkey, by pointing out that the issue under discussion was humanitarian, not political.425

The military section of the British delegation in Paris conveyed to the War Office the issue of repatriating a large number of Armenians, estimated at 650,000, from the Armenian Republic to eastern Anatolia through the use of available British forces in the region. Yet, at the same time, the military section’s opinion was that even if General Milne would agree the use of British troops for the repatriation, this could not be done at the time because of the adverse conditions; therefore, it was hoped that the American authorities should devote their attention to organizing a general repatriation of Armenians for the spring of 1920.426

British officials in Istanbul pointed out that the Greek occupation of Izmir and the atrocities committed against the Turks had rendered the Armenian repatriation more difficult. They stated that the Greek occupation had caused in the interior of Asia Minor considerable unrest and a “feeling of resistance” to any repatriation until something was known of the future. They further indicated that under the existing circumstances neither the contemplated Armenian mandate, nor the repatriation of Armenians into eastern Anatolia would be possible unless the area were occupied by troops.427

The British military control officer Rawlinson in Erzurum reported in the summer of 1919 that there were disturbances and attacks by Armenian forces into the eastern

425 Mallet’s minute of the meeting, July 1, 1919, ibid.
426 Military Section’s letter, July 8, 1919, ibid.
427 G.H.Q. (Istanbul) to War Office, July 21, 1919, FO 371/3662; also: “Notes on Present Conditions in the Caucasus,” by General Bridges, July 26, 1919, ibid.
provinces, including the massacre of Muslim civilians on both sides of the border. Rawlinson further stated that returning Armenians would not be received favorably, if it would be interpreted as the first step towards an Armenian state. He also suggested that the repatriation be carried out under the Entente protection. If, however, a guarantee were given to the Ottoman government that the territory would remain under its sovereignty, the repatriation of Armenians would be practicable and the Ottoman army capable of maintaining order.428

In June 1919, Herbert Hoover, the president of ARA, harshly criticized NER’s relief work due to the inefficiency and maladministration. “The lack of grasp of Armenian problem by Near Eastern Commission and total lack of executive and business ability by its heads,” Hoover alarmingly stressed, had precipitated “the greatest human disaster in Europe.” If truth of waste of resources and incapacity ever became known it would be the “greatest scandal in American charitable history,” he stated.429 Upon Hoover’s telegram, NER took immediate action by agreeing to pay $600,000 covering cargo merchandise to be shipped to Novorossiysk for barter with Kuban for wheat and other food to be sent to Armenia.430 Heinz of ARA in Istanbul had reported to Hoover about the scandal regarding NER’s relief in the Caucasus. The investigation conducted by Major E.R. Stoever, an ARA officer, exposed “an incredible state of affairs” as such that although some thousands of tons of food, clothing and medicine had been shipped to Batum for NER, only a part had ever reached the Armenians. Thousands of tons had been sold in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Hoover learnt that the corruption and thievery were beyond belief. At the end of the

428 Calthorpe to Curzon, June 25, 1919, FO 371/3659; passim.; see also, Rawlinson’s personal account of the period: A. Rawlinson, Adventures in the Near East (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1924).
429 Hoover to Dodge, June 14, 1919, reel 8, Henry Morgenthau Papers.
430 Dodge to Hoover, June 15, 1919, ibid.
investigation, Hoover demanded the removal of the local American director of the NER committee along with his entire personnel, and Yarrow, a former missionary at Van, was assigned director of the local work.\textsuperscript{431}

In America, in addition to the anti-Ottoman propaganda by the missionary organizations, Cardashian’s American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA) also continued its vigorous its public campaign for advocating the Armenian nationalist aspirations. Former American Ambassador to Berlin, James W. Gerard, devoted his energies with such zealotry as to put forth extravagantly maximalist claims to help erect an Armenia by combining the six vilayets, the littoral of Trabzon, with what he called “Russian Armenia” and “Persian Armenia.” The ACIA’s lobbying succeeded in enlisting the support of such important public figures as Charles Evans Hughes, William Jennings, Henry Cabot Lodge, etc. to utilize their names in its propaganda campaigns.\textsuperscript{432}

An exchange of letters between Bristol and Dr. Barton in the early months of 1921 shows how the NER officers were acquiescing to the distortion and manipulation of facts for the sake of maintaining their fundraising drive for the Armenians, and how the pro-Armenian lobby was engaged in a propaganda that had no moral and factual ground at all. In his reply to Bristol’s reaction to such false propaganda, Dr. Barton acknowledged:

\begin{quote}
With reference to the false reports that come through reporting massacres of the Armenians by the Turks. There is no one who can deprecate this more than I do. But there is a situation over here [in the U.S.] which is hard to describe. There is a brilliant young Armenian, a graduate of Yale University, by the name of Cardashian. He is a lawyer, with offices down in Wall Street, I believe. He has organized a committee so-called which has never met and is never consulted, with Mr. Gerard as Chairman. Cardashian is the whole thing. He has set up what he calls
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{431} Hoover, \textit{Memoirs}, 386.
\textsuperscript{432} Telegram from James Watson Gerard and Others, February 10, 1919, \textit{Papers of Woodrow Wilson}, vol.55, 65-66; Telegram from J.W. Gerard, March 5, 1919, ibid., 446.
an Armenian publicity bureau or something of that kind, and has a letterhead printed. Gerard signs everything that Cardashian writes. He told me this himself one time…We have had many a conference with Armenian leaders as to what can be done to stop this vicious propaganda carried on by Cardashian. He is constantly reporting atrocities which never occurred and giving endless misinformation with regard to the situation in Armenia and in Turkey. We do not like to come out and attack him in public. This would injure the whole cause we are trying to serve.433

High Commissioner Bristol’s notes in his diary also demonstrated that, not only ACIA’s propaganda, but also NER’s own fundraising campaign was based on disinformation. For NER officials, telling Americans about Armenian massacres by “the terrible Turk” was the only way in which funds could be raised.434 Curiously, not the above-mentioned one-sided propaganda, but Bristol’s efforts to inform the American public in a more balanced manner were attacked. According to Malkasian, all what Bristol had been doing was to combat Armenophilia during Wilson’s administration.435

Upon Milne’s suggestion, the British authorities decided to appoint Wardrop to Tiflis to watch the developments and coordinate efforts at keeping anti-Bolshevik forces united.436 In the summer of 1919, without any real prospects of material gains, the British authorities started preparations for evacuating the Caucasus. Their intent for withdrawal was accompanied by rapidly spreading rumors and alarm-sounding reports of “possible massacres” of Armenians unless some power would provide the necessary protection. Through such pressure, they were alluding to immediate American intervention in the region.

433 Lowry, “American Observers in Anatolia ca. 1920: Bristol Papers,” in Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, 1912-1926 (Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, 1984), 57.
434 Buzanski, Admiral Mark L. Bristol, 178, and see footnote: 134, 207.
435 Malkasian, Disintegration, 358.
436 Foreign Office to War office, August 13, 1919, FO 608/79.
Yarrow, the director of NER in Caucasia, telegraphed to Cleveland Dodge in August 1919 that British forces were evacuating the Caucasus and he received definite information that the Italians, who had first showed some willingness to send military force, were not going in to replace them. He asserted that this would result in inevitable political chaos and probable massacre of the Armenians unless at least 50,000 American troops were sent into the region. He also stated that there prevailed a local feeling that America was responsible for the situation.437

The American Consul at Tiflis added insult to injury by his inflammatory reports to the American delegation at Paris about the possible massacres of Armenians by the Turks. Usually gathering information from Armenian sources, he remarked that the massacre of Armenians was apparently “to be continued under the surveillance of the Allies.” In one of his interviews, the members of an Armenian delegation told Consul Doolittle that the position of Armenia under the protection of the allies was becoming worse than “under Turkish misrule.”438

Yarrow’s another dispatch in October 1919 expressed his resentment of the British policy for it had reflected their “world position” such that the Caucasus question was related the question of India, Egypt, and Persia, which meant that it was related to “Mohammedanism,” therefore they did not follow a pro-Christian policy in the region strong enough contrary to missionary expectations. In his conversations with British officials in the region, Yarrow gathered that the British would prefer to have the Americans take the mandate for Armenia alone, and leave the Azerbaijan and Georgian

437 Yarrow to Dodge, August 1, 1919, Box 1, Folder 1, Armenia Collection.
438 Doolittle (Tiflis) to American Mission (Paris), July 19, 1919, Box 65, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
questions to them [to the British]. He concluded that such a solution would free them from responsibility for the Armenians, and give them control of the Batum-Baku railroad leading from the Caspian to the Black Sea. Yarrow commented bitterly about Great Britain: “A great Christian nation which was forced, or thought it was forced, by considerations of world politics, to favor Mohammedan peoples at the expense of small Christian races.”

Hoover wrote alarmingly to Frank Polk, who was sent to Paris as the head of American delegation after Wilson and his entourage had left, that according to the reports of the chief of ARA in Armenia unless the British forces could be retained, and reinforced, in the Caucasus, there would be a “practical extermination of the Armenians.” Hoover added that he received further reports through the British authorities pointing out to the same danger.

James Gerard of the ACIA appealed to Wilson that “Turco-Tartars” were moving in on the Armenians from three sides and that, unless immediate preventive measures were taken, “the Armenian nation” would meet with an “appalling catastrophe.” Wilson asked Polk whether it would not be a wise course for the allies “to warn Turkey that aggressive action on the part of her forces or subjects against the Armenians might result in the absolute dissolution of the Turkish Empire and complete alteration of the conditions of peace.”

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439 Yarrow’s letter, October 14, 1919, reel 9, Henry Morgenthau Papers.  
440 Hoover to Polk, July 30, 1919, Box 22, Folder 113, Frank L. Papers.  
441 Williams to Wilson, and Wilson to Polk, August 2, 1919, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.62, 116; passim.
It should be noted that the government of Grand National Assembly of Turkey acceded every possible facility and freedom of movement to Americans, including missionaries, relief workers, journalists, travelers, etc. in the territory under their control. NER functionaries reported that Americans were the only ones who were accorded by the Ankara government anything “resembling” freedom of communication and movement. Turkish officials expressed their desire for American help after the war. Despite this though, arrogance did not permit the NER officers to give credit none other than themselves, as they thought they were “compelled repeatedly to forget their American instincts to assert their rights” [they were obviously referring their former privileges under the Capitulations] and “graciously” adapted themselves to local conditions for the sake of continuing their orphanages and other relief work.\(^442\)

NER underlined in its 1922 Report that as a result of its relief work one million people, chiefly Armenians and members of the “exiled subject races,” had been saved from perishing of starvation and epidemic diseases. By December 31, 1921, NER was operating 124 orphanages, in which 64,107 children were sheltered, and approximately 50,000 other children fed outside of these orphanages. It further reported that by the end of 1921, no less than half a million people in the Soviet Armenian Republic were dependent upon NER’s relief.\(^443\) In its 1921 annual report, NER stated that it operated in the region 63 hospitals with 6,522 beds; 128 clinics; 11 rescue homes, and 229 orphanages. In the same year, NER supplied food to 561,970 persons (mostly Armenians) in the Near East. NER further indicated that according to the best available statistics, there were 2,790,490 Armenians in

\(^442\) Charles W. Fowle (Foreign Secretary of NER) to Secretary of State, November 18, 1921, roll 46, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29. Fowle forwarded the copies of the reports he had received from NER personnel in Turkey.

1921 in the region, including Transcaucasia, and most of these were refugees since 1915.\textsuperscript{444} Dr. Barton wrote that NER had administered in its operations for the Armenians cash, gifts of commodities, concessions and recorded unpaid service, valued at more than $116,000,000.\textsuperscript{445}

**British Policy on an Armenian Mandate**

In the aftermath of the Mudros Armistice, British hegemony over the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire was almost complete. Further, Great Britain, along with other Entente powers took Istanbul, the seat of the Empire, under its control and later in March 1920 militarily occupied it. Aside from securing the land and sea routes to its eastern possessions, the Ottoman lands were crucially important to Great Britain due to their oil reserves and other natural resources. Even before the war and following the British government’s decision in favor of an oil-burning fleet, W. Churchill, then the First Lord of the Admiralty, had announced in 1913 that it was Great Britain’s aim to acquire the ownership or the control of oil reserves to meet at least the needs of the British navy.\textsuperscript{446}

British policy on the Armenian issue reflected the requirements of its military and political strategy towards the Ottoman territories and the Caucasus not only in the course of the war but also in the postwar period. Since the beginning of 1915, the British War Office had been maintaining a military mission in the Caucasus, headquartered in Tiflis. It

\textsuperscript{444} “Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Near east Relief, for the year ending December 31, 1920,” Senate, Document No.5, 67\textsuperscript{th} Congress 1\textsuperscript{st} Session (Washington Government Printing Office, 1922).
\textsuperscript{445} Barton, *Story of Near East*, 414.
was originally formed to facilitate liaison with the Russian forces operating in the Caucasus. After the Russian revolution, the British military mission’s task was turned into organizing various pro-Entente elements in Transcaucasia in order to keep the region under its control. Because of the Ottoman and later German advance into the region in the spring of 1918, the mission’s headquarters was moved to Vladikavkaz on May 3, 1918 where it remained until the members of the mission were arrested by the Bolsheviks on October 7, 1918.\footnote{DMI (WO) to FO, February 20, 1919, and its enclosure: the Memorandum on “The Caucasus Military Mission,” FO 371/3667.} On the pretext of enforcing the armistice terms regarding the evacuation of Ottoman and German troops from the region, the British forces occupied Baku on November 17, 1918, and Batum on December 22, 1918. London installed British “military governors” in Kars, Batum and Nakhchivan. A War Office memorandum revealed that clauses 11 and 15 of the Armistice regarding the evacuation of Transcaucasia and the control of the railways in the region were inserted “in order to combat the easterly and south-easterly spread of Pan-Turanianism and Bolshevism.” However, hostilities between Georgians and Armenians, and between Azerbaijanis and Armenians made the British attempts at forming a pro-Entente bloc in the region difficult, and required the deployment of more troops than had been contemplated.\footnote{DMI (WO) to Curzon, February 12, 1919; the memo, “Situation in Trans-Caucasia,” in its enclosure, FO 371/3667. British army also sent detachments to Kars, Nakhchivan, Akhalkalaki, Balakhanı and Petrovsk, and took under their control the railways in the region, ibid.; Minutes of inter-Departmental Conference, Foreign Office, March 6, 1919, FO 371/3669.}

In an effort to strengthen its precarious situation, the British endeavored to keep General Denikin’s Volunteer Army, which was being supplied by them and their allies, from intruding in the region. British military authorities also organized the disbandment of some local irregular forces, which had been comprised largely of the Armenian volunteers
and former Tsarist army remnants to fight against the Ottoman forces. The armed units formerly operating under General Bicherakov were disbanded under British supervision and their troops were sent to join Denikin’s Volunteer Army. The irregular forces under Andranik, which had also been on the British payroll and supplied by them for fighting against the Ottoman Empire until the Armistice, were disbanded as well. The disbandment was not, of course, extended to the regular armies of the Trans-Caucasian Republics. Nevertheless, a rapidly spreading Bolshevik menace from the north did not bode well for sustaining the British control of the region.449

In view of the growing Bolshevik threat, Great Britain’s priority in Caucasia was to create a buffer zone between its new possessions in the Near East and Bolshevik Russia, and safeguard its life-line to India. On the other hand, economic problems and public pressure for demobilization pressed the British government to plan for a withdrawal from Caucasia as early as possible. In order to fill the strategic vacuum in the aftermath of evacuation, British policy necessitated devising plans for a greater Armenia extending from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.450 In British planning putting such an enlarged Armenia under the protection of a strong allied power to hold a buffer zone against “Russian, Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic pressures” became a strategic priority. The British had apprehensions about France as a mandatory power over the planned Armenia, as it would “excessively increase” the French influence in the Near East, given France’s determination to keep Syria. For obvious reasons, the British preference for such a Western power was America.451

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449 DMI to FO, March 18, 1919, FO 371/3658.
450 Denovo, American Interests, 115.
451 Masis, Question of the American Mandate, 30-37.
Boghos Nubar, apparently at the encouragement of Lord Bryce, approached the British delegates and said that the Quai d’Orsay was urgently pressing him to opt for French assistance, and that otherwise they threatened to abandon the Armenians on their fate. He thought the French were aimed at creating a Greater Syria by annexing Cilicia and southeastern Anatolia, and establishing a protectorate over Armenia after “diminishing” it. He said the Armenians were relying on the support of Great Britain and America for the creation of an Armenian state.452

As for Wilson’s postwar plans, Wiseman informed the British government that Wilson saw the war as a great opportunity for remodeling the whole structure of international affairs, and his Fourteen Points were meant to be the foundation of a new international order.453 It was noteworthy that, Lord Curzon and some other members of the Cabinet suggested to the Prime Minister that he not allow President Wilson to impose his views on crucial issues, and for the sake of imperial interests, if circumstances would necessitate, he should work at the conference in alliance with Clemenceau. As mentioned earlier, when the British Cabinet members had conferred with Wilson in December 1918 on his way to Paris and urged him to take responsibility for the Armenians, he did not seem too enthusiastic about the project.454

Their pressure upon the Wilson administration for an Armenian mandate notwithstanding, the British were apprehensive about the possible further extension of American influence in the Ottoman lands. During an inter-departmental meeting on January 30, 1919 to discuss the future of Istanbul and the Straits, the Foreign Office

452 Minute by Sir Louis Mallet, January 9, 1919, FO 608/77.
453 “The Attitude of the United States and of President Wilson towards the Peace Conference,” October 20, 1918, Box 4, Folder 110, William Wiseman Papers.
454 Draft Minutes, Imperial War Cabinet 47, December 30, 1918, Box 9, Folder 215, ibid.
assumed a favorable attitude toward the idea that the future “guardianship” of this strategic area could be entrusted to America under the system of the League of Nations. However, “the fighting services” (the Admiralty, the Military and Air Forces) strongly opposed this option. They argued that a mandate given to the United States would afford opportunity and pretext for their basing a strong fleet in the Mediterranean. Further, that from a strategic point of view such an option must be avoided at all costs. The Foreign Office acquiesced to the objection of the military and the meeting concluded that British interests would be best served by the establishment of an international authority over the Straits and Istanbul under the aegis of the League of Nations.455

Mark Sykes could be cited among the first British strategists who grasped the Zeitgeist of world affairs, particularly the challenge posed by the new diplomacy. While trying to formulate British aspirations toward Mesopotamia within the context of this new diplomacy, he advised that they had to look at the problem through entirely new spectacles, as the notions of the old diplomacy, such as imperialism, annexation, white men’s burden, had been removed from the popular political vocabulary. Consequently, protectorates, annexations, spheres of influence had to be consigned to the “diplomatic lumber-room.” In order to “run Mesopotamia,” one of the “potential store-houses of fuel and food for the world,” the British must find up-to-date reasons for their doing so.456 In Sykes’s view, under the pressure of the new diplomacy, the British control of Mesopotamia (including Basra) would probably be less direct and overt than had originally

456 “Our Position in Mesopotamia in relation to the Spirit of the Age,” by Mark Sykes, January 16, 1918, Mark Sykes Papers, FO 800/221.
been contemplated.\textsuperscript{457} Ironically, the same Sykes had been one of the architects of the wartime secret treaties, which represented the zenith of old diplomacy and continued to determine British and French positions during the peace conference.

From the outset of the Paris Peace Conference, British statesmen started pressing for an American undertaking in Caucasia to “share the burden.” At a supreme council meeting in January 1919, British Premier Lloyd George stated clearly that although Great Britain presently occupied territories in Caucasia, Syria and other “out-of-way places,” it had no intention of remaining even if the League of Nations asked it to stay. Great Britain must sooner or later withdraw its troops, but could not do that without knowing who would take its place.\textsuperscript{458} Two days later Lloyd George reiterated the British position with increased resoluteness. He said that for maintaining the military control of Caucasia, Asia Minor and Syria they were keeping 1,084,000 troops at an enormous cost, but they had not the slightest intention to remain in these places, or being mandatories, even for the oil-wells of Baku. Somebody, he stressed, had to be there “to protect the Armenians.” He further asserted that “the Turk” would not object to the United States going in these areas instead of Great Britain, for America had not been at war with the Ottoman Empire. President Wilson responded that he needed to ask the American people whether they wanted to undertake such a military responsibility.\textsuperscript{459}

As indicated earlier, at this stage Wilson seriously considered the military occupation of Istanbul, as well as the territories contemplated for the future Armenian state

\textsuperscript{457} “Middle East Committee” undated, ibid.
\textsuperscript{459} Meetings of Council of Ten, January 30, 1919, ibid., 361-78.
and Mesopotamia, and asked his Secretary of War’s opinion as to its feasibility. Secretary Baker advised him to convince the American public opinion before taking any action.460

At the time when the particulars for Ottoman settlement were unknown, let alone deliberated, the British authorities were carefully orchestrating Armenian demands and pleas sent directly to President Wilson in order that such messages be more effective than were they conveyed through allied channels.461

In February 1919, the British government declared to the peace conference its official position on the Armenian question by proposing that the six vilayets and the district of Cilicia should be entirely detached from Turkey and formed into a separate state which should be called Armenia as that had been its “historical name.” The British government depicted the Armenians as “the most progressive and prolific element” in the population, although admitting that they had been in a numerical minority even before the disturbances of 1895, and at the end of the Great War, they were a considerably smaller fraction of the population. The British government recommended that the conference should give a mandate for this purpose to one of its members. As for the other republics in Caucasus, i.e. Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Daghestan, the British government refrained from taking any permanent position, stating that “the future revival of Russia ought not to be left out of account.” “Trans-Caucasian Armenia,” on the other hand, should be allowed to unite with “Ottoman Armenia” if it so wished.462

460 Wilson to Baker, February 8, 1919, ibid., vol.55, 27-8; Baker to Wilson, February 11, 1919, ibid., 81-2.
461 Sykes to FO, January 11, 1919, FO 371/3657; FO to Sykes, January 18, 1919, ibid.
462 Statement, February 7 [18], 1919, by the British Government for the Peace Conference concerning the Settlement of the Middle East, Box 205, Folder 2/742, E. M. House Papers.
The British authorities were cautious that their actions in the former territories of Tsarist Russia should not cause antagonism with a revived Russia later. They felt the need to inform their anti-Bolshevik allies in Russia that the British forces stepped on to “Russian soil to restore order.” They assured their Russian counterparts that when their work was done they would withdraw, and “no inch of territory” would be retained. The Russian cooperation was their only expectation in this effort. Nonetheless, despite their assurances concerning domestic order, British strategy’s priority was to keep the railway network under its control and to prevent any Bolshevik incursion from the north. The War Office ordered General Milne, commander of the British forces in the Ottoman Empire and Caucasia, to concentrate his troops in suitable positions and withdraw all detachments that were not essential for this purpose. He was to interfere as little as possible in the civil administration of the provinces of “embryo states.” Nor should the British government be committed to any local government by promises of military and financial assistance.

Toynbee, who was in the British delegation as adviser, wrote Bryce at the beginning of the conference that the British and the Americans saw eye to eye about Armenia, and the Americans were rather more inclined than he had expected to the idea of undertaking responsibilities there themselves.

British diplomacy’s discreet, yet ultimately influential, backchannel methods were at work during the peace conference. Lord Bryce functioned as one of the key persons to use this type of communication for influencing top American policymakers at critical junctures. In his numerous letters and memoranda addressed particularly to Col. House,

463 Major General Thomson to General Bicherakov, November 3, 1918, in Admiralty to Foreign Office, January 19, 1919, FO 371/3667.
465 Toynbee to Bryce, January 29, 1919, FO 608/77.
Bryce vigorously pressed for certain schemes of partition of the Ottoman territories. Bryce’s political favor in the partition scheme was exclusively reserved for what he termed the “Christian and civilized elements,” and above all the Armenians. Bryce’s Armenia would extend from Transcaucasia to the Mediterranean Sea. America, on the other hand, was the “fittest civilized power” to undertake the guidance that Armenia would need during the period of its recovery. Bryce ignored diplomatic restraint in his private letters to Col. House by voicing in an extremely derogatory manner his hatred of Ottoman Turkey. In putting forth his argument for the internationalization of Istanbul under the League of Nations, Bryce asserted that it had been “a nest of scoundrelism for many centuries,” and would continue to be so as long as it was ruled by Turks. Bryce pressed for the “expulsion of the Turks” from Istanbul, by forwarding a memorandum signed by the professors and lecturers of the University of Oxford expressing the same view. Col. House was grateful to Bryce for these views which he considered most helpful, because of his “wide knowledge of these questions.” Adding that there was no disagreement regarding the treatment of the Turks, he assured Bryce that his views were being submitted to President Wilson.466

Astonishingly enough, Bryce showed an entirely opposite stance towards Germany, against which he had spearheaded “atrocities propaganda” during the war, just as he had done against the Ottomans. He said he rejoiced to hear that the American delegation was

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advocating a “reasonable treatment of Germany instead of that vindictiveness and harshness” which would be the parent of future trouble.467

These efforts apparently bore fruit. Col. House confidentially told Maurice Hankey, private secretary of Lloyd George, that America would take a mandate in the Ottoman Empire, implying Istanbul as well as an Armenian mandate. Colonel House was careful in answering a more direct question of Hankey, when he said he could not come out in the open to say that America would accept a mandate but he could work on a private understanding.468

A few days later, Lloyd George and Clemenceau urged the Colonel for the American acceptance of a mandate for Armenia and Istanbul. Col. House answered that he thought the United States would be willing when the proposal was formally brought before it.469 Clemenceau told Colonel House to convey to Wilson that although France had been promised Cilicia, he was willing to give it up, with the exception of Iskenderun (Alexandretta), provided the United States would take a mandate for Armenia.470

Although they were not recognized by the peace conference for representing in official capacity any political entity, there were two Armenian delegations to do lobbying for their cause at Paris, and they enjoyed full sympathy of the allies. Even some Armenian authors like Payaslian underline the “Armenophile atmosphere” in Paris and the pledges of support from various allied leaders, particularly President Wilson which had apparently

467 Bryce to House, March 27, 1919, ibid.
468 Hankey to Lloyd George, March 1, 1919, LG/F/23/4/28.
470 From the Diary of House, April 14, 1919, ibid., vol.57, 334-5.
emboldened the Armenian representatives to set forth “grand and lavish demands for territory.” Avetis Aharonian’s delegation represented the Armenian Republic, whereas Boghos Nubar’s Armenian national delegation claimed that they spoke for the interests of the Ottoman Armenians. There were four Armenian political parties in the Ottoman Empire at the outbreak of war, which were Dashnaktzoutioun, Hunchak, Ramgavar and Viragazmian (or ‘Reformed Hunchak’). According to a British military intelligence report, these four parties decided that the negotiations between the Armenian delegates and the allies should be entrusted to Boghos Nubar.

The Dashnaks, however, continued keeping their grip on the Armenian politics both among the Ottoman as well as the Caucasian Armenians during the peace conference. Calthorpe informed the Foreign Office in February that they as always were the best organized section of the Armenian community, they had a good organization in Istanbul and were predominant in the Armenian politics in Caucasia. He reported that Aharonian, the head of the mission of Russian Armenians, and some delegates were members of the Dashnaktsutioun.

Boghos Nubar and Aharonian called on Sir Louis Mallet on March 7, 1919, and urged that the Armenian Republic should be permitted to send troops under allied supervision to the “Turkish-Armenian provinces” to protect the Armenian refugees returning from Caucasia to these areas.

473 Webb to Balfour, February 27, 1919, FO 371/3658.
474 Calthorpe to Balfour, February 7, 1919, FO 371/3657.
475 Mallet to Curzon, March 11, 1919, ibid.
The Armenian delegations were later merged at the intervention of the Catholicos, and co-chaired by Nubar and Aharonian. In a memorandum, Nubar and Aharonian put forward their territorial claims for what they termed “the integral Armenia” in such maximalist terms as to extend its boundaries from the Caucasus to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Their depiction of the territory curiously corresponded to what the British government proposed officially as the contemplated Armenian state. Nubar and Aharonian stated that Armenia had won its right to independence “by its voluntary and spontaneous participation in the war on the three fronts of the Caucasus, Syria and France, …through her fidelity to the cause of the Entente looked upon by her from the outset as her own.”

The Armenian participation in the war on the Entente side was such that they had fought in France in the so-called “Légion Etrangère,” in Syria and Palestine in the “Légion d’Orient” in which they were the dominating element, and took part in General Allenby’s campaign. They further said that in the Caucasus, thousands of Armenian volunteers led by Andranik, and an army of 50,000 soldiers, not to mention 150,000 Armenian soldiers in Russian armies on all fronts, fought incessantly under General Nazarbekian’s command against the Ottomans, holding the Caucasian front singlehandedly for seven months following the collapse of Russia. This was a great contribution to the British army in Mesopotamia, by diverting the Ottoman forces.476

The Armenian delegation asserted that in determining the boundaries, the population figures should not serve as the only factor. Instead, “the degree of civilization” must be taken into account, and in this regard, the Armenians were “the sole element

476 “The Armenian Question before the Peace Conference,” February 12, 1919, by Boghos Nubar & A. Aharonian, David Magie Papers, MC093, Box 1, Folder 6, Princeton University Library Manuscripts Division.
capable of actually constituting a state fit for civilization and progress.” By comparison, the Kurds had the “reputation of thieves and plunderers.” As for the Armenian claim to Cilicia, which they called “Armenia Minor,” Nubar and Aharonian turned their periscope to ancient history and based their aspiration on the existence in the medieval times of an Armenian kingdom in the area before it was conquered by the Arabs. Glossing over the fact of that the Turkish population were an absolute majority in the region, they said there were 200,000 Armenians in Cilicia prior to the war. They desired that the “integral Armenia” should be entrusted temporarily to a mandatory power. Among the tasks the mandatory power was expected to execute, they cited the expulsion from the new state of the “nomadic tribes, immigrants, the Muslim colonists, and the elements of disorder and disturbance.” Their conclusion was that in the application of the principle of nationality, not the “ethnographic” aspect, i.e. the composition of the population, but the “historical right” must be the criterion.477

Irrespective of the claims put forward by Nubar and Aharonian, the British delegation at Paris, gathering information directly from their military and civilian personnel, realized at the very outset of the conference that creating an Armenia based on the nationalist Armenian claims would not be an attainable scheme, at least in the foreseeable future. Toynbee suggested in his memorandum the creation of a “multinational” ‘Armenia’ consisting of the six vilayets and Cilicia in which the Muslim population would inevitably constitute an absolute majority. Toynbee’s view was that once

477 Ibid.
such a state had been separated from Turkey, and a mandatory power assumed its administration, “legitimate Armenian claims” would be satisfied thereafter.  

In their conversations with the Armenian leaders, the British officials in the Ottoman Empire and the Caucasus were alluding to some promising future arrangements which would come out of the allied deliberations at Paris. The High Commissioner’s Office kept in touch closely with ecclesiastical and political leaders of the Armenians and urged them to ignore their differences within the community and join forces for their “national ideal.”

The French took a lukewarm attitude from the very beginning toward the Armenian territorial claims. The leading French press organs found the Armenian claims maximalist, and particularly regarding Cilicia, a region of special concern for the French, and they argued that Syria had “prior and better claims” than the Armenians. They wrote that the Armenian population was nowhere in a majority.

By March 1919, the British government reaffirmed its position that its presence in Caucasus and the control of the Caspian Sea could not be sustained because of military conditions and the already strained resources of the British Empire. Besides, any annexation of the former Russian territories would bring Great Britain into collision with a

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478 Balfour to Curzon, January 22, 1919, FO 371/3657. Balfour forwarded two memoranda prepared by Toynbee and Mallet on the Armenian question. Following the Armistice, the French occupied Cilicia and some parts of southeastern Anatolia, on the pretext of deteriorating security conditions in the region. The French occupation and their use of Armenians in their military units, coupled with atrocities committed against the Muslim population, sparked the Turkish National Movement in the region. For a comprehensive recent study of the events in this region during the Great War up until the Lausanne Peace Conference see: Yücel Güçlü, Armenians and the Allies in Cilicia, 1914-1923 (Salt Lake City: Utah UP, 2010).
479 Webb to Balfour, February 28, 1919, FO 371/3657.
480 Lord Derby to Curzon, February 27, 1919, ibid.
“revived Russia.” In order to prevent any Bolshevik, or Turkish incursion, the “embryo states” should be bolstered up and put under protection.⁴⁸¹

At Paris, the four powers held an unofficial discussion in March 1919 on the Ottoman settlement. Their debate focused on the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Balfour commented to Curzon that the Italians and the French were of course the great difficulty, but American wishes added a new complication to the situation. In his opinion, America was prepared to take the mandates for Istanbul, the Straits, and also for Armenia. Nonetheless, he pointed out that, the Armenia they wanted to control was an Armenia in the largest sense of the term, including Russian Armenia in the north and Cilicia in the south. Cilicia was in the French sphere according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and they did not seem to be willing to surrender it.⁴⁸²

Lord Bryce sent letters and memoranda to Secretary Lansing and presidential advisor Henry White, and through them to President Wilson, in which he again emphasized that the allies had finally resolved “to turn the Turks altogether out of Armenia,” it only remained now to hope that the U.S. will accept a mandate for that country. Bryce pointed out that the Christians in these regions, “though reduced by recent massacres,” now equaled or outnumbered the Turkish Muslims, “because that population also has been immensely reduced by the War.”⁴⁸³

Morgenthau told Louis Mallet on May 29, 1919 that the United States would be persuaded to undertake a mandate in the Ottoman Empire under certain conditions: an

⁴⁸¹ “Minutes of inter-Departmental Conference,” Foreign Office, March 6, 1919, FO 371/3669.
⁴⁸³ White to Wilson, May 22, 1919; also Lansing to Wilson, May 22, 1919, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.59, 397-401.
exclusive mandate over Istanbul, Anatolia and Armenia altogether; no interference by any European power; removal of the Sultan from Istanbul to Anatolia. Morgenthau strove to strengthen his argument by referring the looming prospect of a “revived Russia.” Time was pressing and in the near future Russia might again appear as a power along with its aspirations regarding Istanbul and the Straits and the domination over Armenia. It would, therefore, be to the interests of France and Great Britain to settle this issue before it was too late. On Morgenthau’s views, Sir Adam Block commented that if Russia would revive as a powerful state, which might be in the hands of Germany financially and commercially, then such a possible combination of powers would threaten the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean, and America might find that although not partnership with any European power, it would be “in the meshes of that foreign entanglement” which it wished to avoid. “Will it or will it not be to our advantage?” he asked.484

Toward the summer of 1919, the British pressure on the United States for undertaking the responsibility of protecting the Armenians increased considerably. In parallel to this, the Armenians kept sending numerous telegrams through American functionaries in the region alleging the possibility of “massacres” to be perpetrated against them by the Turks as a result of the British withdrawal from Caucasia. Philipp Kerr, Lloyd George’s adviser, told the American delegation that the British intended to withdraw “whatever happened.” It was up to the Americans themselves, he put, who professed such “high principles” and were a nation owning almost all “the fluid wealth of the world” to do something for these people. He remarked to Lloyd George that “it would very likely be necessary for massacres …to take place in order to bring home the sense of their

484 Minute by Mallet, May 29, 1919, FO 608/111; Block to Mallet, Ibid.
responsibility to the American Senate.” He said he could not conceive of any better propaganda for the President’s policy than these telegrams.485

The upkeep of already overstretched British forces, coupled with domestic political pressure for demobilization, was placing a considerable strain on British military and strategic moves in the region. As compared to maintaining the lion’s share Great Britain had acquired in the Ottoman lands at the end of the war, the policing and keeping order in the Caucasus were certainly not a top priority, and even less so single-handedly. In view of these considerations, therefore, the British military authorities did not wish to acquiesce to Boghos Nubar’s request, as referred to above, to permit the Armenian forces to occupy the eastern Anatolia on the pretext of maintaining order and assisting in repatriation of the refugees. Such a move, the War Office commented, would alter the consideration of the British government toward the region. Besides, rehabilitation of Armenians in the “future state of Armenia” should be left to the power which would undertake its mandate.486

In June 1919, the supreme council of the peace conference accepted a proposal submitted by Herbert Hoover, president of the American Relief Administration, to the effect that a single temporary resident commissioner should be appointed to Armenia to represent them.487 It appeared that in addition to Hoover’s suggestion, former Ambassador Morgenthau’s discussion with President Wilson on the subject was effective in proposing the appointment of an allied representative to the Armenian Republic. U.S. army officer Col. Haskell was appointed to assume this position. His main task was to supervise and advise upon governmental matters, and to control relief and repatriation questions till a

485 Kerr to Lloyd George, July 29, 1919, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/89/3/12.
486 DMI to FO, March 19, 1919, FO 371/3658.
487 Hankey to the Secretariat of the Peace Conference, June 28, 1919, FO 371/3659.
political settlement was reached. However, despite Haskell’s appointment, the British apparently desired to continue their political influence in the region independently by appointing Wardrop on July 22, 1919 to Transcaucasia with the title of Chief British Commissioner. Wardrop’s priority would be to report on the political situation in Transcaucasia and to do his utmost to prevent friction between the volunteer army and the Trans-Caucasian Republics and Daghestan (or the North Caucasus Republic).

Prior to President Wilson’s departure from Paris at the end of June 1919 the Entente powers and the United States held detailed discussions on the parameters of the Ottoman settlement and they formally asked the American government to decide whether to assume a mandate in Asia Minor including the contemplated Armenia. Nevertheless the final attitude of each power toward the Ottoman territories remained far from clear. This was nowhere better explained than in a long message by Curzon to Balfour in August 1919 when he was informing the latter of three consecutive Cabinet meetings in which the Ottoman settlement was discussed in all its aspects, but no conclusion had yet been achieved. The crux of the matter was unsurprisingly the burden of maintaining an army of 320,000 in various parts of the Ottoman Empire and in Egypt with its overwhelming cost. That this burden could no longer be sustained was perhaps the only point on which the whole Cabinet was in consensus. On the other hand, all the Cabinet members were anxious about the part the United States was anticipated to play in the settlement of the Eastern Question. However, they knew that the examination of this question could not be

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488 Hoover to Wilson, June 27, 1919, Armenia Documentary File 1913-1925 Box 26, Henry Morgenthau Papers.
489 Curzon to Wardrop, July 22, 1919, FO 371/2662.
postponed even until the date at which Wilson could persuade, or fail to persuade, the Congress to make up its mind about a Turkish mandate.\textsuperscript{490}

Curzon’s view was that Great Britain should discuss with its allies alternative policies related to Asia Minor and Istanbul based on the one hand on the assumption that America would ultimately accept a mandate, and on the other, that it would not. It would be necessary to find out whether America was likely to accept a mandate for Armenia or not. Curzon carefully drew Balfour’s attention to the pressure of public opinion in the United States which might enable President Wilson to give an earlier reply. The majority of the Cabinet would prefer America to be mandatory for Asia Minor, and in the absence of America some members, including Curzon himself, would opt for maintaining Turkish sovereignty under some form of international control. As to the regions lying further east, all agreed that Great Britain should go as far as it legitimately could, without breaking its pledges to France regarding Syria. Great Britain should also let the French have Cilicia, and if America would decline the Armenian mandate, Great Britain should be willing to give the French Armenia as well. As for Great Britain, Mesopotamia, including Mosul, Curzon underlined, was a “sine qua non.” In the meeting, Prime Minister Lloyd George suggested that, in return for giving to France (with or without Palestine) Syria, Cilicia, and Armenia, Great Britain should have the mandate for Istanbul and Asia Minor. Extremely frightened as they were by this speculative suggestion, Curzon and other conservative members of the Cabinet thought that a British mandate in Istanbul would “fatally disturb the true orientation” of British Eastern policy, and bring endless trouble. France would oppose it. Great Britain would become entangled in the “cockpit of the Balkans.” Later on,

\textsuperscript{490} Curzon to Balfour, August 20, 1919, Balfour Papers, British Library Manuscripts Department, vol. CCLXXX, MS 49734, 154-60.
Great Britain might have to face the resentment of “a resuscitated Russia” as well. The assumption by France of the Turkish mandate was also undesirable as it would give that country a “commanding voice” in the Near East, and the temptation to her would be “irresistible to split Islam into two sections” and to become the head of a great “Muslim movement, which might be Pan-Islamic or Pan-Turanian,” and which might shortly become a great menace to British Eastern Empire.491

The Ottoman court-martials of 1919 and the subsequent British arrests and deportation of prominent Ottomans officials marked an important episode in the period. After the signing of the armistice, the CUP government fell and the leading cabinet members, including the triumvirate, fled the country. The new Ottoman government, formed by the Liberal Entente Party, accused the CUP of serious crimes which led to court-martialing at special tribunals the members of the wartime cabinet as well as several other officials. According to Guenther Lewy, the most important factor for the establishment of the military tribunals was “massive pressure by the victorious allies, who insisted on retribution for the Armenian massacres.”492

Between January and July of 1919, the Ottoman authorities rounded up and tried these individuals. The court-martial sentenced to death several of the defendants; others were given lengthy prison sentences. On the pretext that the prisoners could either be released or they could escape, the British military authorities seized on May 28, 1919 sixty-seven of the detainees, and deported them to Malta. Following the military occupation of Istanbul on March 16, 1920, the British authorities continued their arrests.

491 Curzon to Balfour, August 20, 1919, ibid.
By the end of 1920 there were 118 Ottoman detainees held at Malta. The British authorities made extensive efforts to indict them of various crimes, including the massacre of the Armenians. Yet, the British prosecutors could not produce evidence to hold the deportees responsible for these crimes. Curiously, the British did not use the Ottoman court-martial proceedings as evidence in this regard. The British Foreign Office’s persistent attempts to gather evidence with American assistance was to no avail, either. On July 13, 1921 after examination of the State Department records by one of the officials of the British Embassy, Ambassador Geddes sent the following cable:

I regret to inform Your Lordship that there was nothing therein which could be used as evidence against the Turks who are being detained for trial at Malta.493

The British were anxious to obtain the release of the thirty British officers and nationals detained by the National Movement on March 16, 1920 in response to the occupation of Istanbul and the arrests of prominent Ottomans. On September 6, 1921 sixteen detainees escaped from Malta, and finally on November 1, fifty-three Turkish deportees were exchanged for the remaining British hostages.494

493 Ibid., 125-6.
CHAPTER V: “THE WILSON AWARD” AND ITS SPECTER AT LAUSANNE

(1920-23)

Wilson’s Mandate Project and Its Failure

Obtaining ratification from the Senate for the League of Nations Covenant, which had been incorporated into the treaty of peace with Germany, was Wilson’s priority upon his return from Paris on July 8, 1919. Hence, despite his intention to bring up the mandate question for Istanbul and Armenia at a more opportune moment, he was hesitant to put the matter before the Congress prematurely.495

In the meantime, his involvement and struggle with the other leaders of the Big Four over the peace terms at Paris exhausted Wilson both physically and mentally. When he presented the Treaty of Versailles, which he called “one of the greatest documents in human history,” to the Senate on July 10, he was met with strong opposition. Henry C. Lodge, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee led the opposition. Actually, the antagonism between the Senate, which desired a return to political isolationism, and Wilson, who planned and struggled for an active American involvement in European affairs through the League and mandate system, turned into a fight over Congressional authority over foreign policymaking.496

Sir Wiseman, who returned to America following Wilson’s trip home, reported in July 1919 that the American people took little interest in the details of the peace treaty with Germany, and the Republicans’ opposition was not because of their specific animosity towards the terms of the treaty, but because of their feud against Wilson. Wiseman drew

495 Wilson to Lansing, August 4, 1919, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.62, 149.
496 Masis, Question of the American Mandate, 65.
attention to the Republican tactic that to make opposition to the treaty stronger they were resorting to “anti-British agitation,” by presenting Great Britain as the “evil genius” of the peace treaty which had an enormous influence on the Irish Americans. Nevertheless, Wiseman was still optimistic about Wilson’s ability to force the Senate to ratify the treaty without amendment or reservation.497

President Wilson’s ambitious plan to get America involved in the Ottoman settlement through the mandatory system was greatly handicapped not only by the strong Congressional opposition, but also by disharmony in his own foreign policy team. The discord within the inner circle of the President was to get even worse as of the second part of 1919 when Wilson’s personal relations with both his confidant Col. House as well as with his Secretary of State deteriorated. Secretary Lansing and Col. House were not on best terms with each other, either; and this surfaced at Paris in regard to their division of labor. Lansing was convinced that the Colonel was doing his utmost to take the portfolio of real business out of the purview of the State Department. Relying on his close relationship with the President, Col. House and his team (the former Inquiry which was incorporated into the delegation as its intelligence section) worked on primary issues secretly and sidelined the State Department. Dr. Isaiah Bowman, the executive head of the Colonel’ group of experts, revealed to Lansing that House had favored in certain issues (such as Shantung or Fiume), particular positions which were not in harmony with Wilson’s views. However, during the proceedings, House applied an effective censorship through his right-hand advisor, Dr. Mezes, and controlled the flow of information to the President.498

497 Wiseman to Sir Ian Malcolm, July 1, 1919, Box 2, Folder 33, *William Wiseman Papers.*
In Lansing’s opinion, the personal organization the Colonel built around himself operated independently and in some cases even adversely to the American delegation. Lansing further believed that owing to this attitude of the Colonel, the President was unconsciously let into “the game of intrigue,” which had failed miserably. Because, Lansing asserted, the British and French knew how to play it while the Americans were only novices. The American delegates should have played open and “above-board” diplomacy, which the British and French contemptuously called “shirt-sleeve diplomacy,” yet it was this diplomacy, Lansing believed, at which the Americans could beat them. But they did not do so.499

Around this time, Lansing’s relations with Wilson became increasingly sour. Rumors about Lansing’s resignation appeared in the American press in May 1919. Nevertheless he did not refrain from expressing his opposition to the secret diplomacy into which Wilson had been drawn under the influence of Col. House. Lansing thought the secrecy and mystery built around the League of Nations charter and peace treaty gave rise to suspicion and distrust in public opinion. He disapprovingly said that Col. House and his team were to spend the summer of 1919 in Great Britain with Sir Eric Drummond for working out the mechanism of the League of Nations and the mandate system. Since he could claim no authorship, he also wanted no responsibility for its operation.500 There were others like Herbert Hoover and Ray S. Baker around President Wilson who also shared Lansing’s dislike of secret diplomacy which led, they believed, to the adoption of such an

499 Lansing to Polk, July 26, 1919, Box 4, Folder 1, Robert Lansing Papers.
500 Lansing to Woolsey, May 24, 1919, Box 4, Folder 1, ibid.
impossible peace treaty with Germany which they described as “the worst victor’s peace ever written.” Its “obnoxious clauses” were unacceptable to them.  

Moreover, Lansing did not seem to be too enthusiastic as Wilson in regard to the Armenian mandate either. He inclined to attach the contemplated Armenian area to “some paying region” if a mandate would be taken. Secretary Lansing discovered a noticeable fact during the informal talks among the Entente powers and the United States on the issue of the distribution of mandates over territories of the Ottoman Empire. That fact was that the Entente states’ eagerness to be a mandatory depended largely on whether the resources of the territory were sufficient to make such a mandate a profitable undertaking. If there were mines, oil fields, rich grain fields or railroads in a region, it was astonishing to see their willingness to assume the mandate. To Lansing, it was also equally astonishing, however, how insistent they were that America should do its part as a mandatory by taking mandates for “poor territories” which would always be a source of expense. Lansing then gave the signal of American preference for a mandate before entering into such an enterprise, and that was that there ought to be some way of joining the wealthy and the poor regions under one mandate so that one might pay for the other. Otherwise, America would get an “unproductive jumble of mountains,” as Lansing referred to the proposed Armenian mandate.

The plan which (was adopted by the supreme council on April 9, 1919) that the Italian troops should replace the British forces to be withdrawn from the Caucasus was

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501 Lansing to John W. Davis (American Ambassador at London), May 22, 1919, Box 4, Folder 1, ibid.
503 “The Unequal Burden of Proposed Mandates,” June 20, 1919, in Confidential Memoranda & Notes, Box 73, Folder 3, Robert Lansing Papers.
foiled, when the Italians gave up the idea as expressed in their communication to the council on June 2, 1919.504

That the expectation of obtaining material gains was perhaps the only driving force behind whatever the proclaimed positions were evident in the inter-allied discussions on the distribution of mandates. For instance, in an informal meeting between the representatives of the four powers at Paris on July 4, 1919, Tittoni, the Italian Foreign Minister, said his country’s real needs were not territory but coal and raw materials. Referring to Italy’s intention to replace the British troops in Caucasia, he said they could obtain oil in the neighborhood, and they wanted to get assurances from the allies that in addition to coal mines in southwestern Anatolia, Italy should be secured a full and fair share of any oil that might be found in the neighborhood of Van. Lansing expressed sympathy with the Italian desire for Turkish coal, but “no sympathy whatever with the Italian desire for Armenian oil.”505

Bristol, in a communication to Admiral Benson, emphasized in strong terms that undoubtedly the British were trying to get out of Caucasia and to draw America into the region, a fact clearly understood from the actions of the British high commission. It was also obvious to Bristol that the British were encouraging American missionaries and relief workers, like Dr. Ussher, to support this scheme. As for the protection of the Armenians, the whole country must be occupied, which, according to British authorities, would require at least 200,000 troops.506

504 “Memorandum on the Armenian Question,” undated, FO 371/3668.
505 Secretary of State to Acting Secretary of State, July 10, 1919, ibid.
506 Bristol to Benson, July 23, 1919, Box 31, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
Toward the end of August, American newspapers again published stories about a breach between Wilson and Col. House. House relayed this news to Wilson to which the latter responded that he was deeply distressed by this “malicious story,” and suggested that the “best way to treat it is with silent contempt.” Nonetheless, the President’s feelings toward his close friend and confidant were not as cordial as they once had been, particularly since a crisis had erupted when Wilson thought that at the time of his short absence in early spring at Paris, Col. House compromised on various issues to keep the Entente support for the League. Hence, in addition to the gradual but perpetual cooling off in Lansing’s relations with the President, Col. House’s amity with Wilson eroded. He revealed to Lansing in December 1919 that he had lost influence with the President, blaming, though indirectly, Mrs. Wilson and in a less degree Tumulty.

In his letter to Col. House, Sir Edward Grey stressed the British decision to evacuate Caucasia in the summer of 1919 and his planned mission to America. He emphasized that from his talks with both Lloyd George and Lord Curzon, there seemed to be no doubt about the British evacuation of Caucasia. Grey also referred to a talk, which apparently occurred between Col. House and Curzon in Paris, of “letting Armenian massacres force the hand of the U.S.” Grey assured the Colonel that Curzon had confirmed that the urgent need of reducing expenditure was the sole reason of the British withdrawal.

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509 Confidential Memoranda & Notes, December 27, 1919, Box 7, Folder 3, Robert Lansing Papers.
Sir Grey further put that Great Britain could not undertake a larger share of the “philanthropic work of the world” as its burden was too great already.510

Meanwhile, the British plans for withdrawing military troops from Transcaucasia by August 1919 alarmed the State Department which was concerned about the possibility of anarchy and massacres in Armenia following the evacuation. The American administration appealed to the British government to revoke or postpone the withdrawal decision until the future status of the region was determined. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, responded that the financial burden of retaining troops in Caucasus beyond a fixed period should not be borne by Great Britain, but should be assumed by the state which expected to become the mandatory for the Armenian people.511

Curiously enough, upon Great Britain’s evacuation plans, Wilson chose to send on August 16, 1919 a blunt ultimatum to the Ottoman authorities, whose army had been disarmed and largely demobilized under armistice terms:

Should they not take immediate and efficacious measures to prevent any massacres or other atrocities being perpetrated by Turks, Kurds or other Muslims against Armenians in the Caucasus or elsewhere, then all support concerning a secure sovereignty over the Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire, under Article XII of the peace terms, will be withdrawn, and such withdrawal might result in the absolute dissolution of the Turkish Empire.512

In his reply to Wilson on August 25, 1919, the Ottoman Grand Vizier Ferid Pasha underlined:

Turkey is just out of a disastrous war which has completely put the administrative machinery [of the government] out of order and [with] nearly her whole army

510 Grey to House, August 12, 1919, Box 53, Folder 1669, E. M. House Papers.
511 FRUS, 1919, II, 828-33.
512 Ibid., 831-2.
demobilized, has today nothing more than an insufficient number of soldiers and gendarmes dispersed [over her] extensive territory.\textsuperscript{513}

Ferid Pasha also reminded Wilson of the fact that as Caucasia and those regions mentioned in Wilson’s message were beyond the Ottoman boundaries, if well informed of the real situation and animated by the feelings of justice and equity, Wilson would not hold the Ottoman Empire responsible for the events occurring in those foreign lands.

Admiral Calthorpe drew the attention of Foreign Office to the developing circumstances in the Near East that publication of peace terms of a nature favorable to Christians and unfavorable to Muslims, without first taking the steps to ensure their execution, would cause most serious danger, nor could the matter be indefinitely postponed. He indicated that all the news about a greater Armenia was fanning flame of the national movement.\textsuperscript{514}

The allied and associated powers convened in London in July and August 1919 to work out the modalities of mandate system to be established under the League of Nations Covenant. Col. House represented America during these deliberations. Soon a crisis erupted when the French representative refused to discuss the form of mandate on the ground that it was not yet decided whether there should be mandates for the former Ottoman territories. The French attitude infuriated Wilson who retorted that if the mandate system was not to be accepted, he would withdraw the treaty. Clemenceau backed down

\textsuperscript{513} Ibid., 835-6.
\textsuperscript{514} Calthorpe to Curzon, July 29, 1919, FO 608/78.
saying that the French objection would be dropped, yet his disappointment had nothing to do with the American position, but with the British attitude as regards Syria.  

Col. House informed President Wilson that as soon as he arrived in Great Britain he “sensed an antagonism to the United States.” In his view, this adverse feeling could be related to rivalry between the two great powers. He commented that the war had left but two great powers in the world, where before there had been seven. While the British Empire still vastly exceeded the United States in area, population and in aggregate wealth, yet the American position was much more favorable. It was because of this fact that the relations between the two countries were “beginning to assume the same character as that of Great Britain and Germany before the war.” By its industry and organization Germany was forging ahead as the first power in the world, but it lost everything by its arrogance and lack of statesmanship. He then asked: “Will it be Great Britain or the United States who will next commit this colossal blunder?” The war expenditure demonstrated the wealth of the United States to the world exciting its envy. In order to avoid a great coalition against America, it needed to gain the friendship of all nations. This would require America first to supply coal to those countries which previously looked to Great Britain for this commodity, and second to continue the American merchant marine building on the current scale. If it could follow these two goals, the United States would be “hitting” at two of Great Britain’s most lucrative industries.  

In another dispatch to Wilson, Col. House referred to the British government’s intention to appoint Edward Grey ambassador at Washington, or send him on a special

515 House to Wilson & Lansing, August 6, 1919, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.62, 187-189; Wilson to Lansing, August 8, 1919, 235; Lansing to Polk, August 9, 1919, 242; Polk to Wilson and Lansing, 11 August 1919, 257-8, ibid.  
516 House to Wilson, July 20, 1919, Box 121a, Folder 4301, E. M. House Papers.
mission. Three matters that the British government expected Grey to settle with the United States were the naval building program, the Irish question, and the League of Nations. House commented that although great hope could be attached to the League of Nations for the peaceful solutions of all the vexatious international jealousies, it was still a long cry yet to expect this body to perform this task. House said in his discussions with British statesmen they reached a common understanding that there would no difficulty regarding the League of Nations, there should be no contest between these two countries in shipbuilding, and a full measure of home rule to Ireland should be recognized. Lloyd George accepted this program with a reservation that the moderation in naval building must be reciprocal.517

Lord Curzon had a conversation with the American Ambassador on August 11, 1919, on the question of an Armenian mandate. Prior to this talk, Balfour suggested to Curzon that an attempt should be made to induce America, as the possible future mandatory for Armenia, to send military forces to replace the British troops in order to prevent the massacres that were being anticipated following the British withdrawal. American Ambassador Davis expressed as his personal opinion that America had at the moment no troops to spare for this task. Moreover, any dispatch of American troops to the region could not be attempted without the consent of Congress. Concerning the larger question of a mandate, Davis’s view again was not forthcoming. He said, although the American people were deeply interested in the Armenian question on humanitarian and philanthropic grounds, he did not believe that these considerations would to induce America to depart from a strict adherence to the Monroe Doctrine. Besides, as soon as the

517 Ibid.; House to Wilson, August 8, 1919, , Box 121a, Folder 4301, ibid.
American public began to realize the inherent difficulties, political, ethnic, physical, and otherwise, of the Armenian problem, it would be very doubtful “whether philanthropy would survive in the contest of expediency.” Curzon was dismayed by the U.S. Ambassador’s opinion which he found a “very uncertain and rather disquieting forecast of events.”518

Cleveland Dodge urged Wilson to consider the British suggestion that America should assume the burden of expense for the British troops in the Caucasus whom the British government planned to withdraw as of August 17, 1919. Dodge suggested as an alternative way sending some American men-of-war to Batum which would have a “moral effect upon the Turks.”519

Admiral Bristol cautioned that the ongoing press reports for the “imminent massacres” of Armenians following a British withdrawal were mainly emanating from Paris and seemed decidedly to force America to take a hasty step regarding an Armenian mandate. He said these reports were inaccurate or exaggerating local conditions and the menace of Turkish agitation. Further, the acting President of Armenia had revealed to Bristol that if the Ottoman Armenians did not return to their homes they would lose political control of that territory. According to Bristol, American relief workers were probably unconsciously encouraging Armenian political aspirations, as shown by Dr. Ussher’s repatriation scheme. He added that the British authorities in the region were openly advocating an American mandate in Armenia.520

518 Curzon to Lindsay, August 11, 1919, FO 608/79.
520 Bristol to American Mission (Paris), August, 5, 1919, Box 31, Papers of M.L. Bristol; Bristol to American Mission (Paris), August 15, 1919, ibid.
In another dispatch, Bristol informed the American delegation at Paris that the Turks believed that the peace conference was preparing to permit the Armenians to undertake a military occupation of eastern Anatolia in the same way that Greeks were allowed to occupy Izmir. He emphasized that from all acts of allied and associated governments, the Turks were justified in their anxiety.521

The British side continued its efforts for expediting American decision regarding the Armenian mandate and until that time persuading Washington to provide funds for defraying the expenses of the British troops if the extension of their presence in the Caucasus was desired. Lord Curzon told American Ambassador that “the Armenian problem was an American rather than a British one.” However, the American government’s reply was negative as it had no funds for this purpose, and the political situation made any recourse to Congress for an appropriation ill-timed.522

President Wilson’s attempts at getting congressional approval authorizing him to use American military force to assist the Armenians did not find enough support. Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi introduced on September 20, 1919 a resolution proposing to authorize the President to use American military forces to protect Armenians, to suspend restrictions against recruiting volunteers for foreign armies in the United States, and to authorize dispatching arms and ammunition to Armenia.523 The American Commission at Paris was of the opinion that the sending of ammunition, supplies, and volunteer recruits to the Armenian republic as proposed by Senator Williams would be

521 Bristol to American Mission (Paris), August, 15, 1919, Ibid.
522 Curzon to Lindsay, August 29, 1919, FO 371/3668; also Curzon’s letter to American Ambassador, ibid.
possible only if the railway from Batum to Erivan was to be held by an American military force.\textsuperscript{524} Williams’ initiative remained dormant in the Senate.

Despite the outpouring of alarming reports of “impending massacres,” British representative at Tiflis, Wardrop, cabled on September 12, 1919 that he had a meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Khatissian who had said that by the arrival through Georgia of arms and ammunition (amounting to one million cartridges) a day earlier, Armenia was enabled through mobilization to put up a “good fight.”\textsuperscript{525}

In the meantime, Colonel Haskell called for sending troops which were absolutely necessary to take the place of the withdrawing British forces. To this appeal, France responded by saying that about 12,000 French troops would be sent by landing them at Iskenderun and Mersin.\textsuperscript{526} Nevertheless, Curzon informed Balfour of the British Cabinet’s opinion that a French expedition from Iskenderun could have no effect upon the situation in the Caucasus, where “the danger” was, that the force would never reach there because of a distance of nearly 500 hundred miles and local conditions.\textsuperscript{527}

Polk cabled on September 23, 1919 that it turned out that the French plan agreed to by Great Britain consisted merely of sending about twelve thousand men to occupy places like Maraş, Urfa, Malatya evacuated by the British thus carrying out the provisions of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. Polk further underlined that Clemenceau declined to send troops to Caucasia via Batum.\textsuperscript{528}

\textsuperscript{524} \textit{FRUS, 1919, II, 840-1.}\textsuperscript{525} Wardrop to Curzon, September 12, 1919, FO 608/78.\textsuperscript{526} “Memorandum on the Armenian Question,” undated but probably September 1919, FO 371/3668.\textsuperscript{527} Curzon to Balfour, September 2, 1919, ibid.\textsuperscript{528} Philips to Wilson, September 23, 1919, \textit{Papers of Woodrow Wilson}, vol.63, 466.
By September 1919, the prospects for attaining the Armenian maximalist expectations for creating a Greater Armenia under the allied protection seemed increasingly remote a possibility. In graphic depiction of the state of Armenian political aspirations, an American specialist wrote:

In a military and political sense...they are floating on a cake of ice. The weather is getting warmer. Either they must get off the ice, or the weather must change, or the people will be submerged.529

In the beginning of September, Wilson decided “to carry the war into Africa,” i.e. embarking on a public campaign across the country to overcome congressional opposition by stirring up public support to peace treaty and the league project. Lansing did not believe that this trip would bring any good for the proclaimed purpose. In Lansing’s view, considering the strong congressional opposition to the league and the peace treaty, as well as public pressure for returning to a state of peace, the President ought to be in the closest touch with Congress at that critical juncture. More significantly, Lansing stated that there was an increasing sentiment against the idea of an American mandate “over any portion of the Turkish Empire.” Armenia found more supporters than any other section, Lansing noted. He also astonishingly continued as follows: “…but even the demands of humanity are beginning to weaken before the growing dislike of the character of the Armenians. I believe that the Chinese excite more sympathy today than the Armenians.” He thought despite his campaign, Wilson would have a difficult time to obtain congressional consent.530

529 “Confidential Memoranda on Armenia, August-September 1919,” by Robert Davis, ARC Commissioner, Box 22, Folder 115, Frank L. Polk Papers.
530 Lansing to Polk, September 2, 1919, Box 4, Folder 2, Robert Lansing Papers.
However, Wilson was confident about the prospective plans, and did not even avoid making crude jokes on the fate of Turkey during his tour of the country.\footnote{See, for example, An Address in the St. Louis Coliseum, September 5, 1919, \textit{Papers of Woodrow Wilson}, vol.63, 43-51. Wilson remarked: “...[T]he only nations that will not be admitted into it [the League of Nations] promptly are Germany and Turkey, and I take it that we needn’t discuss it. (applause). \textit{We can at any rate postpone Turkey until Thanksgiving}. (laughter)...”} In his address in Kansas City on 6 September 1919, after mentioning the help the Armenians needed, Wilson referred to Turkey with the following remarks: “...[W]e are just now looking for the pieces of Turkey. She has so been thoroughly disintegrated that the process of assembling the parts is becoming exceedingly difficult, and the chief controversy is who shall attempt that very difficult and perilous job?”\footnote{An Address at Bismarck, September 10, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, 153-62.} In another address Wilson declared that Armenia was to be redeemed and “the Turk” was to be forbidden to exercise authority there.\footnote{An Address in Salt Lake City, September 23, 1919, \textit{ibid.}, 449-63.}

Nevertheless, there occurred some unpredictable, yet for an American mandate in the Near East fateful, circumstances in the United States. A physically and mentally overtaxed Wilson collapsed on September 25, 1919 during the tour which he had hoped would help him overturn the Congressional opposition. Physically paralyzed as he was, Wilson was unable to pursue his presidential duties. Nor could he push his campaign for the league any further. As mentioned already, Lansing, as Secretary of State, who had been suspicious and unsympathetic to the Entente’s overtures for an increased involvement in the settlement of the Near East, was naturally less than helpful to the British diplomacy. To the dismay of both the British statesmen and advocates for an American mandate, Col. House was also passing through hard times in his close relationship with Wilson.\footnote{Ibid., vol.55, fn.2.} Hence, one of the strongest pillars with whom British diplomacy had thrown in its lot in many
critical times in the past was no longer available for an immediate consultation and possible intervention, although the Colonel was to continue his communication with the British statesmen thereafter, but with little, if any, impact on official policy.

Sir Edward Grey who was appointed British ambassador on a special mission arrived at Washington in October 1919 under such circumstances. The Lloyd George government was expecting a breakthrough by the appointment of such a name in high standing with American public opinion in the ongoing impasse as to American attitude on peace treaty and the mandate question. President Wilson’s illness frustrated British plans. Grey’s mission encountered further difficulty by the lack of interest on the part of government officials about what he had to convey to them. Grey admitted that so far as public work was concerned, his mission was useless. In utter frustration, Grey was not able to “transact” any business with either the President, or even with his Secretary of State, and left Washington empty-handed.535

Before his departure, Grey held conversations with various figures to discuss issues of common concern. The late Ambassador Morgenthau was among these persons. In their talk on October 24, Morgenthau said after Senate’s ratification, it might be possible for him with the help of General Harbord to embark on a campaign in favor of mandate for Istanbul and Armenia. He further suggested Anglo-American or international control of the Straits, and of Gibraltar, in return America should agree to similar control of Panama Canal. Former Ambassador Elkus told Grey that American people could be roused to accept mandate for Armenia. They urged that Great Britain should at least let impression spread that it would not abandon Armenia. Grey replied that they must go and had already

535 Grey, Twenty-Five Years, II, 256.
done so, only keeping troops at Batum. Grey protested against placing any responsibility for what happened there on Great Britain.\textsuperscript{536} Meanwhile, Lansing confirmed Grey’s impression that there was no chance whatever of congressional acceptance of mandates for Istanbul and other places.\textsuperscript{537}

As for Wilson’s breakdown, Lansing expressed his regret to Polk about the President’s illness and its inevitably negative impact on the administration in general. He said though the whole matter of his illness was shrouded in secrecy for some reason, the President had just avoided a “complete nervous collapse.” It was not possible for Lansing to see the President, yet according to what had learnt it was more mental than physical. The prevailing feeling in Washington was that Wilson’s “veritable obsession” with the League of Nations Covenant had caused an “abnormal state of mind” which excluded everything else from his thoughts. It was a sort of “monomania” concerning the League.\textsuperscript{538} Wilson’s illness paralyzed the American government in determining its course at the negotiations in Paris as well. Polk desperately bombarded the State Department requesting instructions as to what position he should take with regard to the ultimate political status of the Ottoman Empire and the mandates issue.\textsuperscript{539}

In his correspondence with Polk, Admiral Bristol continued to suggest a mandate for the whole of the Ottoman Empire as the best possible solution for putting the British and French on the defensive. To Bristol, there was no reason for America to consider the Entente claims to Ottoman territory as taken for granted, including even the alleged rights

\textsuperscript{536} Grey to Curzon, October 23, 1919, FO 608/111.
\textsuperscript{537} Grey to Curzon, October 22, 1919, ibid.
\textsuperscript{538} Lansing to Polk, October 1 & 4, 1919, Box 4, Folder 2, Robert Lansing Papers.
\textsuperscript{539} Colonel House was told that conditions were chaotic in Washington due to President’s illness, and the government was not functioning but was merely “drifting.” See, From the Diary of Colonel House, January 31, 1920, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.64, 347-8.
of Great Britain to Mesopotamia. Bristol’s ideas should not be considered as favorable to Turks either, as he alleged in the same letter their ineligibility even for governing themselves again “until they have been educated to know what government” was.\(^{540}\) Bristol said the Ottoman government should never be re-established. Nonetheless, Bristol disproved in strong terms the propaganda that was being conducted in America by the missionaries and pro-Armenian lobbies as regards the danger of massacres or an attack on the Armenians. He invited Polk’s attention to “the complicity of the British” in creating such an impression, as it exposed the reason why Great Britain wanted America in Armenia. Bristol commented on the British strategy as such that the Ottoman Empire had stood between Russia and Great Britain for a long time, and now Great Britain wanted another “goat” for the same purpose and it thought that America was “the goat.”\(^{541}\)

Lieut. Robert Dunn, the chief intelligence officer to the American high commissioner in Istanbul, years later revealed his resentment of the Entente policy toward the Near East. Dunn believed that the allied powers spurred Armenian and Greek Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire to sedition. His criticism was, though indirectly, directed to the missionary influence in this regard as well. According to Dunn, the Christian populations in Asia Minor could, and wanted to, live in peace side by side with the Muslims, had there been no political trouble-making of “absentee race-and-religion fanatics.”\(^{542}\)

General Harbord’s correspondence with Bristol also confirmed the latter’s views on Armenian affairs. Contrary to the image that was being propagated in America and at the

\(^{540}\) Bristol to Polk, October 15, 1919, Box 3, Folder 71, *Frank L. Polk Papers.*
\(^{541}\) Bristol to Polk, October 21, 1919, ibid.
peace conference by the Armenian circles and missionary representatives, Harbord reported a relatively tranquil and calm situation in both Anatolia and Syria where he travelled a long route from Aleppo to Sivas. In Anatolian towns he observed that a considerable proportion of the relocated Armenians had already returned to their original places, and they were being generally well treated by the Ottoman authorities. He stated that there was nothing to indicate any probable disturbances or the massing of Ottoman forces along the border to attempt a general massacre against the Armenians.543

After having spent some time in the deliberations of the peace conference, Polk also expressed to Admiral Bristol his dislike of the policies and tactics of the Entente powers. In a confidential letter, dated October 14, 1919, Polk wrote Bristol that there had been “a tremendous amount of hysteria about this Armenian situation” and America stood a very good chance of “being stampeded into doing something foolish.” He was more and more convinced that the United States should try to keep the Ottoman Empire intact under some sort of mandate. Yet, he admitted that there was not even the slightest chance of Congress ever accepting that responsibility.544

The Senate rejected in November 1919 the ratification of the peace treaty with Germany, and thereby practically defeated the American involvement with the League of Nations. What was amazing in Congress’s stance in this matter was the fact that not just the Republicans headed by Senator Lodge, but also some Democrats voted against the

543 Harbord (from Sivas) to Bristol, September 21, 1919, Box 3, Folder 71, Frank L. Polk Papers; the copy of the telegram sent by the Sivas Congress to the American Senate, ibid.
544 Polk to Bristol, October 14, 1919, ibid.
treaty. Lansing pointed out the “intense personal animosity” to President Wilson by the majority of the Republicans in Congress as well as “not a few Democrats.”

Toward the end of November 1919, with Congress’s rejection of the treaty, the sky seemed to Lord Bryce to have darkened as regards the prospects of a mandate for Armenia. He urged Dr. Barton and his friends to exert pressure on the American government for its involvement in the settlement of the East. Bryce hoped that the U.S. government would put its foot down and resist any proposal that would leave to the Turks “any vestige of power in Armenia or Cilicia.”

Polk confided to Bristol that a while ago he had been to London and he found that it was generally believed that Bristol was “genuinely anti-British.” Bristol believed that the impression of his being anti-British was a political trick as he had developed warm relations with the British officials in Istanbul. He assured Polk that he was anti-British as regards the “political acts of the British.”

The ongoing uncertainty about the possible American attitudes regarding the mandates notwithstanding, the British and French authorities held confidential talks in December 1919-January 1920 on the Ottoman settlement. A French note, outlining the conclusions of these talks to Curzon, asserted that by the inclusion into the Republic of Armenia such territories as the eastern portion of Erzurum, the district of Bitlis, and the region of Lake Van, an Armenian state should be constituted. It stated that there were

545 Confidential Memoranda & Notes, November 22, 1919, Box 7, Folder 3, Robert Lansing Papers.
547 Polk to Bristol, December 9, 1919, Box 3, Folder 72, Frank L. Polk Papers.
548 Bristol to Polk, January 15, 1920, Box 3, Folder 73, ibid.
1,500,000 Armenians in the Armenian Republic and it would be necessary to bring back the greatest possible number of 500,000 Armenians dispersed in Asia Minor, Persia, and elsewhere. The French side pointed out that the great difficulty in establishing an Armenian state was that the Armenians practically nowhere constituted a majority. This was also true for Cilicia where they were only a small minority which rendered the inclusion of this region in the contemplated Armenian state impossible.\textsuperscript{549}

In this period, it was noteworthy that the British authorities spared no effort to determine the ethnic composition of the population in Asia Minor. The British military intelligence unit in Istanbul gathered the official Ottoman census figures of 1905 and an estimate published by the Ottoman Interior Ministry in 1919 for the year 1914 based on the said census data. The British authorities also made use of estimates and statistics published by various political societies of minorities, though these were largely exaggerated to support ethnic claims. By comparing these often conflicting figures and modifying them according to local information from the priests of the Greek and Armenian churches, the British compiled estimates for 1919. They found the following figures for Anatolia and Thrace which did not include the eastern provinces:\textsuperscript{550}

\textsuperscript{549} “Anglo-French Conference on the Turkish Settlement,” Minutes of First Meeting and its Appendixes, December 18 & 22, 1919, Lloyd George Papers, LG/11/11/109; Vansittart to Curzon, January 12, 1920, FO 371/4239.

\textsuperscript{550} Robeck to Curzon, “Note on the Present Population of Turkey,” December 12, 1919, FO 371/4239.
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turks</th>
<th>Greeks</th>
<th>Armenians</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>1914</td>
<td>8,162,600</td>
<td>1,234,700</td>
<td>717,430</td>
<td>10,063,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>6,950,000</td>
<td>1,012,300</td>
<td>545,100</td>
<td>9,207,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Other nationalities, including Jews: 1,500,000

1919 6,950,000 1,012,300 545,100 9,207,900

Other nationalities, including Jews: 1,400,000

Lord Bryce stepped up his efforts during the critical phase of American discussion as to the Armenian mandate during the first half of 1920. Barton informed Morgenthau in March 1920 that he had had “much correspondence” with Lord Bryce within the past three months and the latter yearned to do something “to save the non-Muslim peoples from further atrocities.” Lord Bryce and Aneurin Williams claimed in a telegram to Barton that European nations were “all exhausted by the war” and unable to assume further responsibilities. They thought it was only America that could bear this burden.551

As to the incessant activism of Lord Bryce in support of the Armenian cause, Admiral Bristol noticed some underlying political motive other than pure humanistic concerns. In a letter to Vice Admiral Knapp, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, he referred to Bryce’s remarks made on March 28, 1920 that it was necessary to establish a strong Armenia as a buffer state between the Muslims of the East and the Muslims of Turkey. Bristol thought that this was an example of “the ulterior motive” that was in the back of the head of the British politicians.552

551 Barton to Morgenthau, March 8, 1920, reel 8, Henry Morgenthau Papers; Morgenthau to Barton, March 16, 1920, ibid.
552 Bristol to Knapp, March 30, 1920, Box 32, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
Nevertheless, as soon as President Wilson recovered from his illness, his interest in the Ottoman settlement in general, and in the Armenian mandate in particular, gained a new momentum. In the first week of March 1920 he asked Frank L. Polk to prepare instructions to the American Ambassador at Paris to inform the conference of American views on particular matters. Wilson said it would be “folly” to allow France a foothold in Cilicia. Wilson believed that it was America’s duty to assume the Armenian mandate, and he wanted to urge such an assumption of responsibility at the opportune time.\textsuperscript{553}

Before Wilson’s instructions were sent to Paris, the Entente powers reached an accord on the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in the London Conference in March 1920. The terms of their accord were to constitute the basis of the Sèvres treaty. On March 12, 1920, the French Ambassador in Washington officially informed Frank L. Polk, the Acting Secretary of State, of the settlement terms and asked whether America intended to take part in the peace conference with Turkey.\textsuperscript{554} Polk suggested to Wilson that before the ratification of the German treaty it would be difficult for the United States to be signatory to the Ottoman treaty. Further, France, Great Britain, Italy and Greece had ambitions vis-à-vis the Ottoman territories which America could not admit. Yet, given the lack of interest of the American people, and the attitude of Congress, the United States probably could not assume obligations in the Near East.\textsuperscript{555}

Outlining his opinion on the possible Ottoman settlement, Wilson stated that the Turks must be expelled from Istanbul; Cilicia, Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia should be placed in the hands of the five great powers to be disposed of; and, if America was to

\textsuperscript{553} Polk to Wilson, March 6, 1920, \textit{Papers of Woodrow Wilson}, vol.65, 64-5; Wilson to Polk, March 8, 1920, \textit{ibid.}, 72-5.
\textsuperscript{554} FRUS, 1920, III, 748-50.
\textsuperscript{555} Polk to Wilson, March 10, 1920, \textit{Papers of Woodrow Wilson}, vol.65, 76-7.
assume a mandate for Armenia it should do so at the earliest possible moment. However, the Armenian mandate would mean a “long fight” again with the Congress, and he was disinclined to introduce new questions just at the moment.556

Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby* conveyed the American reply on March 24, 1920 by stating Wilson’s views, according to which, the President did not deem American representation at the conference advisable. However, America was keen to express its views on the proposed terms, because, although it had not been at war with the Ottoman Empire, it contributed to its defeat. The American response was uncompromising on the question of the European territories of the Ottoman Empire and Istanbul:

The Government of the United States understands the strength of the arguments for the retention of the Turks at Constantinople, but believes that the arguments against it are far stronger and contain certain imperative elements which it would not seem possible to ignore. It was the often expressed intention of the Allies that the anomaly of the Turks in Europe should cease.557

As for the Armenian question, the United States government expected “the most liberal treatment” in drawing its boundaries to recognize all the “legitimate claims” of the Armenian people, and they would be given easy and unencumbered access to the sea by granting Trabzon to Armenia. Colby’s reply also underlined American sensitivity on the preservation of the capitulations.558

556 Wilson to Polk, March 17, 1920, ibid., 91.
558 Maintenance of American capitulatory rights in Turkey in the period between the armistice and the Lausanne Treaty was one of the main preoccupations of the American high commissioner in Istanbul. For example, see: FRUS, 1920, III, 757-74 [American high commissioner vigorously protested the increase by the Ottoman Government of import tax on some commodities, which Bristol condemned as “illegal taxation.”].
The Entente powers were displeased by the American decision not to become party to the treaty. However, while expressing their sympathy with the American suggestion of the expulsion of the Sultan’s government from Istanbul, they stated that an exhaustive examination of the problem had convinced them to keep it there. They also shared to the full America’s interest in the establishment of an independent Armenia and communicated their considerations in a separate communication to the United States. 559

In the meantime, the Entente powers and America accorded de facto recognition to the Armenian Republic. On April 23, 1920, the Wilson administration declared its understanding that this recognition in no way predetermined “the territorial frontiers,” which were matters for later delimitation. 560 In the press communiqué the next day, the American government stated that “Turkish Armenia,” when its limits would be defined, would presumably be added to the “present Republic, thus forming a United Armenia.” 561 In the meantime, the British government increased its supply to the Armenian Republic with war material amounting to a million pound, including warplanes. The French government arranged similarly the shipment of arms and military supplies to the Armenian government from Bulgarian ports through Batum. 562

At San Remo Conference the Entente powers agreed on April 26, 1920 to send a letter to President Wilson asking him to undertake the Armenian mandate “on behalf of humanity.” 563 In their communication, dated April 27, 1920, the Entente powers officially conveyed their proposal to the American government for the mandate of Armenia.

559 Ibid., 753-6.
560 Ibid., 778, Secretary of State to the Representative of the Armenian Republic (Pasdermadjian).
561 Memorandum, June 12, 1920, Box 22, Folder 118, Frank L. Polk Papers.
562 See the correspondence for the supply of armaments: FO 608/271, May-June 1920.
563 Dispatch to President Wilson, April 26, 1920, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/206/6/12.
Whatever the American answer on the issue of the mandate, they also asked President Wilson to arbitrate on the boundaries of Armenia as set forth in the draft article of the planned Ottoman peace treaty.564

According to that draft article (later it became the Article 89 of the Treaty of Sèvres), President Wilson’s arbitration would have to be limited exclusively to determining the boundary between Turkey and Armenia in eastern Anatolia, including prescribing a formula for access to the Black Sea. In their note, the Allies recalled that although the President of the United States had “consistently pleaded the cause of a larger Armenia; considerations with which the President [was] already familiar had inevitably compelled the partial curtailment of these aspirations.” This meant that “the prospect of creating an Armenia which should include Cilicia and extend to the Mediterranean has for long been abandoned as impracticable.”565

At the San Remo Conference, the Entente powers also concluded a secret agreement on exclusive oil rights and economic concessions in the former Ottoman territories. In the absence of American participation, the British delegation cautioned the Foreign Office to prevent the publication of this tripartite agreement. The delegation explained to the Foreign Office that in an allied note to President Wilson “as favorable description as possible” was briefly given. Yet, if the full text was published it could hardly fail to make a bad impression. The British side also advised the French and the Italians not to allow the revelation of the terms of the agreement they concluded regarding the Ottoman lands, as it contained articles giving to the three powers the control of

564 FRUS, 1920, III, 779-83.
565 Ibid., 780.
management of concessions and financial affairs which might “quite likely” rouse strong opposition from America.\textsuperscript{566}

With the signing of the San Remo Agreement among the Entente powers, a potentially explosive controversy broke out between America and Great Britain, particularly on the exploitation of oil reserves in the Near East. Washington considered the agreement, especially the modifications on the mandate regime on the former Ottoman territories, a violation of the understanding between the allies. Secretary of State Colby’s strongly-worded letter to his British counterpart in November 1920 underlined that the British occupation of Mesopotamia should not accord it, as a “temporary occupant,” a monopoly or a preferred position in terms of exploiting the natural resources of the territory, and that it was of utmost importance to the future peace of the world that these territories should be held and administered in such a way as to secure “equal treatment to the commerce and to the citizens of all nations.”\textsuperscript{567} To the United States, the San Remo Agreement was a breach of the open door violating the principle of equal treatment. The open door principle was a useful tool of American diplomacy to obtain an unhindered access to rich mineral resources and promising markets in the Ottoman lands, as elsewhere.\textsuperscript{568} The controversy over natural resources in the Near East was to continue until after the Lausanne Conference. The American government constantly refused to recognize the allied claims for exclusive concessions.\textsuperscript{569}

Bristol was also fully aware of the British effort to monopolize the oil reserves in the Near East through various schemes of partitioning the country. He knew that the oil

\textsuperscript{566} Lord Derby to Lord Curzon, May 5, 1920, FO 608/2778; passim.
\textsuperscript{567} Colby to Curzon, November 20, 1920, Box 32, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
\textsuperscript{568} Denovo, \textit{American Interests}, 127.
\textsuperscript{569} Harry N. Howard, \textit{King-Crane}, 294-5.
fields in Mesopotamia were some of the richest in the world, and with their control of oil reserves in other parts of the world, the British would control the oil supply of the world and in a few years America would have to ask Great Britain for oil to move its merchant ships and its navy. At the conclusion of the war, Great Britain had also gained a more advantageous position in the Near East to control the East-West maritime commerce.570

Admiral Robeck, British deputy high commissioner, reported on May 1 that the Ottoman government would be willing to accept confidential guidance from the British government if the latter showed any disposition to support of the new Turkish state. The Foreign Office unceremoniously responded that the best advice that could be given to the Ottoman government was that now peace terms were settled “they should swallow their medicine as quickly as possible.”571

Observing the reaction in America to the Armenian mandate proposal, Ambassador Geddes wrote Curzon that the mandate offer had been “very unfavorably” received by Congress and the press. General opinion was that the Armenian mandate would involve greater political difficulties and less economic advantages than those taken by Great Britain, and that offer should not be considered unless accompanied by control of Istanbul and the Straits. Even in the latter option, he considered an American acceptance of the Armenian mandate highly improbable. He underlined that a considerable feeling against Great Britain was aroused on the grounds of “capturing control of Asiatic oilfields.”572

In order to garner support in Congress and in the public opinion for his Armenian mandate plan, on April 29, Wilson requested Cleveland H. Dodge to start a propaganda

570 Bristol to Engert, April 25, 1920, Box 32, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
571 Adm. de Robeck to FO, May 1, 1920, FO 608/277; FO to Webb, May 5, 1919, ibid.
campaign. Dodge assured him of the support of NER to the Armenian mandate project by organizing some form of propaganda, which could be done “without very much fuss” and with a minimum expense through NER’s large number of committees across the country.

Geddes reported to Curzon that, according to reliable sources, President Wilson and Secretary of State Colby were “extremely desirous of forcing the United States” to undertake a mandate in Turkey and to participate in control of the Straits. They had reportedly asked Ambassador Gerard of ACIA to suggest means of implementing this plan without reference to Congress, and approached to Caldwell and other members of Republican Committee to assist them in carrying out their scheme despite Congressional opposition. Wilson and Colby were to meet Gerard and certain Republicans on May 18, to elaborate the scheme.

On May 16, Ambassador Geddes secured papers indicating a draft plan for a military expedition to be discussed at the government’s meeting on May 18, 1920, in case the American mandate would not be accepted by the Senate. Geddes determined that Hamilton, Holt and Caldwell were responsible for these plans and they were working in close touch with Gerard and Morgenthau. Hoover was also believed to be in the movement. On the government’s side the matter was discussed at the last meeting of the Cabinet and final decision was reserved until after the meeting on May 18. According to the plan, the U.S. government appeared to be making serious and extensive military and other kind of preparations to support the Armenians. The U.S. Plan envisaged notification

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573 Masis, 
574 Dodge to Wilson, April 29, 1920, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.65, 234-5. 
to the supreme council that, “despairing of Turkish government’s good faith,” and while America was not able to accept mandate formally, it was willing to render “friendly aid and support to the Armenian Republic and its nationals.” The plan also would deliver a formal warning to the Sublime Porte that until the boundaries of Armenia were defined and allotted, the U.S. government would view as an “unfriendly act” any aggression upon the Armenian nation, and would hold the Ottoman government responsible “for any forces within the territories claimed by it.” Geddes thought that although the administration would have great difficulty in carrying out any such scheme, influential names behind it were such an extraordinary combination that it was difficult to estimate possibilities.576

Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby asked Geddes on May 18, whether he thought the supreme council would reopen the question of control of Istanbul and the Straits, if America were prepared to assume responsibility for Istanbul. Colby’s inquiry thus corroborated earlier reports Geddes had received to the effect that the United States government was seriously weighing the possibility of taking a mandate. According to the Foreign Office records, upon Geddes’ cable, Curzon thought a mandate for Istanbul would not at all be offered to America even if the Wilson administration would be willing to take it, as in that case the Ottoman peace treaty would have to be entirely reconstructed. He considered this idea as a “chimera,” and made the following comment:

If on the other hand they were disposed to take either Armenia or Caucasia, I should witness with a grim delight their dealing with those states when in the hands of Soviet governments.577

577 Geddes to Curzon, May 18, 1920; FO Minutes, ibid., 13, 76.
On the other hand, Curzon instructed Sir Geddes that if approached, he should emphatically declare that the British government would warmly appreciate American cooperation in support of the Armenian Republic.578

While this exchange of communications regarding the mandate question and delimitation of boundaries was continuing, geopolitical situation in Caucasia and in Turkey were undergoing a rapid change which were to render such allied schemes entirely irrelevant in the following months. The Bolsheviks invaded Azerbaijan and proclaimed the new Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan on May 7, 1920. The government of Soviet Azerbaijan sent an ultimatum at once to the government of Armenia to withdraw all Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territory within 24 hours. Armenia requested Moscow to stop any action which would violate its independence.579 Meanwhile, Georgia declared a state of siege. Haskell informed the American delegation at Paris that British authorities had decided to withdraw all their troops in Caucasia by June 1920. Considering the British withdrawal, the American government informed the Entente powers that Haskell was being instructed to relinquish his office of high commissioner in Armenia simultaneously with the evacuation of British troops. Haskell transferred the orphanage, hospital and similar Near East facilities in Armenia to local authorities on July 1, 1920.580

Secretary Colby explained to Wilson that the allied powers were unable to render any assistance to the Armenian Republic, but giving such assistance became a pressing issue, considering the fact that the Bolsheviks had occupied Baku and were reported to be cooperating with what he called “the Young Turks or the nationalists.” Colby warned that

578 Curzon to Geddes, May 21, 1920, ibid., 77.
579 Doolittle to Bristol, May 4, 1920, Box 68, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
a refusal by the United States might involve “the ruining of the Armenian Republic,” and “the opening of the way to further Bolshevism, pan-Turanianism and Pan-Islamism in Turkey and in Asia.” Moreover, Colby underlined, the British Ambassador told him that the supreme council would gladly reopen the Turkish question if there was reason to hope that the United States would consider the acceptance of a mandate for Istanbul.581

On May 24, 1920, President Wilson asked Congress to grant him authority to accept a mandate for Armenia in accordance with the invitation of the allied powers. In his message to Congress, Wilson said that in their hearts, American people have made the cause of Armenia their own, and added:

I am speaking in the spirit and in accordance with the wishes of the greatest of the Christian peoples. The sympathy for Armenia among our people has sprung from untainted consciences, pure Christian faith, and an earnest desire to see Christian people everywhere succored in their time of suffering, and lifted from their abject subjection and distress and enabled to stand up their feet and take their place among free nations of the world.582

Wilson further asserted that maintenance of order in those portions of the “one-time Ottoman Empire” was no longer possible in the interest of civilization to leave under the government of the Turkish authorities themselves. On May 27, 1920, the Senate declined to grant the executive power to accept the mandate by a vote of 62 to 25. Some authors indicated that Senate’s objection was based on the report of the Harbord Mission of 1919, as it would involve immense military engagement and a heavy financial burden.583

There was, however, another important reason for the rejection of the mandate by the Senate as outlined in a report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of

581 Colby to Wilson, May 20, 1920, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.65, 305- 12.
583 Gordon, American Relations, 32.
Representatives. Congress was concerned that its approval for the Armenian mandate would be interpreted as its endorsement, albeit indirectly, of the authority of the League of Nations, a probability which the majority of the Congressmen resolutely opposed.584

On the termination of his mission to Armenia, Haskell visited the Foreign Office in London and during the talks he portrayed a very negative picture of Armenia and the Armenians.585

Lloyd George sent a confidential letter to Wilson to find out whether America could still be expected to take part in the resolution of some outstanding issues. Among other topics, Lloyd George commented on “Turkish question” which he thought was gradually settling down. He said the allies decided to leave the Turks in Istanbul for three reasons: they had neither the strength nor unity to take over the government of the town; out of deference to the strong pressure of Muslim Indians; it made it easier to put pressure on the Ottoman Empire “to behave properly to its minorities in the future.” For the rest, he claimed, they followed the “ethnographic principle as closely as possible.” Above all, he underscored, when it came to enforcing their terms, “there was only one force available with which to do it, and that was the Greek army.” He joyfully remarked that the Greeks

585 Col. Haskell’s Visit, by Osborne, September, 1920, Lord Curzon Papers, FO 800/151. Haskell’s remarks were recorded as follows:
“…He was very interesting about Armenia and the Armenians, present and future, and gave far the worst description of both I have ever heard. The country is a desert and the people nothing but professional beggars. Rich Armenians outside the Erivan Republic will not contribute a penny to the relief of their starving compatriots and the well-to-do in Erivan will pass by dying refugee children in the streets and refuse flatly to work in hospitals for the refugees. The paid hospital nurses will steal and sell the hospital fare. They are thieves and liars, utterly debased, incapable of helping themselves, unwilling to help one another, and entirely lacking in gratitude. Patriotic feeling does not exist. There is no administrative or political capacity in the country, no money and no resources to develop. Foreign Armenians who have amassed fortunes by Jewish methods will neither contribute nor return to the national home…”
were defeating the Turkish resistance. Lloyd George referred to the Armenian problem as the “most difficult one.” He asserted that the allies had not the strength with which to protect it and the Greek forces were at the other end of Asia Minor. Since the refusal of the Senate to take any responsibility for Armenia, he did not see what else could be done.586

Later, the same Lloyd George rejoiced at his success in achieving British war aims with the support of Wilson, despite the latter’s declaration of moralistic peace principles. George was especially proud of his material gains at the Peace Conference in the dismemberment of the Ottoman lands. Referring to assignats,587 Lloyd George told a close friend:

Well, Wilson has gone back home with a bundle of assignats. I have returned with a pocket full of sovereigns in the shape of the German colonies, Mesopotamia, etc. Everyone to his taste.588

Confident about the defeat and dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the signing of the Sèvres Treaty on August 10, 1920, a self-assured Lloyd George further announced triumphantly: “Turkey is no more.”589 While making his celebratory remarks, he seemed to be totally ignorant of the strength of national movement in Anatolia. Toynbee depicted the Sèvres Treaty “a disastrous diplomatic failure because it altogether ignored the point of view of one of the prospective signatories.”590 It is interesting to read such a remark from a man who, as the distinguished historian and member of Wellington House,

586 Lloyd George to Wilson, August 5, 1920, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.66, 42-50. Despite Lloyd George’s letter was dated August 5, 1920 and he referred to the treaty as having been signed, the Sèvres Treaty was signed 5 days later on 10 August 1920.
587 The worthless paper currency issued in France during the French Revolution. Fromkin, Peace, 401.
588 Ibid., 401.
589 Ibid., 431.
590 Arnold J. Toynbee, “The East After Lausanne,” Foreign Affairs, 2/1, (Sep. 5, 1923), 84-98.
had actively contributed to the creation of “the terrible Turk” image in the West by authoring several infamous propaganda publications during the war.

Wilson communicated his decision on the “boundary” to the Entente powers on November 24, 1920. In his decision, which came to be dubbed as the “Wilson Award,” he allotted large portions of Turkish territory in eastern Anatolia whose populations, as he also admitted in his text, were predominantly Turkish and Muslim, to the proposed Armenian state along with the province of Trabzon under the pretext of giving it access to the sea. 591

While Wilson’s decision on Armenian boundaries issue had not yet been conveyed to the allies, Bristol felt the need to remind that the Turkish national independence movement was organized as a protest against the Greek occupation of Izmir, and it would resist any similar aggression of the Armenians in the eastern vilayets. He warned: “the feeling against Armenia gaining any territory in the eastern vilayets is most bitter and stronger than ever before. No one could believe that the Turks would evacuate any territory ceded to Armenia without being forced to make such evacuation.” He added that the Turkish national movement had never recognized the abortive Sèvres Treaty signed by the Istanbul Government, and that the territories about which President Wilson was to arbitrate were practically empty of Armenians. 592

Dr. Barton of the ABCFM wrote Admiral Bristol on June 2, 1920 informing him that the more he had studied the situation the more he was convinced that the mandate of the Near East should be taken as one country, a position that Bristol had defended from the

591 FRUS, 1920, III, 789-804.
592 FRUS, Ibid., 788.
very beginning. As for having the facts known as they actually existed in the interior of Turkey, Dr. Barton pointed out that the difficulty to do so was related to “diplomacy.” There was “so much diplomacy” that the actual facts could not be told by any faction. The British and the Americans could not tell the facts about the French and their dealing in Cilicia. Barton was sure that the report of the King-Crane Commission would never see the light, since it spoke too plainly of the conditions in the region which would disturb the allies. Admiral Bristol’s own report regarding the Greek occupation of Izmir was not made public either, for the same reasons. The American people did not know, Barton admitted, these facts. He further said that the Washington Administration did not seem to be especially anxious to get first-hand information and he does not know how the President planned to define Armenia. He complained that there was no statesmanship in the United States.593

At the time President Wilson was engaged in delimiting the “the Armenian boundaries,” more significant developments in the region would prove such an American exercise futile, as already predicted by Admiral Bristol.594 Bristol and Consul Moser at Tiflis informed Washington on November 30, and December 4 respectively that an armistice between Turkey and Armenia was in effect and they started to negotiate a treaty of peace, and during the peace talks Armenia turned Bolshevik. Failing to receive assurance under the Bolshevik regime, Director General Yarrow of NER in Armenia terminated American relief work of five years duration there and under Turkish military protection started to remove NER personnel and stores from that country.595

593 Barton to Bristol, June 2, 1920, Box 32, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
594 Howard, King-Crane, 296.
The drastic turn of events for the Armenian issue had started when the Armenian Republic under Dashnak leadership attacked the Turkish city of Oltu in September 1920. Admiral Bristol revealed in a letter to Dr. Barton that when the British left Georgia in July 1920, they sent the Armenians a lot of arms and ammunitions. He said as soon as they got these arms, the Armenians started an attack against the Turks at Oltu and another attack against the “Tartars” [i.e. Azerbaijans] at Nakhchivan. According to Bristol, the Armenians provoked the Bolsheviks and the Turks by such actions which brought about the latter two combining their forces against the Armenians.596

The Turkish Army pushed the Armenian forces back. In late September, the Turkish army under the command of Kâzım Karabekir Pasha advanced and took control of Sarıkamış and Kars at the end of October, and Gümüş (Alexandropol) on November 7. The Armenian Republic sued for peace and while the peace negotiations were held at Gümüş between Karabekir and Khatisian, Armenia was declared a Soviet Republic on December 2, 1920. Despite the change in government, the Karabekir-Khatisian negotiations continued and culminated in the Treaty of Gümüş (Alexandropol) on December 2, 1920.597
With the Treaty of Gümüş (Alexandropol), Armenia declared the Treaty of Sèvres null and void, and repudiated all claims on Turkish territory.598

Mustafa Kemal declared his view on the American mandate over Armenia and the League of Nations to an American correspondent, Clarence K. Streit of the Philadelphia

596 Bristol to Barton, October 19, 1920, Box 32, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
598 Suny, 32; K.S. Papazian, Patriotism Perverted (Boston: Baikar Press, 1934), 48, 74-7.
Public Ledger, on February 26, 1921: “the Wilson Project that aims to leave millions of Turks under the control of thousands of Armenians is simply ridiculous.”

Commenting on the fate of the Armenian mandate scheme, Lansing wrote John W. Davis, American Ambassador at London, that the mandate had never had a chance of being accepted. The President, Colonel House, and Morgenthau had been for it from the very beginning, he reminded, but it had never been a popular idea with anybody “unless it was with Jimmie Gerard and a few enthusiasts.” Public sentiment was strongly against involvement in the complex problems of the Near East.”

As noted earlier, British officials complained about Adm. Bristol, who, they alleged, showed “friendly disposition towards the Turks.” They also reported that the missionary workers of NER were not in sympathy with Bristol on account of his “Turcophile attitude.” The British military officials further reported that Lieut. Dunn, Admiral Bristol’s assistant, expressed views and even gave information about his activities while “under influence of drink” which showed both his and the Admiral’s “friendly attitude” to the Turks.

Bristol was never pro-Turk, and like other American officials at the time he exhibited a general tendency in employing hostile language against the Turks by wholesale disparagement. While advising Consul Jackson at Aleppo to consider political motives of

599 Clarence K. Streit, the Public Ledger’s correspondent, was one of the rare Western visitors to Ankara, the center of the National Movement. Streit composed the very informative account of his visit between January-March 1921 to Anatolia in a manuscript which had to wait to see the light till 2011, when Professor Lowry published it with illustrations of Anatolia at the time through photographs taken by Streit. See: Heath W, Lowry, Clarence Streit’s The Unknown Turks, Mustafa Kemal Paşa, Nationalist Ankara & Daily Life in Anatolia, January-March 1921 (İstanbul: Bahçeşehir UP, 2011), 206. See also: İsmet Görgülü, Atatürk’den Ermeni Sorunu (Atatürk’s View on the Armenian Question) (Ankara: Bilgi, 2002), 248-51.

600 Lansing to Davis, May 31, 1920, Box 4, Folder 4, Robert Lansing Papers.

the European powers in the region before reporting about certain developments, Bristol also said to him that although “a large percentage of the Turks” were “murderous fanatics,” as Jackson stated in his report, it was necessary to keep “the Turk from having his fanaticism fully aroused.” He recommended to him consider the tactless methods of the French in occupying Cilicia and Syria, as they stirred up trouble by their cooperation with the Armenians. Bristol, to the dismay of the British, harshly criticized the policies of the Entente powers in the Near East. This apparently frustrated the British officials as they interpreted it as obstructing their plans for America’s role in the region. However, it was also true that Bristol’s recommendations, as those of Lansing and Polk, did not suffice to convince Wilson to reconsider his own convictions regarding the fate of the Ottoman geography.602

Lieut. Dunn, in his memoirs, published years later, disclosed what had apparently been the crux of the matter during the Anglo-American mandate debate. He explained that the proposed American mandate over what came to be called Armenia was a British plan, supported by Armenian and missionary propaganda, to place the “burden on America’s shoulders” in order to create a buffer zone between Great Britain’s interests in the Near East (including new mandatory territories in Iraq and Palestine, as well as its protectorates on Arabian Peninsula) and Bolshevik Russia. He further explained that it was impossible to outline even on paper an Armenia with real geographic or ethnologic frontiers, as vital statistics were incorrect and often deliberately fraudulent. He further referred to his conversation with Khatisian, the last president of the independent Armenia, who had admitted to him that Adm. Bristol had been right in opposing this proposal at the time. On

602 Bristol to Jackson, June 21, 1920, Box 32, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
one occasion, Dunn confronted the Greeks and Armenians of Erzincan during his tour in the region when they brought up to the discussion the Fourteen Points and self-determination. He said: “Paris politicians have cheated the President to believe you have majorities.”  

Garo Pasdermadjian, a former member of the Ottoman Parliament and later diplomatic representative of the Armenian Republic in Washington, expressed the gratitude felt by the Armenian people toward President Wilson in a letter praising him for being “their true champion, the architect of their little state.”

Wilson’s decision on the boundaries of an Armenian state, however, ultimately proved no more than an academic exercise done at the behest of the Entente powers. The allied request was included as a clause in the defunct Sèvres Treaty of August 10, 1920 (Article 89). Above all, Wilson’s demarcation exercise never involved a political commitment on the part of America. As outlined above, political and military developments in the region during the same period rendered Wilson’s arbitrary decision, as well as the Sèvres Treaty itself, pointless. Its academic character notwithstanding, Wilson’s decision was later turned into a political weapon in the hands of the pro-Armenian lobby to keep the United States involved in the Armenian question. Thus, Wilson’s arbitration came to be dubbed as the “Wilson Award,” and falsely described as an “American obligation” to help the Armenians carve out a land for themselves in Turkey.

With the defeat of General Wrangel’s army in the Crimea, the Bolshevik government eliminated its most important adversary in Russia, and further consolidated its

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603 Dunn, World Alive, 313, 384-5, 432.
604 Davis to Wilson, December 14, 1920, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.66, 507.
power in Trans-Caucasia by incorporating Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1920. By the end of
November of the same year, the British military authorities had no doubt that Georgia
would be the next to fall into the Bolshevik system. Now, with the control of the Caucasus
railway, Russians and the Turkish army could make use this strategic line to further
strengthen their military and strategic position. The Bolshevik threat to Poland to the west,
to Iran and Trans-Caspia to the south thus created a difficult situation for the British
Empire. Adding to these critical circumstances was the overthrow of the Venizelos
government in Greece. In Turkey, the national movement proclaimed the Treaty of Sèvres
null and void and vowed to struggle until the full independence and sovereignty of the
country within the boundaries of the armistice be secured.605

By mid-December 1920, British military authorities sounded increasingly
pessimistic about the turn of events in the Near East. In addition, there occurred mischief
between the British and the Arabs owing to the treatment by the French of the latter.
Moreover, the British military forces were being maintained with great difficulty and
expense. The Secretary of War suggested dividing up the local powers and playing them
off against one another as the only way in which the British could exert influence in the
region. He pointed out that pitting these powers against each other was what the British
had always done in their history, particularly with regard to Russia and the Ottoman
Empire. Furthermore, he pointed out, the British had been accustomed to utilize the full
division between the Arabs and the Turks.606

605 “Note on the Military Situation created by recent events in Russia, Caucasia, Turkey, and Greece,” War
606 “The Situation in the Middle East,” by the Secretary of War, December 16, 1920, Lloyd George Papers,
LG/F/206/6/24.
That even the Entente powers considered the Treaty of Sèvres a dead-letter in less than five months of its signing became clear during their conference in London held between November 26 and December 4, 1920. Till then, no one, except Italy, had ratified the treaty. The difficulty they felt was related to determining what alternative course must be followed, i.e. what new terms and modifications must be introduced to induce the Turks to conclude a durable peace. The increasing burden, political, moral and material, of keeping large forces in Asia Minor and in other Ottoman domains made it difficult for them to enforce the further partitioning of the territory by force of arms. As to the Armenian aspirations, at their meeting on December 3, the Entente powers seemed to be in consensus that Wilson’s views about the proposed Armenia could not possibly be attained, nor could the allies undertake to fight the Turks to enforce such a scheme. Lord Curzon explained that President Wilson’s proposal was to give Armenia considerably larger frontiers than it had itself demanded. If such an Armenia was admitted to the League of Nations, this would involve the members of the League in certain conflict with Armenia’s neighbors and “the absurd situation” would arise in which the members of the League would have guaranteed frontiers which “they themselves did not believe to be right and which they could not possibly maintain by force of arms.”607

The Ottoman press considered the result of the presidential elections as the manifestation of the disgust of American people with the European political intrigue and its desire to return to the Monroe Doctrine. According to a Vakit editorial, the American people had grown tired of Wilson’s policy as his methods were rather despotic in character. Wilson, who before and during the war had become such a powerful man, was

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now considered nothing more than a “duffer.” The editorial interpreted Wilson’s arbitration of the boundaries of Armenia, as throwing the responsibility of this matter on America and relieving the League of Nations of a great burden, while it would somehow unite America to the League. *Vakit* also criticized Wilson’s animosity against the Turks by pointing out that in contravention of his own position regarding self-determination Wilson advocated the idea of throwing the Turks out of Turkey.608

In January 1921, Bristol wrote Charles Crane that despite the Entente powers’ effort to destroy the Turkish national movement by vituperations, they placed themselves in the awkward position of being dictated to by “the much despised” Mustafa Kemal. They must choose between backing Constantine in Greece, Soviet Russia, or the national movement of Turkey. It seemed to Bristol as if adopting any one of these three options would be swallowing “a very bitter pill.”609

As early as January 1921, even before making a treaty with the Bolsheviks, the government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly informally tested the waters to resume diplomatic relations with America through a demarche to Adm. Bristol.610 In an interview with correspondent Clarence Streit on January 29, 1921, Mustafa Kemal Pasha depicted America as “the protectress of the rights of liberty.” Bristol, although viewing such overtures of Ankara as its desire “to conciliate” the United States, did not recommend any action. In order to maintain contact with Ankara, he only suggested that J. Gillespie, assistant to the trade counselor, be assigned to Ankara, as a representative of the said

609 Bristol to Crane, January 14, 1921, Box 33, ibid.
department with no diplomatic capacity. Hughes approved Gillespie’s assignment as proposed by Bristol.611

In the spring of 1922, the British Foreign Office took an initiative to send an inter-allied commission to Turkey to investigate the situation of Christian minorities in Anatolia. The British authorities used a report of NER officers Yowell and Ward on the alleged massacres in Harput. The British also publicized the report extensively in Great Britain, and the New York Times published a statement to the same effect. Bristol cautioned that the British initiative was politically motivated to garner support from the allies against the Ankara government, and stated the allegations in the report were baseless. Bristol explained that the British themselves had been well aware of the conditions in Anatolia. The Greek occupation and outrages against the Turkish population forced the Ankara government to take counter measures. Notwithstanding Bristol’s warning not to take part in this British political scheme, Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes claimed that if they did not participate in the investigation proposed by Lord Curzon, this would “offend a large body of Americans” who had deep interest in the Christians of Anatolia.612 After President’s Harding’s approval of American participation, Secretary Hughes evaluated possible consequences for America of this investigation. In a memorandum to Harding, Hughes stressed at first that to decline the British invitation would be interpreted in the country by “the body of church-going Americans,… as tantamount to a tacit acquiescence

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611 Bristol to Hughes, February 9, 1921, roll 2, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29; Bristol to Hughes, June 20 & October 28, 1921; Hughes to Bristol, November 3, 1921, ibid.

612 See the correspondence regarding the proposed investigation: British Ambassador Sir Auckland Geddes to Secretary of State, May 15, 1922; Secretary of State to Geddes, June 3, 1922; Harvey (American Ambassador at London) to Secretary of State, May 18, 1922; Memorandum by Allen Dulles, May 19, 1922; Bristol to Hughes (Secretary of State), May 18, 1922; Hughes to Bristol, June 3 & 9, 1922; passim, roll 46, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29.
in the continuance of the present situation in Asia Minor.”

President Warren G. Harding decided to appoint Generals James G. Harbord and Henry T. Allen to the inquiry commission.

Allegations made by NER representative at Harput, Yowell, were categorically repudiated by the government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Bristol informed the State Department on July 21, 1922 that the allies agreed that the Anatolian investigation be conducted by International Red Cross, which had already consented to undertake the inquiry. The Turkish victory against the Greeks would render this British plan inconclusive.

613 Hughes to President Harding, undated but probably in late May 1922, roll 47, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29.
614 Hughes to Harvey (U.S. Ambassador in London), June 16, 1922, ibid.
616 Bristol to Hughes, July 21, 1922, ibid.
Two events in 1920, i.e. evacuation of the Caucasus by the British in June 1920, and the Bolshevik control of the Armenian Republic in December 1920, had virtually brought to an end the relevance of the Armenian question in a geopolitical sense. American intelligence reports indicated that by mid-1921 the British authorities in the region started realizing the fact that in Turkey too, they were losing control of political affairs. In private talks, British officials admitted that the situation had become intolerable as they were unable to control either Greeks or Turks, and the French and Italians were working for their “selfish interests.” According to some observers, the British were willing and anxious to withdraw from Turkey, “bag and baggage.” The Armenian question hardly figured, or was even referred to, in these political reports and assessments, except its relevance with French occupation of southern Anatolia and Armenian involvement in it. But even in this connection, the French were looking for a settlement with the government of the Grand National Assembly, and after the signing of Ankara Treaty in 1921 it became clear that they were also willing to evacuate Turkey, except for Iskenderun, for good.617

George R. Montgomery of the Armenia-America Society complained in a letter to Lord Robert Cecil in August 1922 that, although he had been endeavoring to obtain funds “for setting up the Armenian national home,” and would continue to do so, he found the sentiment in Washington to be that, “the settlement of the Near East question was distinctly a job belonging to France and Great Britain.”618

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618 Montgomery to Cecil, August, 9, 1922, Box 1, Folder 5, Armenia Collection 1916-1923.
Undeterred as they were, the missionary circles pressed the American government to help fund the Armenian national home scheme through either a direct loan to the mandatory power, whoever was to assume such a mandate, or deduct this amount from the debts of the Entente powers to America so as to enable them to pay for the project. Prior to the Lausanne Peace Conference, correspondence among the American missionary leaders indicated that the idea of an Armenian national home, probably in Cilicia, to gather all the Armenian refugees therein under a mandatory power, started to be circulated at the encouragement of Great Britain. They hoped that the scheme could be made possible by the support of America, at least financially. Why in Cilicia? Dr. Barton explained that a home in northeastern Turkey would eventually become a part of Soviet territory, thus regarded unacceptable. Aware of the real conditions in the country, Dr. Gates wrote the missionary leaders that there was not the slightest possibility that the Turks would accept the idea of a national home for the Armenians. The Turkish press commentaries underlined that the Armenians could live in peace in Turkey if they would not claim any territory. Of course, Dr. Gates felt to reassure them that he held no brief whatever for the Turks, as they were “essentially barbarian,” and all their “national fanaticism” had been intensified by these years of war.

American missionaries were following the progress of the Turkish National War of Independence with increasing alarm and anxiety for it would surely put a definitive end to their already diminishing hopes for Armenian territorial aspirations. It was a curious coincidence that on the day when Charles W. Fowle, foreign secretary of NER, wrote Dr.

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619 An undated (probably in August 1922) petition to the President of the United States, Box 1, Folder 5, ibid.
620 Bristol to Hughes, October 4, 1922, roll 47, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29. Bristol sent in the enclosure the copies of letters, Dr. Barton, George R. Montgomery, and Caleb F. Gates exchanged between them.
Herbert A. Gibbons, expressing his hope the America and Great Britain would recognize King Constantine of Greece and strengthen Greece’s hand and coffers, the Turkish army routed the Greek occupation forces in a decisive victory, ending once and for all Greek aspirations toward Anatolia.\(^{621}\) The Turkish victory was also to deprive these circles of a hoped-for military tool for squeezing out from Turkey concessions for the Armenian cause. Depressed as he was, Dr. Barton admitted that Mustafa Kemal was coming back with power, and out of all the nations that had had a part in the Great War, Turkey was the only that was coming out on top. Turkey seemed now to have won on every front and to be in control of the situation.\(^{622}\)

Dr. Barton was utterly dismayed by the Turkish victory, viewing it as the beginning of another European war, in which, he asserted, “barbarianism” would be arraigned against “civilization.” His deep disappointment unleashed all the constraints in Barton’s mind who could not keep himself from expressing his hostility against the reassertion of Turkish national independence. In his letter to President Harding, Barton tried to blemish the Turkish government and army by such accusations as that the rights of Americans and of minorities were held in contempt. He also put the blame on the Turks for the Great Fire in Izmir during the Greek retreat. He claimed that all civilized laws were defied as one must always expect from a “distinctly Mohammedan government.” He was convinced that if America would join with Great Britain, France, and Italy in drafting an “ultimatum” to be presented to the “Kemalists,” it could not only save “Constantinople and Europe,” but also save “civilization” in the Near East. “Has the time not come for America?” he asked, to

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\(^{621}\) Fowle to Gibbons, August 30, 1922, Box 1, Folder 5, Armenia Collection 1916-1923.

\(^{622}\) Barton to Gibbons, September 11, 1922, ibid.
join with the allies in taking its stand against the crossing of “Turkish barbarianism” into Europe through the Bosphorus.623

In a stark contrast to Barton’s inflammatory accusations, Admiral Bristol informed the Secretary of State that all of the reports that he had received from his naval representatives in Izmir seemed to indicate that the Greeks during their retreat systematically laid waste to the country and perpetrated many atrocities. He stated that he had received no reports of atrocities committed by the Turkish forces, and all agreed that the Turkish entry in Izmir was carried out in a most orderly and peaceful manner. Bristol also conveyed to Hughes the protest of the Turkish government against the atrocities committed by the Greeks during their retreat in Anatolia.624

President Harding wrote Barton that while the American government was doing all that it could do without being unduly involved in the “tangled” situation in the Near East, it could not enter upon a policy of sending armed forces to the region.625

In a last-ditch attempt to retain Istanbul and the Straits, the British government considered forming a “Balkan block” which would materially assist it in this scheme to prevent the restoration of Turkish sovereignty in these areas by force of arms, but to no avail. Romania and Serbia seemed to be willing to take part in the British plan, yet with Greece in disarray, Lloyd George’s government could not proceed further with its “Balkan Plan.”626 The Turkish army, after recovering Izmir on September 9, 1922, continued its

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623 Barton to Harding, September 18, 1922, roll 47, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29.
624 Bristol to Hughes, September 14, 1922, ibid.
625 Harding to Barton, September 27, 1922, ibid.
626 Memorandum prepared by the Foreign Office “on the Attitude of the Balkan State towards the problem of Constantinople and the Straits,” September 14, 1922, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/13/3/32; also Lloyd George to Curzon, September 15, 1922, ibid. LG/F/13/3/33.
advance north into the Straits region. The Turkish army’s arrival at the outskirts of the town Çanakkale, on September 23, alarmed the British of the possibility of the renewal of war. Although France and most of the British dominions refused to support him, Lloyd George was stubbornly ready to risk a renewed war with Turkey in order to maintain British control over the Straits and Istanbul. The British Cabinet, on September 29, instructed Lt. Gen. Sir Charles Harington, the British commander in the Straits, to give the Turkish army an ultimatum to withdraw. Harington chose to delay the execution of the order, pending a meeting between British, French, and Turkish representatives at Mudanya, which began on 3 October and resulted in the signing of the Armistice opening the way to peace negotiations. Consequently, the frantic quest made by the Lloyd George cabinet for such a renewed war failed utterly in the face of the new realities emerged in the Near East. This fact served to precipitate his resignation.627

Controversy regarding the mandates continued to color diplomatic discussions between the British and American officials even as late as November 1922. The British Ambassador inquired of the Secretary of State whether it was possible to deliver to Turkey a joint ultimatum concerning the protection of Christian minorities, and to what extent they could rely upon the American support. Hughes responded that the U.S. government was ready to use diplomatic pressure, but if it was desired to threaten war, it was not ready to do that. The British Ambassador brought up the mandate question of the Paris Peace Conference and claimed that in deference to President Wilson’s wishes at the time, the allies deferred making settlement with Turkey, and they had delayed for months because of hope of American support. He claimed that the British had not desired mandates; and the

627 See fn.1, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.68, 141-2.
whole mandate idea was President Wilson’s. Hughes retorted that America had never sought for any territories, unlike other powers; and was not therefore responsible for the “late disaster.” Hughes further remarked that “what troubled the dreams of the British statesmen” was their maintenance of power in India, Egypt, and the control of the Suez Canal. However, he pointed out, America was not associated with these imperial aspirations.628

Unlike the fanfare at Paris in 1919, the American presence was less spectacular on the Armenian question at the Lausanne Peace Conference in the absence of President Wilson and his peace plans. Yet, the “Wilson Award,” as an idea, continued to influence the attitudes of both the American diplomatic representatives and of the pro-Armenian lobbyists who also came to Lausanne from America to advocate for the Armenian cause.

It is pertinent to note that the instructions given by the Turkish government to its delegation at the Lausanne negotiations had the following as its first point: “The Eastern Boundary: The issue of an Armenian home shall never be accepted. If this issue is brought up, the negotiations must cease.” Among the other instructions, an identical position was repeated for the issue of the capitulations. They were unacceptable, and if necessary, the negotiations must cease. On both issues, the Turkish delegation was under definite instructions as such that if the allied states pressed their demands, these must absolutely be rejected on the spot and the delegation must leave the conference, and return home.629

The U.S. government conveyed its views to the allies on October 30, 1922, in which it made clear that since America had not been at war with Turkey, it did not desire

628 Memorandum of Interview with the British Ambassador, November 10, 1922, roll 47, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29.
629 Türk Dış Politikası (ed. by Baskın Oran), (Ankara: İletişim, 2001), 218.
to participate in the peace negotiations as a signatory of the peace treaty. While maintaining this reserve, the U.S. government did not avoid putting forth its expectations from the peace conference, and clearly stated that it was “not disposed to relinquish the rights enjoyed in common with other powers, or proper commercial opportunity.” It stated its opposition to the tripartite agreement at Sèvres in August 1920 envisaging particular spheres of influence as well as exclusive rights for the Entente powers. To safeguard its interests, the American government was to send its observers to the conference.630

Secretary of State Hughes informed the U.S. Ambassadors in London, Paris and Rome in a confidential message that the U.S. government would not permit any fait accompli by the allies, and that the U.S. government should be ready at the first appropriate opportunity to make a separate treaty with Turkey to protect American interests.631 Hughes stressed the importance of the retention of the capitulations. It is interesting to see that during the debate on an American mandate, the Harbord Report had suggested the abrogation of the capitulatory regime as an indispensable condition for the success of any mandate administration.632 “The Inquiry” viewed the capitulatory regime in Turkey as “economic and political bondage.”633 In a contradictory manner, the same condition was not regarded as justified for the Turks, because the American delegation at Lausanne acted together with the allied delegations to retain the capitulations.

Regarding the issue of protection of minorities, Hughes thought an exchange of Christian and Muslim minorities in Asia Minor and Greece to be the most feasible

632 FRUS, 1919, II, 841-89.
633 FRUS, 1919, I, 52.
solution. He underlined that the Christian minorities in Europe (European regions of Turkey), particularly in Istanbul, was of special interest to the American government, and that it would exert appropriate influence for their protection. Above all, Hughes drew attention to the possibility that the question of “the homeland of the Armenians may be raised.” His conclusion was that “upon the return of more settled conditions in Russia, the Russian Caucasus may offer the best refuge for Armenians from Turkey.”\textsuperscript{634} Malkasian contends that the State Department included the national home among its seven primary interests at Lausanne.\textsuperscript{635} However, neither the American memorandum handed to the allied governments nor Hughes’s confidential message sent to the American ambassadors contained such a reference.

The Lausanne Peace Conference was held in two phases. During the first phase of talks (between 20 November 1922 and 4 February 1923) the allies and America brought up the issue of an Armenian homeland, and in the second phase (between 23 April and 24 July 1923), there was no discussion on this issue except for the return of refugees. Armenian groups and church organizations pressed the allied delegates with a torrent of letters and pleas reminding them of the earlier promises for an Armenian homeland in the former Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{636}

Despite their attempts, the Armenian groups were not admitted as official representatives to the Lausanne Conference. The British side only consented to the possibility of hearing the representatives of the Ottoman Armenians in case the allies

\textsuperscript{634} FRUS, 1923, II, 886-8.
\textsuperscript{635} Malkasian, \textit{Disintegration}, 358.
desired information regarding Armenian minorities in Turkey. The representatives of “the pro-Soviet Armenian government of the Caucasus” would not be summoned.637

On November 22, 1922, just two days after the opening of the conference İsmet Pasha, head of the Turkish delegation, expressed his willingness to Ambassador Child, head of the American delegation, to enter into preliminary negotiations for a treaty with the United States. The American attitude to this Turkish overture was not forthcoming in the beginning. Throughout the conference, the American delegates observed that the Turkish delegation was most determined on the abolition of the capitulations, and refused any limitations whatsoever on its national sovereignty. American delegates found this uncompromising position too “extreme.” Nonetheless, considering the friendly attitude of the Turkish delegation, the American delegates suggested to the State Department to take advantage of this Turkish stance to secure more favorable conditions for American interests in Turkey.638

In the first phase of the conference, the proceedings were moving slowly because of the intransigent attitude and “star-chamber decisions” taken by Lord Curzon. Curzon’s tactics in the negotiations were giving hard times even to the American delegates as decisions taken just before sessions were not being communicated to them, but they were frequently asked to make immediate statements on issues that required prior assessment or instructions by the government. Ambassador Child got the impression from his talk with Curzon that the latter had a tendency to delay considerations of question where divergence of allied views might break the “united front” against the Turks. According to the

638 American Mission at Lausanne to Hughes, November 29 & December 17, 1922, roll 2, RDS relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29.
American delegates the conference sessions constituted the mask behind which vital matters were prepared.639

On December 13, 1922 the American delegation made a statement at the conference calling for “a generous policy” on the part of Turkey to contribute to the safety and relief of the refugees, including finding a safe territorial refuge, a matter which was of a vital interest for the American people. Ambassador Child mentioned in the statement that his country had put nearly $75 million dollar in the relief work for those (Armenian) refugees through one committee alone (NER). The Secretary of State approved the statement.640

On December 14, 1922 Lord Curzon asked İsmet Pasha whether “a corner could be found for the Armenians in a country as large as Turkey.” İsmet Pasha replied that there were countries whose territories were incomparably larger than those of Turkey.641

The next day, the Armenian homeland issue was raised again this time by the chairman of the minorities sub-commission, the Italian delegate Montagna. The Turkish delegate Rıza Nur refused to discuss the issue.642 Yet, the minorities sub-commission heard the Armenian delegation on December 26 at a meeting that had no official status because the Turkish delegation was not present. The Armenian delegation, which included Aharonian, Khatision, and Noradunghian, stated how, having been motivated by the allies’ promises, they (the Armenians) had formed the Eastern Army of the French, how they had fought on the frontiers of Palestine and Syria under the command of General Allenby. The

639 Child-Grew to Hughes, December 1, 1922, roll 3, ibid.
640 FRUS, 1923, II, 922.
642 Turan, Armenian Question, 220.
Armenian delegation finally repeated its demand for an Armenian home. İsmet Pasha delivered the Turkish protest to Lord Curzon at Lausanne that the sub-commission’s hearing of an Armenian delegation was against the diplomatic custom as it was done without Turkish consent.\(^\text{643}\)

Notwithstanding the Turkish protest, on December 29 and 30, the American delegation made two statements on the Armenian question, asking for the establishment of an autonomous Armenian region. The delegation tried to justify its initiative for an Armenian home by referring to favorable public sentiment in the United States in support of it.\(^\text{644}\) To its statement of December 30, the delegation attached two declarations prepared and signed by Barton, Peet, and Montgomery, and handed them to the minorities subcommittee on the same day.\(^\text{645}\)

The Secretary of State approved the statements of the delegation after they had already been made; but warned the delegates that in order to avoid misunderstanding in the future, the delegation should not formally transmit the recommendations of individual Americans unless he could give them his official support.\(^\text{646}\) In other words, on its own initiative and without a prior instruction from the State Department, the American delegation had attempted to revive the so-called “Wilson Award” in a different form.

On January 6, 1923, the Armenian homeland issue was brought up once more by Montagna and the British delegate Rumbold. Riza Nur objected to the debate and interrupted when the floor had just been given to the French delegate. Riza Nur stated that

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\(^{643}\) Gürün, *Armenian File*, 373.

\(^{644}\) FRUS, 1923, II, 940-1.

\(^{645}\) Ibid., 941-2.

\(^{646}\) Ibid., 942-3.
the allies had to make such statements as they had incited this people against the Turks and the entire responsibility for their situation rested with these powers. He said the Turkish delegation refused to listen to any further statements on this subject. Afterwards Riza Nur and other Turkish delegates left the meeting in protest. J. Grew, U.S. delegate, depicted Nur’s reaction as a scandal.647

Lord Curzon, who presided on January 9, over the meeting of the minorities commission, brought to the agenda the claims of Armenian, Assyro-Chaldean and Bulgarian refugees and referred again to the idea of a national home for Armenians. İsmet Pasha refused categorically even to consider the idea. In his report to Foreign Office, Curzon admitted that they had no means of forcing Turks to accept and could not introduce such a clause in the treaty. Nevertheless, Curzon said, he had fought in this meeting, as on two previous occasions in the conference, and while the section of the draft treaty on minorities might not be too satisfactory; yet, he thought it was probably the most that could have been extracted “from an enemy swollen with pride and in a position to dictate rather than to accept conditions.”648

The State Department did not believe that satisfactory results could be obtained by pressure upon Ankara from foreign powers. Instead, it thought “informal conversations with the Turkish delegates” to impress upon them that it would be desirable if they themselves take initiatives as an “act of generosity” might be preferable, given the “aroused Turkish national feeling.” The American delegation replied that it had received no evidence that the Turkish delegates were in sympathy with the proposal for an

Armenian national home. Nor did the allied delegates propose any concrete plan. Besides, the American delegation stressed that there was no question upon which the Turkish delegates were more unyielding.649

Finally, Turkey and the Entente powers signed the Lausanne Peace Treaty on July 24, 1923. On August 6, 1923, a treaty of amity and commerce was signed between Turkey and the United States with a view to resuming bilateral diplomatic relations which had been broken off on April 20, 1917. In the second phase of the Lausanne Conference, the Armenian question was not discussed and no article was included in both treaties.650 In sum, the American and allied attempt to bring the Armenian question to the conference table was met with a determined opposition by the Turkish delegation and the question of an Armenian homeland completely dropped off the agenda.

In a memorandum, written on the eve of the signing of the bilateral treaty with Turkey, the State Department underlined the difference between America and the European powers in regard to Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. It stated that America was not a signatory to the Treaty of Berlin and thus historically did not take part in diplomatic and political aspects on this question. Nevertheless, it stressed, on account of the heavy immigration from the Ottoman territory into America, and because of recent history, pressure was exerted on the U.S. government, to induce it to take active steps in protection of the Armenians and the Greeks.651

The memorandum also included a separate section on the Armenian question. It stated that there had been an expectation as to the outcome of the Great War in presenting...
a “favorable opportunity” for improving the situation of the Armenians, “who had in the Trans-Caucasus and in northern Syria thrown in their lot with the Allies and whose hopes of independence had not been discouraged by the Allied and American leaders.” It recalled President Wilson’s decision on the delimitation of the boundary. However, by that time the developments in the region rendered this decision ineffective, and none of the western powers were in a position to intervene by force of arms, which might have entailed a war with Russia and Turkey combined.652

The signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in August 1923 did not lead to the normalization of Turkish-American bilateral relations. This anomalous situation was the result of intense anti-Turkish lobbying carried out by pro-Armenian lobbies, some influential church organizations which had no direct connection with or activity in Turkey, and above all a hostile composition in Congress with a Democratic preponderance disposed to retaliate in kind to Wilson’s failure in May 1920 in obtaining approval for the Armenian mandate. Owing to the fierce opposition and uncertainty in Congress, the Coolidge administration could not submit the treaty to the Senate for approval until January 18, 1927. When it did, the Senate failed to ratify it among the fervent hue and cry of anti-Turkish speeches which included every kind of hostile and offensive remarks the vocabulary of the speakers contained. According to the antagonists of the treaty, approving this treaty would mean “to ratify a thousand years of national barbarism.”653

The State Department, considering the relatively temperate Turkish reaction, proposed to resume diplomatic relations at once through an exchange of notes which did

652 Ibid.
not need congressional approval.\textsuperscript{654} With the favorable response of Ankara, this abnormal impasse ended when Joseph Clark Grew, then Undersecretary of State who had been the chief of the American delegation at the second phase of the Lausanne Conference, presented his credentials to President Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) on October 12, 1927, as the first U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey.\textsuperscript{655} Ahmed Muhtar Bey, the first Turkish Ambassador to Washington, presented his letter of credentials to President Coolidge on December 5, 1927, thereby closing an anomalous chapter in Turkish-American relations which had lasted for over a decade.\textsuperscript{656}

\textsuperscript{654} FRUS, 1927, III, 767.
\textsuperscript{655} Stedman, Republic of Turkey, 732.
\textsuperscript{656} Howard, King-Crane, 310.
CONCLUSION

Great Britain’s reticence vis-à-vis Tsarist Russia’s sudden instigation for a pro-Armenian reform program during the Balkan Wars was quickly translated into London’s acquiescence, under the geostrategic constraints of the Great War, to Russia’s territorial claims on eastern Anatolia as well as Istanbul and the Straits. This paved the way for the secret wartime treaties, as the pinnacle of the old diplomacy, on the partition of Ottoman territory among the Entente powers.

In 1915, in response to urgent humanitarian need during the relocation by the Ottoman government of the Armenians of the Apostolic Church, the American missionary organizations started a large-scale relief operation in the Ottoman Empire which continued throughout the war and thereafter. American missionary societies, under the leadership of the American Board (ABCFM) resorted to long-lasting vilification campaign against the Ottoman Empire to stir up American public opinion for supporting their fund-raising drives. The Wilson administration lent its unstinting support to the missionary campaign from beginning to end.

To the British diplomacy, influencing the public opinion in the most important neutral country, i.e. the United States, and bringing the full might of America on the side of the Entente war effort was the utmost strategic priority during the war. According to one of the specialists of the British propaganda, “there was no richer field for propaganda than in the United States of America in the first years of the war.”

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The British policy on the Armenian question all through this period was consistent and essentially pursued the requirements of perceived strategic interests. It envisaged and strove for the creation of a buffer state/zone between its newly attained position in the Near East and Soviet Russia. There were also British concerns about a renewal of a pan-Islamic or a pan-Turkist movement under the control of a rival major power, though such ideas were already becoming phantasy rather than a real policy challenge to reckon with. The powerful network of American missionaries and their public propaganda pursued from the beginning up until the conclusion of the Lausanne Peace Treaty the goal of the creation of an Armenian state in an area as large as possible, and later the propagation of the idea of an Armenian home in Cilicia. The missionary propaganda and political pressure they brought to bear upon the American administration to assume an Armenian mandate had perfectly served the British strategy of establishing a buffer zone. Lord Bryce of Wellington House found an enthusiastic partner in Dr. Barton, the secretary of the ABCFM and chairman of NER, for collaborating upon a plan to set up a “free government in the eastern part” of the Ottoman Empire, which was just an identical expression of British strategy for the buffer zone.

At the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson’s willingness to take an active part in Ottoman settlement and his proclaimed sympathy to the Armenian cause provided the British statesmen with a long-sought-for opportunity to press for an American mandate over the contemplated Armenia. However, an antagonistic Congress and the geopolitical developments in the region did not allow Lord Curzon to witness “with a grim delight”659

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658 Barton to Col. House, January 8, 1918, Box 11, Folder 325, E. M. House Papers.
659 Curzon’s minute, May 18, 1920, Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-39, vol.13, 76.
America’s anticipated imbroglio in Caucasia when the region was invaded by the Bolsheviks.

On the other hand, President Wilson’s willingness in this regard can also be seen as a calculated diplomatic move to achieve a direct American involvement in this strategically significant area rather than a naïve undertaking provoked by the British intrigue. Due to the strong appeal of the Armenian issue to the American people, it was possible for Wilson’s administration to mobilize public opinion with relative ease by using this issue to support its direct engagement in the Near East. Wilson was prepared to intervene militarily at least two times (in February 1919 and in May 1920) in the Ottoman Empire in order to implement his own foreign policy goals. Wilson’s objective to break up “multinational” Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires with a view to “cutting back Germany’s imperialistic potential” was identical to that of the British.\(^{660}\) In Wilson’s plan, the American sympathy for the Armenians would be conducive to facilitate his objective for a mandate over his contemplated State of Istanbul, where he saw a strategic position to control that part of the world, including the actions of the allies as mandatories in the remaining Ottoman territories.\(^{661}\)

The consistency in tone and in the underlying message of two American fact-finding missions, though undertaken in the name of the allied supreme council, attests to the fact that Wilson’s engagement in the region would have been larger in geographical and material scope than was expected by the American public, had it been implemented. For both the King-Crane and General Harbord missions suggested that, if it was decided to

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\(^{661}\) Interview with President Wilson, May 22, 1919, \textit{David Magie Papers}, Box 1, Folder 5.
assume a mandate in the region, it should cover the whole Turkish territory. Wilson’s initial plans included even American control over Syria and Mesopotamia in addition to Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{662} It appears that Wilson considered the Armenian question a useful instrument in achieving active American involvement in the region. Besides, American acceptance of the contemplated Armenian mandate would enable Wilson to bypass congressional opposition to his grand project of the League of Nation, as it would inevitably have required its operation through the league system. From this angle, President Wilson’s policy on the Ottoman Empire in general and on the Armenian question in particular does not seem to warrant such crude assessments as to the effect that, driven by his “lofty ideals,” he inadvertently let himself to be played off by Lloyd George against other powers to advance British interests.\textsuperscript{663}

Moreover, despite his enthusiastic attachment to the Armenian cause, Wilson resisted British demarches, direct or indirect, to declare war on the Ottoman Empire, or to militarily intervene in the Caucasus to fill the vacuum left by the disintegrating Russian army. Even his approval of using the Armenian issue in support of war propaganda was calculated but not unlimited.\textsuperscript{664}

It is true that General Jan C. Smuts and Lloyd George’s Cabinet appropriated Wilson’s idea of trusteeship under the League of Nations for peoples, supposedly “incapable of immediate self-government,” and they found the formula of “mandate” for governing the territories occupied during the war. According to Hoover, the British policymakers, together with their Entente allies, “neatly” managed to manipulate the

\textsuperscript{663} Fromkin, \textit{Peace}, 398-401.
\textsuperscript{664} Lowry, \textit{Ambassador Morgenthau’s}, 11.
mandate idea to wrap it up in the tinsel of the “white man’s burden.” There was no practical difference between these mandated areas and their colonial possessions.665 Under this formula, Lloyd George planned that Great Britain’s “hold on the Middle East should be permanent, and not terminate when the mandates did.”666 Meanwhile, the traces of the impact of British propaganda were also visible in the utterances of some high-level American officials. For instance, Secretary Colby, while defending urgent American military help to the Armenians in May 1920, curiously pointed out the threat of “pan-Turanianism and pan-Islamism in Turkey and in Asia,” in addition to Bolshevism.667 Unlike Great Britain’s own precarious position, this was not a primary strategic concern for America, at least at the time, and particularly when the British had already decided upon their withdrawal from Caucasia.

Nevertheless, despite these maneuvers and intentions by Lloyd George and the Congress’s rejection of both the League of Nations Covenant as well as the Armenian mandate project, in the long run President Wilson’s new diplomacy served to undermine the British-led old diplomacy’s hegemony over the world politics, including in Near Eastern affairs. Wilson’s emphasis on the nationality concept and open door principle did not allow direct annexations or unilateral exploitation of the occupied territories by the European powers. Strong American opposition to the San Remo Agreement of May 1920, particularly to the British efforts to monopolize oil deposits in the Near East, drew its strength on the principles of the new diplomacy.668

665 Hoover, Memoirs, 454.
666 Fromkin, Peace, 283.
667 Colby to Wilson, May 20, 1920, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol.65, 305- 12.
668 Colby to Curzon, November 20, 1920, Box 32, Papers of M.L. Bristol.
As for the British position vis-à-vis the Ottoman Armenians, Lord Curzon’s letter to Aneurin Williams, M.P. and a chairman of the Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor’s) Fund, indicated in a sense the gist of British policy on the Armenian question a year prior to the Lausanne Peace Conference. In reply to Williams’ criticism of the British policy towards the Armenians, Curzon maintained that his government could not be held responsible for circumstances, geopolitical and strategic, which they had done their best to counteract. Referring to the Armenian aspirations, Curzon emphasized that, without the use of forces which Great Britain did not possess, it was impossible to achieve them. Nor should he expect Great Britain, or any other country, “arbitrarily to select a portion of Turkey, to eject all other races…to organize an Armenian national existence at immense expense to the British taxpayer.”

Mr. Harmsworth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in answering a parliamentary question, explained the British position on the “political pledges” to the Armenians during the war:

I can find no definite written assurance given by this country to any Armenians. There are on the record a number of public utterances of an indefinite character….and in the Treaty of Sèvres we stipulated that the Armenians must be given a national home. This, as far as I can make out, is as far as the assurances have ever gone.

Nevertheless, extremely hostile and derogatory language, invented largely by the wartime British propaganda, disseminated particularly across America through a nationwide missionary network, permeated into the rhetoric of both American and Entente

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669 Curzon to Williams, December 6, 1921, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-39, Series 1, vol. 17, 515-6.
politicians at the time. In the partitioning of the spoils of the “Sick Man of Europe,” this antagonistic discourse was exclusively employed not only in public campaigns but also during the formal deliberations and talks among the allied statesmen. This became especially instrumental to delegitimize the Ottoman political order when the powers in Paris were engaged in their diplomatic struggle to design the postwar world order. The Armenian question was perhaps the most pronounced theme lending currency to the allied, including American, effort to virtually bring to an end the Ottoman political system. Paradoxically, however, the collapse of the Ottoman order did not lead to materialization of Armenian territorial aspirations.

Despite its material superiority at the end of the Great War, the American foreign policy was still in the process of formation, as shrewdly pointed out earlier by Wiseman.671 Wilson saw the war and ensuing peace conference as a great opportunity to remodel “the whole structure of international affairs” by making his Fourteen Points program the foundation of new world order.672 Regardless of President Wilson’s enthusiasm, the geopolitical factors, the strong Congressional opposition and the disharmony in his own foreign policy team constituted the main impediments standing in the way of Wilson’s new diplomacy.

Yet, one thing was more than certain. Wilson’s emphasis helped, probably inadvertently and of course to the dismay of Secretary Lansing, such notions as self-determination and nationality pervade international politics unleashing explosive processes which were to radically alter the world order in the coming decades. The Entente

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671 Memorandum on Anglo-American Relations, August 1917, Box 4, Folder 110, William Wiseman Papers.
672 “The Attitude of the United States and of President Wilson towards the Peace Conference,” October 20, 1918, ibid.
statesmen, above all the British ones, while enthusiastically endeavoring for the partition of Ottoman lands on the grounds of these new notions, were also undermining the legitimacy of their own rule in their colonial domains.
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