

**HARBORD MILITARY MISSION TO ARMENIA:  
“ THE STORY OF AN AMERICAN FACT FINDING MISSION AND  
ITS EFFECTS ON TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS ”**

**by**

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Title: Harbord Military Mission to Armenia: The Story of An American Fact Finding  
Mission and Its Effects on Turkish-American Relations

One of the most important episodes of Turkish-American foreign relations during the Independence War was General Harbord mission. Even though the idea behind the mission was to understand the feasibility of a large, independent Armenia, the real outcomes were mostly unexpected. The main purpose, which was related to the Armenian Question, has already been discussed by several academic studies. They put great emphasis on General Harbord's final report, which not only destroyed all the assumptions of an independent Armenia, but also of the long established Armenian lobby in America. But the real merit of the mission was its long-range effects on Turkish-American relations. The mission's findings gave support to the relatively few Americans trying desperately to change the American view of Turkey and establish healthy relations unbiased from the Armenian lobby. The other important side of the mission was unpublished findings about Turkey, Armenians, the independence movement, etc., which had been buried under the archives.

The Harbord mission was totally different and unique from its predecessors. First of all, its members were mainly composed of military personnel. They had the necessary cadre and sources to fulfill their duty. They talked to most of the main actors, visited all sides, and traveled across Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. They managed to produce a body of expert reports on all the aspects of these three countries. Unfortunately most of these reports and findings were never published. So, in short the mission's document collection is a kind of time capsule, which has a variety of information especially about the first phase of Turkey's independence war.

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Başlık: Harbord Military Mission to Armenia: Bir Amerikan Araştırma Heyeti'nin  
Hikâyesi ve Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri'ne Etkileri

Kurtuluş Savaşı döneminde Türk-Amerikan ilişkileri açısından en önemli safhalardan birisi Harbord Heyeti'dir. Her ne kadar Heyet'in görevlendirilmesindeki sebep büyük ve bağımsız Ermenistan'ın kurulup kurulamayacağı gözüксе de sonuçlar büyük ölçüde beklenmedik düzeydeydi. Asıl sebep olarak gözüken Ermeni Sorunu şimdiye kadar çeşitli akademik çalışmalarda tartışılmıştır. Ancak General Harbord'ın büyük, bağımsız Ermenistan hayalini ve köklü Ermeni lobisini yıkan nihai raporuna fazla vurgu yapmışlardır. Oysa Heyet asıl önemi Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerini üzerindeki uzun dönemli etkisinde yatmaktadır. Heyet'in bulguları, Amerika'nın Türkiye'ye bakışını değiştirmek ve Ermeni lobisinin taraflı etkisinden bağımsız sağlıklı ilişkiler kurulması için çalışan bir grup Amerikalıya destek verdi. Heyet'in bir başka önemi ise arşivlerde saklı kalan Türkiye, Ermeniler, bağımsızlık mücadelesi ve sair konulardaki bulgulardır.

Harbord Heyeti önceki araştırma çabalarından tamamen farklıydı. Öncelikle mensuplarının büyük kısmı askerlerden oluşmaktaydı. Görevlerini başarmak için gereken kadro ve imkânlarla sahiptiler. Başlıca aktörlerin büyük kısmı ile görüştüler. Bütün tarafları ziyaret ettiler. Türkiye, Gürcistan, Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan'ı baştan aşağı dolaştılar. Üç ülke hakkında her konuda bir çok rapor hazırladılar. Ne yazık ki bu raporların büyük bir çoğunluğu yayınlanmamıştır. Kısacası Heyetin belge koleksiyonu başta Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı olmak üzere geniş bir yelpazede bilgi içermektedir.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACIA	: American Committee for the Independence of Armenia
AEF	: American Expeditionary Forces (in Europe)
ARA	: American Relief Administration
HMMA	: Harbord Military Mission to Armenia
LTC	: Lieutenant Colonel
MSgt.	: Master Sergeant
POW	: Prisoner of War
Pvt.	: Private Soldier
PWW	: The Papers of Woodrow Wilson
Sgt	: Sergeant
1st Lt.	: First Lieutenant

## **PREFACE**

My purpose in writing this Ph.D. dissertation is to cast light on what happened at the beginning of the Turkish Independence War, which is the period of the establishment of modern Turkish-American relations. Even though there have been many academic works on Turkish-American relations, there has not been a study based on the original American documents by Turkish researchers on the Harbord Mission, which was the most important incident of the period. Not only have the American archives not been used in any of the existing studies, the Harbord Mission is mentioned in all studies from the perspective of the Armenian problem. Furthermore, since they depend on secondary sources, a lot of false information is assumed to be correct. Whereas, the Harbord Mission was the most important and comprehensive foreign affairs attempt made towards Turkey by the United States. Not only did the employment of the mission, the execution of the investigation trip and its reports influence the American administration and public, it also had a permanent effect on the bilateral relations of both countries.

Consequently, two points are emphasized in this dissertation. In the first place, the Harbord Mission was considered and examined from the perspective of Turkish-American relations. The Armenian problem was not taken as the main focus of the study. This problem was examined when it arose within the framework of the findings of the Harbord Mission. Second, the study was conducted on the basis of the original archive documents. In addition, articles that appeared in the media of the period and what the actors of the incident wrote have been studied as much as possible.

The archives of the Harbord Mission contain important information on many different subjects related to the Ottoman Empire and the southern Caucasus. The detailed statistical information on the population, finance and economy of the area is especially striking. However, many of these could be touched on only these documents briefly because of the scope of our study. In order to support researchers who work on different subjects, efforts were made to show the content and style of the documents by quoting the important parts of the documents. In doing so, the original structures of the



texts were reserved. Grammatical and terminology corrections in the quotations were not made.

The dissertation is composed of three parts. Following a brief summary of Turkish-American relations, in the first part is given the outlines of the developments during and after World War I. A particular emphasis is put on the interests shown by the American administration and the public opinion in the future of the Ottoman Empire, hence, their efforts to realize the facts of the region. The studies and findings of the official and special committees assigned prior to the Harbord Mission have been mentioned to the extent that they influence the subject. Although, these efforts have had considerable impact on the bilateral relations of both countries, a detailed survey is beyond the scope of this study.

In the second part, the process of assignment of the Harbord Mission and the execution of the investigation trip are examined. Since this is the first ever to make a comprehensive study relating to this issue, it is necessary to give as much detailed information as possible. Indeed, the Turkish literature on this subject abounds with fallacies. Furthermore, attention is drawn to subjects conducive to future studies. Naturally, discussion of technicalities has been avoided. Otherwise, both the length of the dissertation would increase and matters of real importance would be diverted.

The final part presents an evaluation of the final report prepared by the Harbord mission, including the appendices, and its repercussions.

The worst hardship faced during the study was the difficulty in reaching the primary sources available in various archives and libraries in the U.S. However, these documents are available thanks to the Internet. The valuable inventories of the TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly), Bilkent University, and METU facilitated the research.

## PART I

### 1. THE BEGINNING PERIOD OF OTTOMAN-U.S. RELATIONS

While the first American commercial ships began visiting Ottoman ports only in the 1870s, the first American missionaries arrived in the Empire in 1820. The first American consulate was opened in İzmir in 1824. The official starting date of Ottoman-U.S. relations was the Agreement of Commerce dated May 7, 1830. Starting from the 1860s, as missionary colleges began education programs, Ottoman subjects of the Christian faith, particularly from Syria, began migrating to the U.S. with increasing numbers in the 1870s.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the distance between the two countries and the technology of the time, the volume of the relations attained at the beginning of the twentieth century was high. However, from the beginning, a structural problem emerged in the bilateral relations. The political and diplomatic relations stayed limited to the consular affairs and services, and as a result bilateral relations did not develop much. Almost all of the relations consisted of missionary activities and commerce. Their relations continued under the influence of strong lobbying by the missionaries and the limited one of merchants. Therefore, as a state, the interests of the U.S. in the Ottoman Empire were limited, compared to those of the other western nations. Even though there were some exceptional personal efforts by diplomats and

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed information on the establishment and the beginning period of the Ottoman-US relations: See Fuat Ezgü, **Osmanlı İmparatorluğu-Amerika Birleşik Devletleri İktisadi, Siyasi ve Kültürel Münasebetlerinin Kuruluşu ve Gelişmesi (1795-1901)**, (İstanbul: İ.U. Faculty of Letters, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Dissertation No:555).

When numerical data is considered, the dimension of the missionary activities can be understood more easily. There were 112 registered Protestant churches and 44959 members of their congregation in 1900. As of 1899 there were 412 missionary schools and 21437 students. Between 1905-1914 2.634.344 dollars had been spent. For detailed information, see Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, **Anadolu'daki Amerika: Kendi Belgeleriyle 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları**, 3rd Edition, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2000), pp. 97-164

According to the information provided by the Turkish Ambassador to Washington Mr. Mavroyani, to the Department of Foreign Affairs on March 29, 1892, of the 455.302 who immigrated to the US in 1890, 2167 of them were Ottoman citizens. The majority were Syrians, the rest were Armenians. Haluk Selvi, "Amerika Birleşik Devletlerinde Ermeni Faaliyetleri", **Bilim ve Aklın Aydınlığında Eğitim Dergisi** (Online Version), Year: 4, Number: 38, April 2003

businessmen from time to time, there was no noteworthy progress in the political sense.<sup>2</sup>

It is appropriate to discuss briefly the activities of the American missionaries because of their influence on the bilateral relations. In order to convert Jews and Muslims to the Protestant faith, starting from 1820s the first American missionaries began arriving in the Ottoman Empire without first obtaining any official permission. As time passed the number of missionary stations, schools, hostels and churches rose, yet except for a few people, the attempts to convert Jews and Muslims did not yield any results. But, contrary to their expectations, the missionary activities turned out to be more effective among the Eastern Christians. While the Greek Orthodox Church, with its strong bonds among its congregation, was able to keep its followers away from the missionaries, the Armenian Gregorians, who were going through some serious religious and social crises, and to a lesser degree, the Assyrians and Nestorians, were affected by the missionaries' propaganda.<sup>3</sup>

As the American missionaries were working to convert the Eastern Christians to the Protestant faith, they unknowingly shattered the existing political balance. The Armenian and Assyrian alphabets were modernized and standardized so as to ease religious education.<sup>4</sup> Thousands of New Testaments were printed with the new alphabets. The Armenian language was taught to the Armenians, the great majority of whom spoke Turkish as their mother tongue, and the Assyrian language was taught to the Assyrians,

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<sup>2</sup> The attempt to benefit from some American naval engineers such as Henry Eckdorf, Forester Rhodes and Reevel in order to improve the Ottoman shipyards was one of these exceptional examples. See Charles Mac Farlane, **Kismet or the Doom of Turkey**, (London: no name of pub., 1853)

<sup>3</sup> KOCABAŞOĞLU, **op.cit.**, pp. 13-50  
Mark Malkasian, "The Disintegration of the Armenian Cause in the United States, 1918-1927", **International Journal of Middle East Studies**, vol.16, 1994, pp. 349-351

<sup>4</sup> For nationalism and the process of the creation of the modern alphabets and its importance see Benedict Anderson, **Hayali Cemaatler: Milliyetçiliğin Kökenleri ve Yayılması**, çev. İ.Savaşır, (İstanbul :Metis Yayınları, 1993), pp. 47-51, 83-98

During the French Revolution in 1789, % 50 of the population had French as their mother tongue and only about %12-13 could speak it correctly. Only through spreading and expanding the use of the French language and providing mandatory education under state control, was the French nation born. Erik J. Hobsbawm, **1780'den Günümüze Milletler ve Milliyetçilik: Program, Mit, Gerçeklik**, (trans.) O. Akınhay, (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1993), pp. 80-81

whose mother language was Persian. As a result, the Armenians and the Assyrians began to be more interested in their own national identities. While nationalism did not appear to be effective among the Assyrians because of their limited number and isolated geographic location, it spread rapidly among the Armenians, a part of who resided in towns and cities and mostly dealing with trade and other crafts made a great leap in nationalism too.<sup>5</sup>

As the United States was slowly becoming captive of the process which had been started by the missionaries, the Great Powers, namely, Great Britain, and France, began to regard the Armenians, who were looking for independence, as a useful tool for themselves. However, this was not a unilateral utilization. Armenian intellectuals and protestant clergy were aware of the possibility of taking advantage of the Great Powers. Russia, particularly, after its successes in the Balkans needed collaborators in order to attain its aim of reaching the warm seas. Russia clearly was talking about the project of an independent or autonomous Armenia as of the 1860s.<sup>6</sup>

With the 1878 Berlin Agreement “the Armenian Problem” officially became part of the international relations and “Eastern Question”. The solution which the English imposed satisfied neither the Armenian elite group nor Russia. On the contrary, it caused disappointment as a result of not fulfilling the great promises that had been given. However, in considering the subject at hand, what is important is the change in the American missionaries’ attitude towards the issue. From this point on, the purpose was not only to propagate and spread Protestantism, but to create an independent or autonomous Armenia carved from Ottoman Empire and would be under the protection of the West, and, if possible, to create a homeland for the other eastern Christians.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Daniel, **American Philanthropy in the Near East 1820-1960**, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970), p. 111

<sup>6</sup> Vernon Asaturian, “Armenia in the World Arena, 1914-1921”, **Armenian Review**, vol. 46, no. 1-4, Spring-Winter 1993, pp. 126-127  
Salahi Ramsdan Sonyel, **The Ottoman Armenians: Victims of Great Power Diplomacy**, (London: K. Rustem R. Brother, 1987), pp. 27-32

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Salt, **Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians 1878-1896**, (London: Frank Cass, 1993), pp. 53-57

Terrorist activities carried out by small groups of Armenian separatists caused a great deal of bloodshed in eastern Anatolia. The incidents between 1880 and 1890 appeared in the headlines of the newspapers and magazines of the West. Western public opinion followed the developments almost on a daily basis. This was made possible through the daily news bulletins of the missionaries and the American consulates that were under their influence. The Armenian separatists consciously and greatly made use of the media's close interest in this subject. The Muslim populace was being agitated by the acts of Armenian terrorists and attacked the Armenian villages. As the news of massacres spread across the U.S., the American public opinion increased donations to the missionaries. While negative propaganda was drawing a completely negative and devilish portrait of the Muslims and of a corrupt Ottoman Empire, it created an image of innocent, helpless and massacred Armenians.<sup>8</sup>

A natural result of the Armenian propaganda, on the other hand, was well-organized associations set up by Armenians or the friends of Armenians. These associations began to be so influential on the U.S. administration that in August 1895 demands concerning the employment of the U.S. Navy to interfere in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire in favor of the Armenians<sup>9</sup> were

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H.W.V. Temperley, **A History of the Peace Conference of Paris**, vol.6, (London: Oxford Uni. Press, 1924), pp.80-81  
 SONYEL, **op.cit.**, pp.32-56

<sup>8</sup> SALT, **op.cit.**, pp. 63,79  
 DANIEL, **op.cit.**, pp. 117-118, 120

In 1895 Armenian lobbyists began to set up organizations without borders. While English and American citizens of Armenian descent were setting up joint associations, English and American missionaries were trying to press their governments in a coordinated way. The extremist Hunchak revolutionary organization had already been organized in both countries. Ernest R. May, **Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America As a Great Power**, (Chicago: Imprint Pub., 1991), s.27-29

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the proposal of a naval intervention to the Ottoman Empire was not a new idea. During the Greek uprising (1822) following the effective Greek propaganda the US administration was under the heavy pressure of both its public and Great Powers. President James Monroe believed that the Greeks should be supported. However, the Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, with his effective opposition not only prevented the demands for intervention, but also made possible the active isolation policy, which was called in 1823 as "Monroe Doctrine". See. Paul Constantine Pappas, **The United States and the Greek War for Independence 1821-1828**, (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1985), pp.123-126

made by the senators sympathetic to the Armenians. The same demands would be repeated in December of that year, too. During the course of these arguments, a small number of American citizens went to Russia for military training in order to join the armed struggle. They were smuggled into Anatolia in order to act as the leaders of rebel bands. Thus, Turkey was then pulled further into the problems.<sup>10</sup> But despite all the efforts by the Armenian separatists and the missionaries, the western intervention they had envisaged did not take place. While Russia's attention was diverted to comparatively more important issues in the Far East, Great Britain was dealing with issues in Africa. The U.S. administration was ready to help financially, but was not so willing to send troops. Furthermore, the exaggerated propaganda aroused the suspicion of the western public opinion.<sup>11</sup>

Even though the military failures of the Armenian revolts and the inability to realize of the western intervention caused great disappointment among the Armenian nationalists, they achieved a remarkable success in terms of influencing U.S. public opinion. Americans began to perceive Armenians and other eastern Christians as ancient and noble peoples who were subject to unimaginable persecution because of their faith. Turks, on the other hand, were ruthless invaders who should return to their barbaric homeland in Central Asia. Because of this one-sided propaganda, the hardships that the Turks had to endure, the massacres conducted against them and, their even worse living conditions in comparison to the Christians

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<sup>10</sup> DANIEL, **op.cit.**, s.119

In May 1895, Armenian militants of the US citizenry landed on the Syrian shore and instigated revolts in Süveydiye, Antep, Maraş and Zeytun regions. For this and other incidents see SONYEL, **op.cit.**, pp. 169, 173, 195, 207

In 1896 the US administration sent the USS Kentucky warship to İstanbul in order to show off force, to give moral support to the Americans and to indemnify the losses of the missionaries. The captain of the battleship Colby Mitchell Chester, personally visited the sultan and got the assurance that the compensation would be paid. Bilmez Bülent Can, **Demiryolundan Petrole Chester Projesi (1908-1923)**, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yay, 2000), pp. 113-115

<sup>11</sup> DANIEL, **op.cit.**, p.118

SALT , **op.cit.**, p. 142

were not known. This cultural blindness and the acceptance of the Armenian allegations without question influenced the U.S.-Ottoman relations greatly.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. WORLD WAR I

Following its defeat in the Balkan Wars, the Ottoman Empire not only lost a great portion of its territory in Europe, but caused the belief to be accepted by the Great Powers that it was not possible for the Ottoman Empire to survive as a state any longer. Now for Russia's desires of territorial gains there were no longer British or French obstacles, and even the latter countries began to scheme to secure their shares. Certainly, this structural change gave tremendous hope to the Armenian nationalists and their supporters.

Despite these and similar changes, the outbreak of the First World War changed the balances in Europe and the Middle East completely. It was no longer possible to talk about international equations of politics, and new equations had not been formulated completely yet. In other words, vacuum and ambiguity reigned. This vacuum, which emerged contrary to the expectations of many leading statesmen, would continue until the end of the Second World War. The lands controlled by the Ottoman rule, were affected much more than many other areas. Many dynamics which were started during and after the First World War, not only made the already complex Middle East situation more so, but caused the Great Powers to be pulled into the area at an unprecedented level.

These developments affected the U.S. however at a limited level. Even though it was being questioned, the effective application of the Monroe Doctrine and, despite the new technologies, the vast distance of the U.S. from Europe still kept the U.S. outside the scope politically. With the declaration of the state of war, serious tremors began to be felt in Ottoman-U.S. relations which had been strained even before both sides joined the war. Particularly, two concurrent developments played major roles in this tension. The first incident took place as a result of the anti-Ottoman Armenian

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<sup>12</sup> SALT, **op.cit.**, pp. 21, 25-26, 67  
KOCABAŞOĞLU, **op.cit.**, pp. 166-167

propaganda which since 1912 had been increased by the Armenians. The Ottoman Ambassador to Washington, Ahmed Rüstem Bey (Alfred Bilinski), dropping out of the diplomatic etiquette, made a harsh statement criticizing the American press about their general support of the Armenians and giving a voice to Armenian propaganda. This statement disturbed the administration and the people as well. Ahmed Rüstem Bey did not withdraw his statement despite the pressure and returned to İstanbul. Right after this incident, the Ottoman Empire declared that starting from October 1, 1914 it had annulled the capitulations unilaterally. The American administration with confusion and great anger declared that it did not recognize this decision.<sup>13</sup>

The relations worsened with the outbreak of the Armenian uprising in eastern Anatolia and the 1915 deportation Armenians from the area. Under the leadership of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, which was set up in September 1915 (after 1919 it was renamed Near East Relief) a big campaign that aimed to cover all of the U.S. was started. With sensational news, the already existent anti-Ottoman and Turkish atmosphere spread even to the remotest parts of the country through church gatherings and Near East Relief Days support campaigns at which 11 million dollars were raised, an amount beyond all expectations.<sup>14</sup>

The U.S. declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Americans of Armenian and Greek descent wanted the U.S. to declare war on the Ottoman Empire immediately. They already had some influential politicians siding with them. For instance, former President Theodore Roosevelt talked about the need to declare war on the Ottoman Empire because of the massacres

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<sup>13</sup> Roger R. Trask, **The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939**, (Minneapolis: The Uni. of Minnesota Press, 1971). pp. 18-19

<sup>14</sup> Some prominent figures like the Secretary of State Robert Lansing; former presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft were members of this organization. TRASK, **op.cit.**, p. 21

Joseph L. Grabill, **Missionaries Amid Conflict; Their Influence Upon American Relations with the Near East 1914-1927**, (Indiana Uni., Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 1964), pp. 33-34, 38-39  
DANIEL, **op.cit.**, pp 152-153

The great contribution of the British to the Armenian propaganda in the U.S. should not be underestimated. British diplomat Lancelot Oliphant, commented on the U.S. protest of the Ottoman Empire in February 1916 concerning the massacres against the Armenians: "I suppose we are already making use of the Armenian question for propaganda in the U.S." SONYEL, **op.cit.**, p.305



carried out against the Armenians. However, despite the anti-Ottoman feelings prevalent in the U.S., war was not declared on the Ottoman Empire in order to protect the missionaries and their facilities, and to keep out of the battle fronts outside of Europe. The Ottoman rulers sought to avoid war with the U.S. Nevertheless, diplomatic relations with the U.S. were suspended on April 20, 1917 as a result of intensive German pressure. Not having declared war on each other would lead to significant difficulties during the peace negotiations after the war.<sup>15</sup>

The former U.S. ambassador to İstanbul, Henry Morgenthau, is a significant personality with regard to his influence on the subject at hand. During his tenure (November 1913- January 1916) he served as an important supporter of the Armenian lobby in the U.S. and Europe and a news source about the Ottoman Empire. By organizing American consulates and missionaries, he realized the continuous flow of information to himself. On the other hand, he covered up news about the attacks and massacres committed by Armenians against Turks. The only important thing for him was news that supported the pro-Armenian propaganda. He also supplied news and information to the wartime propaganda books that spread the news of the alleged massacres of Armenians.<sup>16</sup> Not satisfied with this, he obtained

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<sup>15</sup> TRASK, **op.cit.**, pp.21-22

The foreign affairs representative of the ABCFM, James L. Barton, and the missionaries in the Ottoman Empire were instrumental in getting this resolution passed. Thomas A. Bryson, **Woodrow Wilson, The Senate, Public Opinion and the Armenian Mandate 1919-20**, (Athens: Uni. of Georgia, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 1965), pp.6-8

<sup>16</sup> An interesting document indicating that the news concerning the Armenian atrocities towards Turks reached Morgenthau was the official message of the Department of Domestic Affairs dated September 13, 1915. In this official message, it is stated that the letter sent by US Consul in the Mamuretülaziz (Elazığ) to the Ambassador was opened and inspected. The Consul in his letter reported the murders committed by the Armenians in the region. See. **Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915-1920)**, 2.printing, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995), p.91, Document no: 103

The books referred to are still accepted as the basic source and evidence for the claims of so called massacres against Armenians. These are: The books sponsored by the British administration and written by Lord Bryce "The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire" (1916), Arnold Toynbee's "Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation" (1915) and the book by German protestant priest Johannes Lepsius "Le Rapport Secret du Dr. Johannes Lepsius sur les Massacres D'Armenie" (1918). Heath W. Lowry, **The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story**, (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1990), pp.70-77

the permission of President Woodrow Wilson as well as the support of the State Department; he prepared a book called *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*.

Their common aim was to increase the support of the American public of the war. People would realize the need for war when they learned about the alleged massacres committed by the Turks, who were the ally of the Germans. The book was first published in April 1918 as a serial story in a popular magazine named *World's Work* and it caused echoes across the U.S. Even those who had been suspicious of the massacre news began to believe that this was the absolute truth.<sup>17</sup> All the Americans who came to Turkey after the war were of the same opinion, "Turks unjustifiably massacred the Armenians and forced them to migrate from their historic motherland."<sup>18</sup>

Before the U.S. entered into the Great War, President Wilson had already been talking about entering the war in 1916 for "humanitarian reasons" as a result of the Armenian Propaganda and Morgenthau's reports. This fact alone shows that the propaganda was not only effective among the ordinary people, but also the U.S. administration itself too. Again, as stated above, as a result of the one-sided propaganda, the ordinary people and the U.S. administration never learned of the Armenian attacks on and massacres of the Turks. The missionaries and the officials of the Near East Relief particularly covered up the news that might show the Armenians evil and doing wrong.<sup>19</sup>

### **The War to End All Wars**

Unlike his predecessors, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson did not believe in an international policy that was realistic and depended upon power. He dreamed of an international order that depended on peace, justice and equity, a conception that had its roots in his former career as a university

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<sup>17</sup> LOWRY, **op.cit.**, pp. 1-6, 8-24

<sup>18</sup> DANIEL, **op.cit.**, pp. 160-161

<sup>19</sup> GRABILL, **op.cit.**, pp.58, 233

In the similar way, the attacks and massacres the Turks had undergone were overlooked in the previous periods too. See. SALT, **op.cit.**, p.11

professor. According to him, the U.S. could not limit itself only in the American continent any longer. The U.S., taking the initiative at once, should take the steps that would change the corrupt, degenerate Europe-centered world-order. It should quit its policy of “magnificent isolation”, and take its place at the front of the new world order. However, American public opinion was not ready for such a radical change in foreign policy. Only a small minority, with businessmen at the top of the list, was ready to provide the support because of their own interest.<sup>20</sup>

President Wilson dared to attempt this radical change thanks to the World War I, which he had cursed at the beginning. The slogan he had used in his re-election campaign had been “He kept us out of war”. However, Germany, with its unlimited submarine warfare, not only impaired American commercial interests, but also, by sinking the passenger liner Lusitania and causing the death of more than 100 American citizens drew a deep reaction. The greatest shock was learning the statement made by the German Foreign minister, Alfred Zimmermann, that in case of the American involvement in the war, they had a project to use Mexico against the USA. Among the American public opinion, which had had sympathy for the Entente countries from the beginning and grew more hostile with the submarine attacks, there was widespread anger at Zimmermann’s statement. Now, President Wilson could enter the war for “peace without victory” with contentment.<sup>21</sup>

The war showed that the U.S. was not ready for war in the military sense. At the same time, inexperience and idealism in the diplomatic sphere showed negative results. Americans heard of the four secret agreements, which the Allied countries had signed after long negotiations during the war when the Bolshevik Russian government made some statements to the public opinion during November-December 1917.<sup>22</sup> The U.S. administration,

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<sup>20</sup> Lloyd E. Ambrosius, **Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition**, (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 1987), pp.1-14

<sup>21</sup> Thomas A. Bailey, **Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace**, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), pp.5-12

<sup>22</sup> The texts of the secret meetings were published in the Bolshevik newspapers, The Pravda and the Izvestiya in November-December 1917. In Europe the newspapers of Manchester Guardian and London Daily Herald published them only in January-February of 1918 and the New York Times newspaper began to publish them in December 1917. During the

unable to learn the interest oriented power diplomacy, continued to be manipulated by the Entente countries, specifically by Great Britain, for their own aspirations.

An important example showing the dilemma into which the U.S. administration was pulled was the Russian intervention. This military operation not only contains valuable information about this study, but also the experiences gained through it prevailed directly in the draft of the proposal for the Armenian Mandate and U.S.-Ottoman relations.

### **Intervening Russia**

Russia was experiencing significant developments when the U.S. joined the war. After the Tsarist rule had been overthrown, the short-lived Kerensky government had decided to go on with the war. It was of vital importance for Great Britain and France that Russia should continue the war because the situation on the Western Front was critical. Otherwise, the German and Austrian units at the Eastern Front would be freed.

What was anticipated with fear happened in the autumn of 1917: The Bolsheviks took over the government and the Eastern Front collapsed. The British administration got the idea that with interventions at critical points they could change the balance in favor of the white Russians. But neither Great Britain nor France had extra units to assign on this operation, which was both politically and militarily risky. In the Far East, Japan was ready to provide the necessary support. The U.S. had to be persuaded and its support should be gained. However, the U.S. neither had any strategic interests nor any clear objectives in Russia.

The Supreme War Council decided to intervene in Russia on December 24, 1917 in order to prevent the expansion of Germany. The British and the French tried for many months to persuade the US to join them. With the Brest-Litovsk agreement signed on March 3, 1918, Russia officially withdrew from the war and Germany gained great advantage. Now

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coming months of 1918, the British leftists published them altogether. See. F. Seymour Cocks, **The Secret Treaties and Understanding**, (London; Union of Democratic Control, 1918), pp. 9-12

Hoover claimed that the texts of the secret treaties came into Wilson's possession with significant errors in May 1917. Herbert Hoover, **The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson**, (New York: Popular Library, 1961), pp.89-90

the situation became critical for Great Britain. President Wilson had to be convinced through every available means. For, the American army and Department of State were basically against the intervention.<sup>23</sup>

President Wilson, without even consulting his closest advisor, Colonel Edward M. House, made the decision to deploy the American troops in northern Russia and Siberia. In the resolution dated July 17, 1918, one of the main reasons expressed for sending American troops to Siberia was to save the Czech POWs who were stuck there. The British, addressing the idealist and humane side of the president, claimed that unless the Czech POWs were helped they face a massacre.<sup>24</sup> This was good enough for President Wilson. The other reasons were to help to save the military equipment in Murmansk and Vladivostok and to help the Russians to form a new government. One additional reason, which was not expressed in the resolution, was to keep Siberia open for the interests of American business circles.<sup>25</sup>

Two reinforced infantry regiments under the command of Brigadier General William S. Graves (a total of 9300 troops) arrived in Vladivostok on August 16, 1918, while a reinforced infantry regiment under the command of Colonel George E. Stewart (a total of 5108 troops) arrived in Archangel on 4 September 1918. No sooner had the units stepped on Russian soil than it became obvious that the President's reasons for intervention had been

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<sup>23</sup> Edward M. Coffman, "The Intervention in Russia, 1918-1921", **Military Review**, vol.88, no.9, September 1988, pp 60-61

<sup>24</sup> In the minutes of the meeting of the Supreme War Council which met in Paris on 20 May 1919, read the reason of President Wilson's decision to intervene Russia as: "President Wilson said that the Americans had only gone to Siberia to get the Czechs out, and Czechs had refused to go." N. Gordon Levin, **Woodrow Wilson and the Paris Peace Conference**, 2nd edition, (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Co., 1972), p.198

<sup>25</sup> George F. Kennan, who was the ideologist of the cold war and employed at the American Embassy in Moscow at that period, described Wilson's decision as follows: "It would be a mistake to conclude that in making the decision of July, 6, Wilson thought that he had found the perfect or final solution to this problem. This was a troubled decision on a problem which had baffled him up to this time and would continue to baffle him in the future." George F. Kennan, **Soviet-American Relations 1917-1920; The Decision to Intervene**, (Princeton: Princeton Uni. Press, 1958), p. 404

Gibson Bell Smith, "Guarding the Railroad, Taming the Cossacks: The US Army in Russia, 1918-1920" **Prologue** (Online version), vol.34, no.4, Winter 2002

baseless. The Czech POWs were, as it had been claimed, were not surrounded by Bolshevik enemies facing the threat of destruction. The situation was almost the opposite. Armed Czechs had organized regular units and joined the civil war. In other words, they did not want to be saved. The equipment at Murmansk had already been captured by the Bolsheviks, too. Furthermore, the American units had to land at Archangel instead of Murmansk, their original destination. The cause of supporting the Russians to set up a new government was only fancy. Russia was in a complete disorder and embroiled in civil war. The presence of the soldiers of the Allied countries did not bring order but only increased the anarchy.<sup>26</sup>

The American unit commanders faced a difficult dilemma. Not only was there no coordination among the units in northern Russia and Siberia, they did not know what to do either, since they had not been given any clear orders or objectives as to what to do. The situation was hopeless. The Whites, whom they had been sent to support, had already lost the support of the Russian people and had turned into a gang rather than a military unit. As they had not made any preparations or obtained any information about the conditions of the region, its geography, its people, logistics and communication, the commands structure was not very clear either. The conditions of the task very heavy and not having a specific objective made the troops even more hopeless.<sup>27</sup>

While the army was trying hard to find ways to bring the troops home safely, on November 11, 1918 World War I officially came to an end. Therefore, the need for the Eastern Front, which had been formed to stand

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<sup>26</sup> Army Chief of Staff, General Peyton C. March, summarized the situation or rather the failure they encountered as follows: "Almost immediately after the Siberian and North Russian forces had reached their theaters of operations events moved rapidly and uniformly in the direction of the complete failure of these expeditions to accomplish anything that their sponsors had claimed for them." COFFMAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 61-64

Richard K. Kolb, "When U.S. Troops Fought in Russia: The Bolo War", **Army**, no.38, April 1988, pp.71-72

<sup>27</sup> While General Graves was largely able to keep his unit outside the events despite the pressure by the Allied countries, Colonel Stewart did not show similar success. The British completely took over the control of his unit. KOLB, **op.cit.**, pp.72-77

SMITH, **op.cit.**

COFFMAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 66-67

against Germany, disappeared. Nevertheless, as a result of the plan by the British and French to stop the Bolsheviks, the American troops were never able to withdraw. As the American troops suffered casualties against the Bolsheviks and local gangs, the American public opinion became impatient. As the families of the service members pushed Congress to bring back the troops, the newspapers reported that the U.S. had become bogged down in the area.<sup>28</sup>

With the total defeat of the last White regular units, the reasons for the stay disappeared and the U.S. troops faced a great danger. Even though it had been decided to withdraw the units in Archangel in February 1919, the final unit departed the area as late as 27 June. The units in Siberia were the much more unlucky. The last American soldier left Vladivostok on April 1, 1920. The total number of casualties on both fronts was 412 dead and 357 wounded. Considering that it was not a real war, the number of the casualties was serious. With the help of luck, the American units completed their withdrawal without any additional losses, without being subjected to Russian Attacks<sup>29</sup>

Even though the intervention in Russia was a limited operation carried out with a few units, it had some significant effects on U.S. domestic and international politics. What appears, first and foremost, is that despite all the opposition, President Wilson's decision was made under the influence of the Entente countries and for emotional reasons, which disturbed the State department and army greatly.<sup>30</sup> Second, sending troops to a location where

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<sup>28</sup> The minutes of the meeting of the Supreme War Council dated February 14, 1919 show that President Wilson, who had learned the real situation, wanted to end the intervention as soon as possible: "...the troops of the Allied and Associated Powers were doing no sort of good in Russia. They did not know for whom or for what they were fighting. They were not assisting any promising common effort to establish order through out Russia. His conclusion, therefore, was that the Allied and Associated powers ought to withdraw their troops from all parts of Russian territory." LEVIN, **op.cit.**, p.192

KOLB, **op.cit.**, p.79

COFFMAN, **op.cit.**, p. 67

<sup>29</sup> COFFMAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 67-70

KOLB, **op.cit.**, p. 80

SMITH, **op.cit.**

<sup>30</sup> For the diplomatic aspects of the intervention in Russia and other problems faced see. KENNAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 405-429

there were no specific American interests caused President Wilson to lose the confidence of the Congress and the people as well. Keeping the troops, particularly, under arms for seventeen more months in the conflict zone despite the end of the war drew a lot of criticism. The press, keeping the subject on front pages, caused the protests to increase. Third, it became obvious that the British and the French distorted the truth and the events and made use of the U.S. for their own interest. Fourth, it became clear that this military operation, which had started without any information or preparation and a clear policy, had been doomed to create serious problems and cause a loss of morale among the troops. Finally, this operation, which had been intended for humanitarian purposes, did not receive public support, but turned the sympathy of the Russian people into hatred. They provided the Bolsheviks with a picture of an “invading, imperialist” U.S., which was used extensively during the Cold War.<sup>31</sup>

In brief, President Wilson was at a desperate pass against public opinion, the political circles, and the army. It had already become a widely accepted conviction that whatever the reasons might be, the U.S. should not intervene in distant and unknown areas in which the US had no specific interests. The American troops should not be employed in unknown adventures without end in sight. This experience showed its result during the discussions of the Armenian mandate.

### **Secret Treaties**

The Ottoman Empire officially withdrew from the war and accepted defeat with the ratification of the Mondros Armistice Treaty on November 30, 1918. As the relations with the U.S. entered a new phase, the future of the Ottoman Empire opened doors to new problems. Since the U.S. had not officially declared war on the Ottoman Empire, it was not possible for it to join Entente Powers with the same status in the peace negotiations to be held

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<sup>31</sup> COFFMAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 70-71

During the Cold War, some American politicians and intellectuals perceived the intervention in Russia as a great chance, which was not utilized wisely. Nevertheless, today it is presented as a good answer to the question of what not to do during a military intervention. See. Paul E. Dunscomb, “US Intervention in Siberia as Military Operations Other Than War”, **Military Review** (Online version), vol. 82, no. 6, November-December 2002



with the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, it had been clear ever since the U.S. entered the war that it was willing to join actively in the process of restructuring to be done after the war. Furthermore, President Wilson clearly stated the interest he showed in the fate of the Ottoman Empire in the 12<sup>th</sup> point of his Fourteen Points.<sup>32</sup>

The only thoughts of its allies, Great Britain, France, and Italy, was to increase the share in the Ottoman lands which they had secured through secret treaties and to get rid of each other in critical areas. It is necessary to give some brief information related to the secret treaties.<sup>33</sup>

The first of these secret treaties was the İstanbul Treaty dated March 18, 1915, which was the result of the exchange of letters between Russia and Britain. Russia had always wanted to achieve its dream of reaching the Turkish Straits (The Boğaziçi and the Çanakkale, the coast of the Marmara Sea, and the islands of Bozcaada and Gökçeada), considering the importance the war attached to them and benefiting from the changing strategy of Great Britain. Turkish Straits and the area to the north of Iran were indicated as the areas of influence of Russia. In return Russia, recognized the British and French interests in the Ottoman Empire, and southern Iran was determined as the area of British influence. Russia also recognized the British and French economic and trade interests in the Turkish Straits.<sup>34</sup>

The second secret treaty, the London Treaty, was signed on April 26, 1915. Its purpose was to ensure that Italy join the war immediately on the Entente side. Italy had great dreams even though it had joined the contest of colonial expansionism very late. First of all, the Italians wanted to change the Adriatic Sea into an Italian lake. It had captured Libya after a grueling war, but was still looking for settlement areas in southern Anatolia for its increasing population. In lieu of remuneration of its full scale participation in

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<sup>32</sup> TRASK, **op.cit.**, pp. 23-24

<sup>33</sup> For the complete texts of the secret treaties see. COCKS, **supra**. 12  
J.C. Hurewitz, **Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East**, vol.2, (Princeton. D. Van Nostrand Co, 1956), pp. 5-25

<sup>34</sup> TEMPERLEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 4-9

the war Italy's sovereignty over Libya and the Dodecanese archipelago in the Aegean recognized and, in case of the division of Anatolia, it was implied that Italy would also get its due share. Following this treaty, Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire on August 20, 1915.<sup>35</sup>

The fate of the Ottoman territories in Asia was determined in another and the most important secret treaty, the Sykes-Picot Treaty, which was signed on May 16, 1916 between Britain and France. The treaty provisions were kept secret particularly from the Italians and the Arabs. After the draft treaty had been prepared by Mark Sykes and Georges Picot, it was submitted to Russia. Following the corrections made by the Russians, the treaty gained official status. According to this treaty, Russia would acquire Trabzon, Erzurum, Van and north of the Siirt-Urmiye line; France acquired the south of this line including Musul, Syria, Adana, Antep, Mardin, Kayseri and the area as far as Zara. Great Britain, on the other hand, would get Mesopotamia, including Baghdad and Palestine, and would make the arrangements necessary to establish an Arab state in the Arabia. In this way, all three countries would acquire the territories for which they had been yearning for many years. The Sykes-Picot Treaty would be the base for the Paris Peace and San Remo Conferences and would be transformed into the Sevres Treaty after some minor changes.<sup>36</sup>

The fourth treaty was prepared to formalize the Italian interests in Asia Minor. The Sykes-Picot Treaty had been prepared and signed without the knowledge of the Italians. But, Italy, too, had to be satisfied in one way or another. It would get a share of Antalya and the neighboring provinces with the St. Jean de Maurienne Treaty signed on April 17, 1917. One party of the treaty, Russia, could not ratify the treaty due to internal conflicts it was experiencing and the following revolution. During the post-war conflicts over partition of the Ottoman territories, Great Britain and France would declare that the treaty was void due to the fact that Russia had not signed it.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 10-13

<sup>36</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 14-17

<sup>37</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 19-22

However, it appeared that the partitioning out the Ottoman territories had been completed among Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy with secret treaties. At the end of the war, the outbreak of many problems could not be prevented. First of all, Russia withdrew from war after the revolution. The future of the Russian shares would create serious short-comings. Second, the Wilson points that the U.S. tried to implement ruled out these treaties. A way had be found to convince the U.S. Third, the interests of Italy and Greece, who had been convinced to join the war with certain promises, clashed. The only way to get out of this conflict was to prefer one of them. Finally, according to American statesman Herbert Hoover *"territories were defined with the precision of New England farm"*. Namely, these treaties envisaged sharing these territories without considering the people, geography, history and economy of these lands.<sup>38</sup> It was deemed and accepted that the peoples of the Middle East would yield to whatever was granted to them and that they would not react seriously to it.

### ***Inquiry and Wilson's Points***

As the Entente countries were secretly redrawing the post-war world map in line with their own interests, President Wilson was also working on a plan for a peaceful world to be set up under the leadership of the U.S. He was not alone in this work. American politicians, intellectuals and businessmen were exerting great effort for a new world order to be set up around American interests. Considering our own subject, *"Inquiry"* appears to have been the most significant group in this effort.

Colonel House, who was President Wilson's consultant and close friend, on his own initiative established a circle of friends which included experts in various subjects, innovative and curious about the controversial issues of the world. They discussed the future of the world and that of the U.S. During this time, in August 1917, the State Department announced a committee was needed to make preparations for the peace conference to be convened after the war. Thus it became possible for Colonel House to obtain official standing for his group. So in September 1917, Inquiry was established

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<sup>38</sup> HOOVER, **op.cit.**, pp.87-89

officially under the chairmanship of Dr. Sidney E. Mezes, the president of New York City College.<sup>39</sup>

Upon Wilson's demand, Inquiry prepared a report on the points that must be considered at the peace negotiations. The report was submitted to President Wilson on December 22, 1917. The predominant thinking in the part concerning the Ottoman Empire is important for us to understand Wilson's 12th Point:

The broad goals to be aimed at 'in order to render Middle Europe safe' included, for the Ottoman Empire, the neutralization and internationalization of Constantinople and the Straits, and control of the eastern terminals of the Berlin-Baghdad axis by an administration friendly to the Western nations. To accomplish this and as a matter of justice and humanity, a 'guaranteed autonomy' for the Armenians must be secured.<sup>40</sup>

Basing his thoughts on this report, Wilson prepared his "Fourteen Points". Since his desire to mention openly about Armenia, Syria and Mesopotamia was not found appropriate by his consultants, the 12<sup>th</sup> Point was not realized and finally he formulated it the following way:

The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development; and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.<sup>41</sup>

However, since this short point was not found adequate during the peace negotiations, Colonel House made the experts at the Inquiry interpret it. Wilson's approval was certainly secured for this restatement. The following

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<sup>39</sup> Laurence Evans, **United States Policy and the Partition of Turkey 1914-1924**, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), s. 71-72

As time passed, Inquiry institutionalized even more. With the financial support it received from the business circles it reorganized itself in 1921 received the name of "Council on Foreign Relations". Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) which also published "Foreign Affairs" journal is presently one of the influential think-tanks in the USA. "The Inquiry", **Council on Foreign Relations** 2 January 2004, <[http:// www.cfr.org/public/pubs/grose/grose01.htm](http://www.cfr.org/public/pubs/grose/grose01.htm)>

<sup>40</sup> EVANS, **op.cit.**, pp. 72-76

<sup>41</sup> President Wilson, announced his Fourteen Points and annexes to the public in his four separate speeches he made respectively on January 8, February 11, July 4 and September 27, 1918. See. HOOVER, **op.cit.**, pp.30-40

interpretation by the Inquiry experts clearly allowed the partition of the Ottoman Empire, including Asia Minor.<sup>42</sup> Without giving details, it accepted the principles of the Sykes-Picot Treaty, but it did not mention the share of Italians:

The same difficulty arises here as in the case of Austria-Hungary concerning the word 'autonomous'.

It is clear that the Straits and Constantinople, while they may remain nominally Turkish, should be under international control. This control may be collective or be in the hands of one power as mandatory of the League.

Anatolia should be reserved for the Turks. The coastlands, where Greeks predominate, should be under special international control, perhaps with Greece as mandatory.

Armenia must be (given) a port on the Mediterranean, and a protecting power established. France may claim it, but the Armenians would prefer Great Britain.

Great Britain is clearly the best mandatory for Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Arabia.

A general code of guarantees binding upon all mandatory in Asia Minor should be written into the Treaty of Peace.

This should contain provisions for minorities and the "open door". The trunk lines should be internationalized.<sup>43</sup>

Wilson's Fourteen Points showed its effect in a short time. The small nations and minorities who were seeking independence got the feeling that they finally had reached their goal, it offered hope to Germany and its allies, who were in big trouble. The fall of Bulgaria in October 1918 was the beginning of the end of the Axis alliance. Germany and Austria-Hungary through intermediaries separately applied to Wilson for an armistice. The German government declared on October 6, 1918 that it unconditionally accepted the Fourteen Points and that it demanded an armistice within accordance with these principles because they thought that the only way they

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<sup>42</sup> In his memoirs, Lloyd George expressed President Wilson's conviction about the Ottoman Empire in 1918 in the following words: "With regard to the Near East (...) President Wilson expressed himself in favour of the Turks being cleared out of Europe altogether and of their place at Constantinople being taken by some small power acting as a mandatory of the League of Nations." David Lloyd George, **The Truth About The Peace Treaties**, vol. 1, (London. Victor Gollancz, 1938), p. 189

<sup>43</sup> The Inquiry experts who wrote the comment were Frank Cobb and Walter Lippmann. Edward M. House, "Interpretation of President Wilson's Fourteen Points", **Mount Holyoke University**, 6 January 2004, <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/doc31.htm>>

could avoid a dishonorable defeat was through Wilson's points.<sup>44</sup> Since Germany's search for a self-respecting peace and the final disappointment it had to face is a good example of what would happen to the Ottoman Empire, it is significant for our subject.

Wilson declared that he wanted to negotiate particularly with the people not the present German government: "If it [Germany] must deal with the military masters and the monarchical autocrats... it must demand, not peace negotiations, but surrender." Wilson's message was immediately understood in Germany. The Council of Ministers asked Kaiser Wilhelm II to step down from the throne. Kaiser Wilhelm II sought asylum in the Netherlands on November 9, 1918. Upon this news, the German army, which still fighting Entente armies in French territory, was demoralized and units began to disintegrate. So the new German cabinet faced the desperate situation in which an armistice should be secured immediately before the Western Front collapsed.<sup>45</sup>

As the waves of hope that the Fourteen Points spread and the change of government destroyed Germany's will and determination to fight, American diplomats kept out of the armistice negotiations upon Wilson's instructions. This was great opportunity for France and Great Britain. On November 10, 1918, they forced the German delegation sign an armistice treaty with extremely harsh conditions. The new German cabinet, army and people were greatly disappointed. This disappointment was later replaced with the feeling of having been cheated after the Versailles Treaty and sowed the seeds of World War II. It is clear that Wilson had great responsibility in this development.<sup>46</sup> After the wave of hope that he had spread throughout Europe

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<sup>44</sup> Charles Seymour, **American Diplomacy During the World War**, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 355  
BAILEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 36-38, 44  
HOOVER, **op.cit.**, pp.40-42

<sup>45</sup> SEYMOUR, **op.cit.**, pp. 355-360  
HOOVER, **op.cit.**, pp.50-52

<sup>46</sup> SEYMOUR, **op.cit.**, pp. 361-365  
Henry Kissenger, **Diplomasi**, (trans) İ. H. Kurt, (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Yay., 1998), p.216

and the Middle East, by not responding to these hopes, he increased his responsibility even more.

### **The Mandate System**

During the war the leaders of the Entente countries frequently claimed that they had not entered the war in order to seize the territories of their enemies. “The war to end all wars” or “to make the world a secure place for democracy” was frequently used slogans. They claimed that their goal was the freedom of the people living under the “corrupt rule” of the Germans and Turks. The news of alleged massacres committed against the Armenians which were spread by the missionaries and Ambassador Morgenthau, therefore, was of utmost value. British Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour, in a letter to Wilson dated December 18, 1916, expressed that one of the goals of the Entente countries was “setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; and the turning out of Europe of the Ottoman Empire as decidedly foreign to Western Civilization” <sup>47</sup>

With the American participation in the war, it became obligatory to emphasize even more the slogan of “to give freedom to the peoples who are under the tyranny.” Particularly, the points referred to in the Fourteen Points that had been accepted by the Supreme War Council on November 4, 1918 brought more concrete obligations. With Great Britain in the lead, all of the Entente countries were in a dilemma. “Freedom of people” was only a part of the propaganda started to secure the support of the world public opinion. In fact, the Great Powers wanted to acquire the strategic lands that they had wanted for a long time.<sup>48</sup>

A South African, General Jan Christian Smuts, rescued the Allied countries from this dilemma. General Smuts, pointing to the problem that the people to be freed from German and Turkish rule presently did not have the

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<sup>47</sup> Temperley, who participated Paris Peace Conference summarized the situation as follows: “the Entente Powers... were exploiting Armenian atrocities to enlist in their armies by affecting to favour their national aspirations ” TEMPERLEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 28, 83  
David Lloyd George, **The Truth About The Peace Treaties**, vol. 2, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), pp. 756-758  
KISSENGER, **op.cit.**, pp.203-204

<sup>48</sup> HOOVER, **op.cit.**, pp.54-61

power or ability to rule themselves, declared the need to establish a “mandate” which was a kind of guardianship. According to him, the mandate to be practiced upon those people with different development levels had to be carried out by countries that were geographically and politically appropriate, under the supervision of the League of Nations. The proposal in question would create a status between full independence and something in between invasion and colonization. But since the assurance and control needed for the system to run soundly had not been established yet, in practice, it was nothing but an effort to maintain the colonization under a different name. General Smut’s proposal was not original. The concept of guardianship had been known since the time of ancient Romans and it had various examples in history. In addition to this, with the 1885 Berlin-Congo Agreement, the European powers had bestowed the guardianship of the Congo basin on the Belgian King, Leopold II, on condition that the supervision persisted. Congo had nothing different from other African colonies. In other words, it was apparent from the beginning that mandate was not a humanitarian solution.<sup>49</sup>

It was a happy coincidence for the Great Powers that Wilson had synchronously devised a system similar to the mandate of General Smuts.<sup>50</sup> It is not a pretentious idea to say that the studies carried out by the Inquiry led President Wilson to this plan.

Even though it was put in ink much later, the 12<sup>th</sup> Article of the Covenant of the League of Nations suitably summarizes the mandate regime:

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust to civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced

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<sup>49</sup> TEMPERLEY, **op.cit.**, pp.500-503  
AMBROSIUS, **op.cit.**, pp.68-69

<sup>50</sup> President Wilson, explained his mandate project to his staff on the way to Paris Peace Conference. HOOVER, **op.cit.**, s.229



nations who, by reason of their resources, their experience, or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatory on behalf of the League.

The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions, and other similar circumstances.

- (A) Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized, subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.
- (B) Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic, and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defense of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League.
- (C) There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centers of civilization, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interest of the indigenous population.

In every case of mandate, the Mandatory shall render to the Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.

The degree of authority, control, or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.

A permanent Commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates.”<sup>51</sup>

With Wilson’s adoption of the mandate that was formulated with great enthusiasm, the European powers were able to recover their old diplomatic tactics and techniques. Even though it was decided that the Mandatories

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<sup>51</sup> TEMPERLEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 501-502

were to be determined by the League of Nations, mandates had been distributed long before the establishment of the League. On May 7, 1919, with the participation of U.S., the Supreme Council agreed that B and C class mandates be shared. Naturally, the biggest shares went to England and France. Thus, it became clear right from the beginning that mandate regime was just a pretext for the European powers to prove their imperialistic desires to be legal <sup>52</sup>

Although the B and C class mandates were shared quite easily without any major problems, it was not the same for A class mandates. As stated above, the Asian lands of the Ottoman Empire had been partitioned through treaties signed secretly during the war. Therefore, on the whole, it was clear whose shares Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabian lands would be in the end. However, during the war, England had several times promised to the Arabs, who constituted the majority in the region, that they would back them in their revolt and accordingly had signed a number of agreements with them. Sherif Hussein and his son Faisal, having secured the support of some English officers, were against any kind of distribution. Hussein and Faisal believed that Arabs, through their rebellion, had helped the Allied Forces to gain a victory in Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Consequently, an independent Arab state had to be established on these lands. The English mandate could be accepted, but they were strictly opposed to the French mandate. <sup>53</sup>

Yet this was not the only problem. How could Britain and France keep the contradictory and separately given promises to Italy and Greece? Still more important than that, who would take over the mandate of the Turkish Straits and Armenia, which had fallen in Russia's share through the secret treaties. For England, the answer to the first question was that they should prefer Greece to Italy, by taking the support of the United States and France. The second problem could be solved only if the U.S. agreed to take on the

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<sup>52</sup> Hoover summarized the situation as follows: "It is my belief that the president, to put it bluntly, was just fooled. He was certainly under an illusion as to ultimate effect of the mandates." HOOVER, **op.cit.**, p. 231

<sup>53</sup> Harry N. Howard, **An American Inquiry in the Middle East: The King-Crane Commission**, (Beirut : Khayats, 1963), pp. 16-20  
See also. Thomas Lowell, **With Lawrence in Arabia**, (London: Hutchinson&Co Ltd., ?), pp.255-263

mandate. The Straits could be put under the control of an international commission. The only candidate for Armenia was the U.S., because neither England nor France, who had gained the support of public opinion through the propaganda of alleged Armenian massacres during the war, and who tried to show that the war had been legitimate, were intent on taking over the mandate of Armenia, which had many seemingly insoluble problems and little economic or strategic value. What is more, an Armenia under American mandate could act as a strong buffer zone against a possible Bolshevik move that could threaten the Middle East. Another advantage was that European public opinion, which had been subject to pro-Armenian propaganda, would be made to feel content. Therefore, the thing to be done was to use all the ways possible to make the United States agree to it. More important matters regarding distribution could be settled in the period that would elapse until the United States agreed to take over the mandate of Armenia.

### **3. PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE**

With the hope to playing an exclusive role in the establishment of a world in which there would be no wars, all “oppressed nations” would be independent, and the U.S. would be the leading nation, Wilson left the U.S. on December 4, 1918. He was accompanied not only by representatives from the Departments of State and War, but also by a twenty-two person Inquiry expert group headed by Sidney E. Mezes. The U.S. Peace Delegation took along hundreds of books, reports, and documents. They appeared to be the largest and in term of preparation the best delegation to attend the Paris Peace Conference. However, the delegation was to face many problems right from the start.

Most authorities, especially those in the U.S. Congress, did not comprehend why Wilson insisted on attending the Conference. Believing that the president’s attendance at the Conference would lead to many problems, they did everything to prevent him from doing so. They were not successful in their attempt; in addition to this Wilson included nobody to represent the Congress in the delegation, which was composed of technical experts and Wilson’s close colleagues only. Other political interest groups were excluded entirely. Second, the world public opinion had high expectations. The U.S.

President was seen as a philosopher-king, and the idea that he was going to solve all the problems of the world was widespread. Still worse, the U.S. public expected Wilson to tackle the problems of the Old World and return home with no additional responsibility for the U.S. or need to use any military and financial resources. Every stratum of the society in the U.S. began expressing the desire for a return to the policy of isolation. Third, Wilson and his staff were, in fact, men of ideals and they lacked diplomatic experience. They did not have any first-hand insight into the problems they hoped to tackle. Their knowledge of political, social, economic, historical, and geographical issues was based on only books. They themselves did not know what to do in practice. Finally, they went to the Conference without having defined a specific national goal in advance. The proposed goals such as “peace for humanity,” “make peace to end all wars,” and “world union” all were abstract concepts. Nobody had any idea as to how the Fourteen Points were to be put into practice whether there would be any concessions to be made and how a mandate regime was to be implemented without the occupation and incorporation of any foreign territory. In sum, unprepared and inexperienced, the US Peace Delegation<sup>54</sup> was headed into the unknown.

### **Council of Four**

In Europe, the public welcomed Wilson with great enthusiasm. The warm welcome extended to him in all the countries he visited was unprecedented. Moreover, as the president of a young country, when all the allies had been considerably weakened due to the heavy cost for the final victory, he had power and prestige. Hence, President Wilson and the U.S. delegation had rather high morale when the Paris Peace Conference began

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<sup>54</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, **Woodrow Wilson and World War I 1917-1921**, (New York: Harper&Row Pub., 1985), p. 136-138  
KISSENGER, **op.cit.**, p.214

On November 23, 1919, Lloyd George criticized President Wilson's exclusion of the opposition: “Wilson is a tragedy. He made a terrible mistake in not co-operating with the Republicans in the war. Great Britain, France and Italy had all coalition governments with great advantage.” Lord Riddell, **Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After 1918-1923**, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933), pp. 144-145

on January 12, 1919. It was as though all the problems had been left behind in the U.S.<sup>55</sup>

Although the Peace Conference had been designed to be representative of all attending countries in a complex structure based on various principles, it soon became obvious that the Council of Four would be the main decision maker. In the Council of the Four victorious powers, the U.S. was represented by President Woodrow Wilson, Great Britain by Prime Minister David Lloyd George, France by Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, and Italy by Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando. There was to be no replacement of the representatives until the end of June 1919.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to the official delegations, the Peace Conference also attracted many unofficial delegations and groups to Paris. Claiming to represent different peoples, geographical areas, or various interest groups, these unofficial delegations attempted to convince the Council of Four by all means available. Furthermore, the presence of multiple delegations claiming to represent the same nation or area, due to the disputes and differences between themselves, complicated things further. The Armenian delegations were a typical example. The Yerevan Republic (Russian Armenia), having recently proclaimed independence, was represented by a delegation led by writer Avetis Aharonian, while the Armenian National Delegation under the leadership of Egyptian Boghos Nubar Paşa claimed to represent the Ottoman Armenians.<sup>57</sup> All these unofficial delegations had their highest hope in President Wilson and the U.S. delegation.

The fate of the Ottoman Empire began to unfold in all aspects once the Conference started. As he presented to the Conference the first draft of

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<sup>55</sup> DILLON, **op.cit.**, pp.92-94

David Fromkin, **Barişa Son Veren Barış: Modern Ortadoğu Nasıl Yaratıldı ?**, (trans.) M. Harmancı, (İstanbul: Sabah Yayıncılık, 1994), p.388

<sup>56</sup> Twenty-seven countries were invited to the Conference. Though it was presented as a forum of all the nations of the world, the real arbiter, after all, was the Council of the Four. However, there were also the Council of the Five, the Council of the Ten, and 58 different Committees. FERRELL, **op.cit.**, pp.140-141  
KISSINGER, **op.cit.**, pp.212, 216

<sup>57</sup> Richard G. Hovannisian, **The Republic of Armenia, The First Year (1918-1919)**, vol. 1, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 250-260

the treaty founding the League of Nations on January 10, 1919, Wilson voiced the idea most dreaded by the Great Powers. Refusing any right to the Great Powers to occupy any territory based on a mutual agreement, and acting within the framework of the idea of self-determination, he declared that: "all policies of administration or economic development be based primarily upon the well-considered interests of the people themselves."<sup>58</sup>

Right at the beginning, the Council of Four acknowledged that a common agreement on the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire had already been reached. After all, the necessity to establish a mandate in Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Armenia, whose borders had not yet been drawn, had already been agreed upon. The issues to be debated concerned the French and Italian spheres of influence in Asia Minor, and the territory to be given to Greece. In this light, the Ottoman Empire was officially declared to have ended on January 30, 1919. The only issue the Council was worried about was that the U.S. position had not yet been made clear. The common desire of the victorious powers led by Great Britain was for the U.S. to assume the mandates over the Straits' Region and Armenia that, in accordance with the secret treaties, were to have been the spoils of Russia.<sup>59</sup>

There were many reasons why Britain so enthusiastically wanted the U.S. to play an active role in the territories of the Ottoman Empire. The leading reason was that Bolsheviks were about to take over the government in Russia. A buffer zone needed to be established between Bolshevik Russia which Britain deemed to be aggressive and expansionist, and its own oil interests in the Middle East. In addition to Armenia under a U.S. mandate, a possible Kurdish state might also have played this role. The second reason also concerned the need for an effective buffer zone. The war had made the Muslims more actively defend their own interests. The British were to be relieved by a buffer state of Armenia separating and restraining the Muslim bloc that included Central Asia, the Middle East, and Asia Minor. The third

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<sup>58</sup> Harry N. Howard, **The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History 1913-1923**, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), p. 219  
On January 5, 1918, Lloyd George made a similar statement: "The consent of the governed must be basis of any territorial settlement in this war" GEORGE, **op.cit.**, p. 757

<sup>59</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 219-221  
GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 758-759

reason had to do with the pro-Armenian, anti-Turkish propaganda that had made a great spiritual and ethical contribution to the Allies during the wartime and mobilized public opinion. At various levels many statesmen frequently mentioned the establishment of an independent Armenia as having been one of the goals of the war. Meaning, they had become captives of their own pro-Armenian propaganda. However, there existed no noteworthy natural resources in the geographical area in which Armenia was to be founded. On the contrary, there were lots of problems to be resolved. The Great Powers would be rid of a difficult situation if the U.S. assumed the mandate over a problematic Armenia. The final reason stemmed from British economic interests. Not only would the U.S. have ensured a more effective navigation of the Straits, but it also would facilitate the entry of British businesses into the region thanks to the large investments it would make into Armenia's infrastructure. In addition, a U.S. presence would have contributed to the stability in the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. With some border redrawing, Armenia and the Straits would become more economically attractive. Thus, it was imperative that the U.S., if possible at all, had to assume the mandate especially over Armenia, as well as over the Straits.<sup>60</sup>

As Britain and the other members of the Council of Four debated how best to divide the Ottoman Empire in line with their own interests, they found themselves in a difficult position vis-à-vis the demands of the official or unofficial delegations. The opening speech was made by Greek Prime Minister Eleutherios K. Venizelos who, addressing the Conference on February 3 and 4, 1919, spoke about the contributions his country had made to the war effort, and demanded self-determination rights for the Greeks living in the Ottoman territories. He also demanded the Greek occupation of all the islands in the Aegean Sea (including the Dodecanese archipelago (Oniki Adalar) then under Italian rule), all of Thrace, and the coastal region,

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<sup>60</sup> GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 1254-1256, 1259-1262

Salahi R. Sonyel, **Turkey's Struggle for Liberation and the Armenians**, (Ankara: Center of Strategic Research, 2001), pp. 21-22

Akaby Nassibian, **Britain and the Armenian Question, 1915-1923**, (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 149-150

FROMKIN, **op.cit.**, p.396

and hinterland of Western Anatolia. He finally demanded autonomy for the region of Trabzon and its vicinity.<sup>61</sup>

The delegation of United Armenia presented its demands in writing to the Conference on February 12 and orally on February 26. In the rather long introduction part, the written Armenian request talked about the alleged Ottoman persecutions and massacres lasting for centuries, and how the Armenians had made all possible sacrifices to the Entente Powers to win the war, and, as a result, lost one quarter of their own population. No participant of war had paid such a high price. Therefore, it was their time to be compensated in return for their wartime sacrifices. This payback was “an Armenia stretching from one sea to the other.” Armenia was to be composed of Vilayet-i Sitte (the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Mamuretülaziz (Elazığ), Diyarbakır, Sivas, Erzurum), four Cilicia Territories (Maraş, Kozan, Cebel-Bereket and Adana), Trabzon and İskenderun ports providing access to the sea, as well as Russian Armenia (the cities of Kars, Erivan, Elisavetpol (Gence), Karabağ, Zangezur and Southern Tiflis). They claimed that they had been in majority in eastern Anatolia fifty years earlier, but that they had become a minority due to massacres and deportations. In order for justice to be upheld “the voice of all Armenians living and dead must be heard.” Not content with such a territorial request, the delegation added that Armenia would provide an effective buffer zone between the north-south and east-west.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 222-223

According to journalist Edward J. Dillon, Venizelos was “the Ulysses of the Conference.” With an impressionable and charismatic personality, he got everybody under his influence. E. J. Dillon, **The Inside Story of the Peace Conference**, (New York: Harper& Bros, 1920), pp. 74-76

<sup>62</sup> Special Correspondent of the Times, **The New Armenia: Claims at the Peace Conference Boundaries of Proposed State**, (London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Co., 1919)

HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 225-226

HOVANNISIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 277-281

According to Edward J. Dillon, one of the journalists observing the Conference, Armenian demands were as fragile as the icy surface on a lake; “...but Boghos Pasha skated over it gracefully. His description of the Armenian massacres was thrilling. All together his exposé was a masterpiece, and was appreciated by Mr. Wilson and M. Clemenceau.” DILLON, **op.cit.**, p. 86



The territorial demands on the Ottoman Empire were not limited to the Greek and Armenian requests. Arguing that the Kurds were of the Persian race, the Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Kuli Han made claims on northern Mesopotamia and the cities of Van, Bitlis, Diyarbekir and Mamuretülaziz on March 1919. The Georgian delegation submitted its demands on March 14, 1919. In the form of self-determination rights and the necessity of historical heritage of the Muslim Georgians and Lazs they claimed the towns of Ardahan, Oltu, and Trabzon. The request of the Zionists concerning the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine was heard on February 27, 1919. The delegation led by Sherif Paşa and the Bedirhan brothers, claiming to represent all Kurds, demanded that an independent Kurdistan be founded in the region that covered the area stretching among the towns of Van, Mamuretülaziz, Diyarbekir, and Musul, but whose borders were not clearly defined. When Emir Faisal appeared before the Council of Ten on February 6, he demanded independence for all Arab lands. In sum, there were many contradictory demands and interests on eastern Anatolia. "Small nations," was trying to divide the Ottoman Empire in the words of British Foreign Minister Balfour like "dividing up the bearskin before the bear was killed."<sup>63</sup>

Britain was able to demand more than France and Italy. The Ottoman Empire which had asked Wilson on October 14, 1918 for a just ceasefire based on the Fourteen Points was not recognized as a party to the negotiations. After everything had been taken care of, on June 17, 1919, the Ottoman delegation, led by Damat Ferit Paşa stated the Ottoman request for the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Empire. Speaking on behalf of the Council of Four, Clemenceau replied, "Neither among the Christians of Europe, nor among the Muslims of Syria, Arabia and Africa, has the Turk done other than destroy what ever he has conquered; never has he shown himself able to develop in peace what he has won by war," and dismissed the delegation after scolding them.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp.226-227  
HOVANNISIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 283-284, 286-287

<sup>64</sup> HOOVER, **op.cit.**, pp. 62, 89  
James B. Gidney, **A Mandate for Armenia**, (Oberlin: The Kent State Uni. Press, 1967), pp.128-131

The chaos created by the existence of Great Powers, the secret treaties, the small nations, and the conflict of interests of the various groups were beyond the ability of Wilson and the U.S. Peace Delegation to handle. First of all, the Americans were untrained and inexperienced in the art of old diplomacy. None of the members of the delegation were diplomats by profession or at a level to deal with and challenge their knowledgeable and experienced European counterparts. Moreover, given their ethnic background, some members of the delegation were sympathetic towards different countries, with Britain being the main one among them. Worse still, they had to take into account the American public opinion and the ethnic lobbies in Congress.<sup>65</sup>

Another important issue complicating the position of the U.S. delegation was Wilson himself. He had already begun to disassociate himself from the delegation during the cross-Atlantic trip. He had not shared his thoughts on the Conference with the delegation members. He had desired to be in full charge of all the issues. Nobody except Colonel House knew what was going on. He harshly dismissed State Secretary Robert Lansing when he proposed the preparation of a draft treaty blueprint. With time, this situation became worse, rather than better. By June 1919, even Colonel House was excluded. Wilson made the preparations by himself and made decisions without accepting anybody's advice. In sum, neither the Congress nor the Peace Delegation was aware of what had been happening at the Conference.<sup>66</sup>

Within a very short time, Wilson also lost the confidence and respect of the other members of the Council of Four. Clemenceau often criticized Wilson harshly. In Clemenceau's view, Wilson imagined himself to be "Jesus Christ came upon the earth to reform men." Going even further, he mocked Wilson, saying: "the Almighty gave his ten commandments, but Wilson has given us fourteen."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> HOOVER, **op.cit.**, pp. 86-87

<sup>66</sup> Daniel M. Smith, "The Struggle for an Enduring Peace", LEVIN, **op.cit.**, pp. 8-10, 14

<sup>67</sup> GRABILL, **op.cit.**, p. 143

Having tested the Americans and their capabilities at the beginning of the Conference, Britain and France assumed the leadership. According to the economist John Maynard Keynes, the representative of the Ministry of the Exchequer on the British Delegation: "As the President had thought nothing out, the Council was generally working on the basis of a French or British draft."<sup>68</sup> Despite all the opposition of the U.S. delegation, the Council of Four, empowered by Wilson's approach, closed up and took into account only its own interests in light of the secret agreements. Lansing was right in his complaints: "The small nations have not more voice in setting the destinies of the world than they had a hundred years ago... Translated into plain terms it will mean that five or six great powers will run the world as they please and the equal voice of the little nations will be a myth."<sup>69</sup>

Though the fate of the Ottoman Empire was placed sensationally on the agenda at the start of the Conference, it was soon pushed into the background by the Council of Four. To France, the most important issue was the peace treaty to be signed with Germany. It not only desired to take revenge for the 1871 defeat, but also wished to establish a European order, in which Germany would never recover. Britain extended its empire to the farthest possible borders. However, the people were tired of war; the soldiers, wishing to go home, were on the verge of rebellion; the treasury had problems; and the country was shaken by the threat of Bolshevism. Thus, Europe needed peace and a new order as soon as possible. An agreement on the Ottoman Empire could wait. Besides, the British authorities desired to keep as much as they could of what they had won in the war by taking advantage of the U.S. In order to make it happen, the Middle East was

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FERRELL, **op.cit.**, p. 484

<sup>68</sup> Keynes was harsh in his criticisms: "It was commonly believed at the commencement of the Paris Conference that the president had thought out, with the aid of a large body of advisers, a comprehensive scheme not only for the embodiment of the fourteen Points in an actual Treaty of Peace. But in fact the President had thought out nothing; when it came to practice his ideas were nebulous and incomplete. He had no plan, no scheme, no constructive ideas what ever for clothing with the flesh of life the commandments which he had thundered from the White House". John Maynard Keynes, "The Economic Consequences of the peace," LEVIN, **op.cit.**, pp. 55-58

<sup>69</sup> AMBROSIUS, **op.cit.**, p. 67

critical. Wilson agreed with his allies. Without order in place in Europe, the League of Nations as the basis for a new world order could not be established. Wilson was too busy to think about the Ottoman Empire.<sup>70</sup>

Being in charge, Britain and France began to draw a new map of Europe disregarding of ethnic, historical, political, social, economic, and geographical issues. Making one concession after another, Wilson tried to secure the support of his allies for his League of Nations project. Danzig, where the Germans made up the majority, was ceded to Poland, Sudeteland to Czechoslovakia, and southern Tirol to Italy. Japan received Shantung, which possessed a Chinese majority. Thus, the self-determination principle that had formed the basis of the Fourteen Points was trampled. Moreover, the leaders' ignorance about nations and geography was rather alarming. As the borders were being redrawn the landmark towns and mountains, as well as the nations living in the same geography, were all confused with each other. In some situations no need was even felt to correct the mistakes.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Occupation of İzmir**

Gradually losing touch with the assessments he had made earlier, bored with the negotiations over the details in which he had no interest, and desiring to find a quick solution to the issues, or put them off as his time in Europe became longer, Wilson finally lashed out against Italy's excessive demands on the Austro-Hungarian territories. In the so-called Fiume (Rijeka) case, Italy, with a reference to the London Treaty, claimed the Dalmatian islands and shores, as well as Fiume, the only large port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, Slavs were the majority group in the whole region and Serbia's link to the sea would be all but cut off. In strict and harsh

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<sup>70</sup> FROMKIN, **op.cit.**, pp. 381-389, 397

Lloyd George defended the delay by alluding to the importance of the treaty with Germany, and the complexity of the Ottoman problem: "In some respects the settlement of the Turkish Empire presented greater difficulties than that of any other enemy country. There were a greater variety of races and religions to be dealt with. They were more hopelessly intermingled without any trace or hope of merger." GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 1001-1002

<sup>71</sup> DILLON, **op.cit.**, pp. 104-107, 188

SMITH, **op.cit.**, pp. 30-34

KISSINGER, **op.cit.**, p. 214

language Wilson stated that the Italian claims could not be accepted. Nonetheless, he himself, in essence, had encouraged the Italians by making one concession after another. He complicated the situation further by yielding to the British and French claims, while rejecting the Italian ones.<sup>72</sup>

In order to justify himself, Wilson made a statement addressing the Italian public. He hoped to receive the support of Britain and France. Not only did he not get the expected support after his address, but he also faced the intensive protests of the Italians. Even worse, he faced the reaction of Americans of Italian origin, who had considerable influence over the U.S. administration, and thus he began to ground in domestic politics.<sup>73</sup>

To Lloyd George, the Fiume issue which had risen unexpectedly to the forefront, proved to be a rare opportunity. By using Wilson anger, he could have gotten rid of the Italians, who were perceived as a threat to the British interests in the Middle East. They had to be replaced by the more dependable Greeks.<sup>74</sup> On April 24, 1919, Italy temporarily withdrew from the Peace Conference. Wilson was outraged by the news that the Italians had dispatched a war ship to Fiume and some troops to Anatolia on May 2. Italy had to pay for this misbehavior. Lloyd George requested that the necessary steps be taken with regards to the Ottoman mandates as soon as possible.

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<sup>72</sup> In his memoirs, Lloyd George says the following concerning Wilson's inconsistency: "The President raised no objection to carving out of the Tyrol a slice containing a purely Germanic population of 200.000 that was sacred ground to the Tyrolese (...) That territory he surrendered to the Italians without a qualm or a query, but the annexation of Fiume raised his ire to a heat which it had never yet reached at any time during the Conference." For details about the issue, see GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 773-810

DILLON, **op.cit.**, p. 190

EVANS, **op.cit.**, pp. 160-161

<sup>73</sup> GEORGE , **op.cit.**, pp. 836-843, 1246-1250

SMITH , **op.cit.**, p. 33

EVANS, **op.cit.**, pp. 162-164

<sup>74</sup> GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 856-862

Why Lloyd George supported the Greeks so enthusiastically is a controversial issue. He viewed the Turks as "the cancer of humanity." He admired and trusted Venizelos. But, most probably, his main reason was to see Greece as a ruling nation over the Middle East in the future: "Greece was the coming nation of the eastern Mediterranean and that it would serve Britain will to maintain a close connection. The Greeks, numbered about six million, but the Prime Minister believed... that in the next sixty years they would increase to twenty million." GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 119-120

The U.S. had to take over the Straits and dispatch troops to Armenia right away. Wilson explained that it was not possible to assume the two mandates without Congressional approval. Lloyd George kept pressing the issue. In that case, Greece had to be allowed to occupy İzmir in order to frustrate the Italian maneuver. On May 6, 1919, one day before the Italian delegation returned, the Council approved the occupation plan.<sup>75</sup>

After having submitted maps, population statistics, and petitions with many signatures in order to impress the Council for months, and having claimed that there had occurred events in İzmir and Aydın as of April 12, 1919, and that the Greeks were under the threat of massacre, Venizelos thus reached his goal. The evening of May 14, 1919, Greek troops under the protection of British, French warships, as well as the USS Arizona battleship, began the occupation of İzmir. An irretrievable step was taken. The following day, Greek troops began slaughtering unarmed Turkish troops and civilians right before the eyes of the Entente. After a short while, the Greek soldiers were out of control. İzmir and its vicinity were burned and looted for days, and the massacres continued.<sup>76</sup>

Months after the occupation, as a result of uncountable requests and complaints, the Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry on the Greek Occupation of Smyrna and Adjacent Territories, made up of high-ranking Allied officers, initiated an investigation. The commission, composed of Brigadier General R. H. Hare (British), Brigadier General Bunoust (French), Rear Admiral Mark L.

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<sup>75</sup> It is still not understood how Wilson was taken in so easily. According to Ray Stannard Baker, one of the delegates, Wilson was influenced by Venizelos and the “disreputable intrigue of the Conference.” BAILEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 265-266

GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 862-871

GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp.106-111

EVANS, **op.cit.**, pp. 165-166

FROMKIN, **op.cit.**, p. 391

<sup>76</sup> William Linn Westermann, the US Delegation member responsible for the Middle East Affairs, considered the occupation unjust and confirmed the massacres: “News of the Smyrna massacres spread rapidly throughout the Near East. It caused terror and suspicion of the Allied intention, even in Syria.” William Linn Westermann, “The Armenian Problem and The Disruption of Turkey”, in **What Really Happened At Paris, The Story of The peace Conference 1918-1919, By American Delegates**, (ed.) Edward Mandell House, Charles Seymour, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921), p. 195

TEMPERLEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 25-26

Bristol (American), and Lieutenant General A. Dall'Olio (Italian), submitted its final report on October 14, 1919. The Commission unanimously decided that there was no need for the Allies to occupy İzmir, and that it was completely mistaken. Even a short paragraph from their report illustrates the awful situation:

The international situation in the Vilayet did not call for the landing of Allied troops at Smyrna. On the contrary since the Greek landing, the situation is troubled because of the state of war existing between the Greek troops and the Turkish irregulars.... Their occupation, far from presenting itself as the carrying out of a civilizing mission, at once took the form of a conquest and a crusade.<sup>77</sup>

The occupation of İzmir fundamentally changed the balance of forces in Middle East. The Turkish nation, after being hesitant a little at first, finally understood that its independence was entirely in its hands, and that the Allies had acted in their own interests, rather than for justice as they had claimed before. In the words of William L. Westermann, one of the prominent members in the U.S. delegation: "The massacres gave life and purpose to their (young Turk leaders) appeal to the Turkish peasantry, to defend themselves against other massacres which would surely befall them when the Allied control should be established."<sup>78</sup>

On May 17, 1919, a delegation of Indian Muslim leaders visited the Council members. The delegation protested the injuries done to the Ottoman Empire, primarily the occupation of İzmir. The Allies had violated the principle of self-determination. Wilson's 12<sup>th</sup> Point and promises had been forgotten. Muslims could not be expected not to react against this situation. The protests of the Indian delegation scared Lloyd George the most. In fact, the Governor of India, Sir Edwin Montagu and the Royal Chief of the General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson, opposed Great Britain's Ottoman policy from the start. General Wilson said bluntly: "we don't want to increase our troubles by breaking up Turkey and dividing her amongst a lot of people -Greek, Italians, French and Americans- who can't even govern themselves." As Lloyd George was in search of a resolution that would please the parties, Wilson,

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<sup>77</sup> GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 117-118

<sup>78</sup> WESTERMANN, **op.cit.**, p. 196

having acted on his emotions and having been cheated, tried to swallow the Indian delegation's remainder of his long-forgotten 12<sup>th</sup> Point.<sup>79</sup>

### **Divided American Public Opinion and Debates on Mandate**

As mentioned above, due to the pro-Armenian and anti-Turkish propaganda, which was at its peak during the war, the U.S. administration and public opinion unquestioningly accepted that the Armenians deserved independence. Such Armenian lobbying groups as Near East Relief and the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA) demanded that the necessary steps be taken and an Armenia under U.S. mandate "stretching from sea to sea", be established at once. Former ambassador Morgenthau declared that there was nothing to be afraid of, that "the cruel Turk" was actually "psychologically primitive," and the "bully and coward" Turks had to be taught a lesson.<sup>80</sup>

Another thing that excited the Armenian lobby was the Russian withdrawal from the war, followed by its evacuation of the Caucasus due to the civil war. Thus, the greatest impediment before an independent Armenia had been removed. In addition, the Ottoman territories left to Russia in accordance with the secret treaties could be attached to Armenia. To the American leaders, including Westermann "It was a natural thing for men to assume that the United States would replace Russia in the political

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<sup>79</sup> EVANS, **op.cit.**, pp. 166-167  
HOVANNISIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 325-326

<sup>80</sup> Hacobian, the author of the memorandum written prior to the Peace Conference, talked about the trust the Armenian nationalists had in the USA at the time as follows: "In the United States at last there is no need for any fresh proof or explanation of the issue at this stage, and the martyrdom of Armenia has contributed largely to that state of American opinion. I have little doubt that President Wilson's Peace Note and speech to the Senate are the first steps towards America casting her whole weight into the scale, aiming at the realization of a just and lasting peace. The intense interest evinced by the people and Government of United States in the fate of Armenia and the Armenians is abundantly shown.... Nothing in the war has brought home to the people of the United States the world issues of the war more strongly and vividly than the unprecedented barbarities committed by the Turks in their diabolical attempt to wipe out the Armenian race. No event of the war has been more damaging to the Central Powers in the eyes of the United States." A.P. Hacobian, "Armenia and the War. An Armenian's point of View With an Appeal to Britain and the Coming Peace Conference, 1918", **World War I Project**, 9 September 2003, <<http://www.raven.cc.ukans.edu/~libsites/wwwi-www/Armenia2/ArmeniaTC.htm>>  
DANIEL, **op.cit.**, pp.160-161  
Caleb Frank Gates, **Not to Me Only**, (Princeton: Princeton Uni. Press, 1940), pp. 249-250



settlement of the Turkish problems as she had in the war by accepting.... the territorial assignments which the Russian collapse had left vacant.”<sup>81</sup>

Soon these over-confident Armenian delegations and lobby groups became disappointed one after another. To the British, who had exploited the Armenian issue to the fullest, the Armenians now had become a burden. The Armenian project was off the table for Britain which had achieved its goals in the war. As mentioned above, they had no other plans but to get the U.S. involved in the region as soon as possible. France, on the other hand, was opposed already to the idea that the proposed Armenia would contain the towns of Cilicia, Kayseri, and Sivas, which it had reserved for itself. France wanted Armenians to serve its own colonial rule unquestioningly.<sup>82</sup>

The Armenians' issues were not limited to this, however. The Armenians, the Armenian lobbies, and the missionaries were divided amongst themselves by strict lines. Each group was in search of a solution that would maximize its gains. The debates on the Armenian mandate were framed within three main models. The first model was supported by the Yerevan Republic and the majority of Armenian nationalists. The American spokesmen for this model, first voiced in 1915 by Boghos Nubar, were James W. Gerard, the director of the ACIA and former ambassador, to Berlin and Vahan Cardashian, the boss at the Armenian Press Bureau. According to them, the Yerevan Republic had to be recognized immediately and offered financial, military, and other support. In addition the Armenia that was to stretch from sea to sea, with territories ripped from the Ottoman territories had to be placed under a short-term mandate.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> WESTERMANN, **op.cit.**, p. 187  
ASPATURIAN, **op.cit.**, p. 134

<sup>82</sup> NASSIBIAN, **op.cit.**, p. 121  
ASPATURIAN, **op.cit.**, p. 133  
HOVANNISIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 273-275  
EVANS, **op.cit.**, p.165

<sup>83</sup> James W. Gerard, “Why America Should Accept Mandate for Armenia”, **The New York Times**, 6 July 1919.  
Richard G. Hovannisian, **The Republic of Armenia: From Versailles to London 1919-1920**, vol.2, (Berkeley: Uni. of California Press, 1982), pp.321-322  
GRABILL, **op.cit.**, pp.121-122  
NASSIBIAN, **op.cit.**, pp.142

The second model had the great support of the missionary circles in the U.S. According to this model, the greatest proponents of which were Morgenthau, U.S. Commissar to İstanbul Gabriel Bie Ravndal, and James L. Barton, although separate mandates had to be established for the regions of the Straits, Anatolia, and Armenia, all of which were to be coordinated by a higher administration. If only one Armenian mandate were established, the Turks would escape control and impede the establishment of peace in the region. Therefore, a tri-partite mandate maintaining both individual and regional development was the best solution.<sup>84</sup>

The third model was supported mostly by the missionaries who had served in the Ottoman Empire for many years and some diplomats. American High Commissioner Rear Admiral Mark L. Bristol, the President of the Robert College Caleb F. Gates, and the Principal of the Constantinople College for Women Marry Mills Patrick were important supporters of this model. To them, the establishment of Armenia by itself was both impossible and incomprehensible. There had to be a U.S. mandate over the Ottoman Empire as a whole. This was the only way by which a politically, economically and socially self-sufficient state could be established. No solution denying the Turks a powerful existence could survive for long. One of the great advantages of this model was the fact that it was supported by an influential group of Turkish intellectuals led by Halide Edip (Adivar), Adnan (Adivar), Ahmet Emin (Yalman), and Hüseyin (Pektaş).<sup>85</sup>

The groups supporting these three different models actually took only their own interests into account. The intensive propaganda of the interest

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<sup>84</sup> HOVANNISIAN, **op.cit.**, p.319-321

<sup>85</sup> HOVANNISIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 317-319

Caleb F. Gates summarized his model as follows: "I believe that the best solution would be for one power to take control of the Empire, appointing a high commissioner with veto power, and placing its representatives in every ministry and in every province. It should develop the resources of the country and ensure equal rights to all nationalities. Thus, in a quarter of century the problems of the Near East would find a natural and permanent solution. Neither England nor France can take the responsibility of governing Turkey (...) The United States of America is the only power that can do it." GATES, **op.cit.**, p. 253  
Thomas A. Bryson "Admiral Mark L. Bristol, An Open Door Diplomat in Turkey", **International Journal of Middle East Studies**, vol. 5, 1974, pp. 454-455

groups that aimed primarily at the American authorities and the Peace Delegation contributed further to the chaos about the future of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, as the debates become increasingly harsh, division was certain. The groups, holding different opinions on each and every topic, agreed only on the prejudice that the “Turks were not capable of governing themselves.”<sup>86</sup>

### **American Delegations of Inquiry**

As discussed above, no solution to satisfy everybody on the issues of the future of the Ottoman Empire, the division of its territories, and the mandates to be established could be found at all. Especially the demands of the “small nations” complicated the issues further. Faced with the intense pressure and propaganda by the various delegations demanding places they could not even find on a map, the diplomats became rather distressed. It was right at this point that the idea to pay a visit to and reveal the truth in the region itself began to be debated among the American delegation and authorities. A delegation to be made up of unbiased, responsible, and prominent people with no interests in the region and supported by a headquarters qualified in various topics could reveal the situation better than anybody else. Thus, the information required for the establishment of real peace in the Middle East was to be in the hands of the Peace Conference.

In fact, setting up inquiry delegations was nothing new for the Americans. Just as a new diplomatic understanding came into being by the inclusion of the expert scholars in various subjects into the diplomatic delegations, it was an innovation of the Americans to see for themselves the state of affairs on the ground themselves. Journalist Dillon described the functioning of this new system as follows: “Whenever a topic came up for discussion which could not be solved offhand, it was referred to a commission assisted by a mission which proceeded to the country concerned and within a few weeks returned with data which were assumed to supply materials enough for a decision.” Many an American delegation of various sizes were sent to the problematic regions both during and after the war. For

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<sup>86</sup> EVANS, **op.cit.**, p. 163.

instance, eight different delegations were in the middle of their inquiries as of July 1919.<sup>87</sup>

Consequently, the idea of sending an inquiry delegation to the Ottoman Empire began to be voiced in the aftermath of the Armistice Treaty. The first official application for this purpose was made by politician and diplomat William Christian Bullitt, who had just returned from an inquiry mission in southern Russia. In a memorandum written to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, on January 29, 1919, he pointed out that an impartial inquiry had to be conducted so that the Wilsonian Points could be applied in the Middle East as both the secret treaties and the British-French rivalry had led to decisions contradictory to the Wilsonian Points.<sup>88</sup>

However, the real reason behind the decision to send out inquiry delegations to the Ottoman Empire was the intensive and bombastic anti-Turkish propaganda conducted both during and after the war. As a consequence of this propaganda, most Americans were curious to know what was really happening in the Ottoman Empire. Such grandiose crimes and massacres were described that it was impossible for curiosity and suspicion not to be aroused. Following the Armistice treaty, a great number of private persons, along with delegations representing various organizations and institutions rushed to the Ottoman Empire. This was the case not only for Americans but also for the British and the French. In a short period of time, the European and American newspapers were full of articles and news reflecting the results of the trips. Many books were published in the course of time. Of course, the bulk of these visitors saw what they had expected to see due to their biases. But still, some biases began to be called into question. It was realized that the propaganda did not reflect the truth.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> These are Rhineland Commission, Teschen Commission, Klagenfurt Mission, Halstead Mission, Dyar Mission, Summerall Mission, Polish Mission, and Mission to Southern Russia. GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, p. 136  
DILLON, **op.cit.**, p. 148

<sup>88</sup> GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 136-137

<sup>89</sup> Caleb F. Gates, an important witness of the era explained the situation as follows: "With the end of the war, private individuals and committees began to come to Turkey to investigate conditions and to see how the situation might be improved. Most of these visitors had preconceived ideas about what ought to be done, and they did not hesitate to proclaim them. After a visit in December by Dr. H. P. Judson, chancellor of the University

The second important reason was the news by Christian minorities, especially Armenians, about the alleged Turkish massacres and attacks. The minorities, impatient to establish independent states of their own and receive their share from the Ottoman territories, and the missionaries, using the former for their own interests, kept sending bombastic and fabricated news to the Peace Conference and the newspapers in order to force the Allies to get moving. In March 1919, Near East Relief sent out three separate delegations to the region for inquiry and emergency aid. The delegations not only made inquiries into the latest situation in the provinces of Konya, Kayseri, Harput, Sivas, Diyarbakır, and Halep, but also distributed aid supplies that they had brought to the Christian minority.<sup>90</sup> The military and diplomatic representatives of the Allies (Britain, France and Italy) in the Ottoman Empire also dispatched many officers and intelligence officials deep into the country to investigate. For instance, while British Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Rawlinson conducted inquiries in the province of *Kars* and its vicinity controlled by the Yerevan Republic in June-July 1919, British High Commissioner Admiral De Robeck visited Samsun and Trabzon in October 1919 in order to observe the situation on the ground.<sup>91</sup>

The third reason was to ascertain the scope of responsibility that the mandate would require after the drawing of the real portrait of the Ottoman

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of Chicago, who had expressed to me prejudiced and bitter opinions about both the Armenians and the Turks (he repeated a popular sentiment that the Turks should be "driven out of Europe"). GATES, **op.cit.**, p. 252

We find an interesting example of personal inquiry trips in a message dated 19 June 1919 and numbered 278 by Major General Mustafa Kemal Paşa, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Inspector: "According to the information by the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps, an American woman named Miss Scott returned to the borough of Beşiri by going from Diyarbekir to Silvan. The above named is conducting inquiries into the number of the Armenian population in Armenian villages." **Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri**, vol. 2, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1999), p. 399

<sup>90</sup> GATES, **op.cit.**, pp. 258-259  
SONYEL, **op.cit.**, p. 173

<sup>91</sup> Alfred Rawlinson, **Adventures in the Near East 1918-1922**, (London: Andrew Melrose, 1924), pp. 215-227  
From the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps Command Headquarters, 14 October 1919, **Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi**, number 11, Document No: 283  
From the 15th Corps Command Headquarters, 19 October 1919, **Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi**, number 11, Document No: 285

Empire. The administration circles, including the Senate especially, were worried that the responsibilities to be assumed in the Middle East would carry a significant political, economic, and social price. The fact that Britain assumed the mandate over Mesopotamia with its rich oil fields, whereas the U.S. was offered the mandate over Armenia, rich only with problems, resulted in much reaction.<sup>92</sup>

The last reason had to do with the dilemma Wilson faced. As mentioned above, Wilson attempted to conduct the negotiations at the Peace Conference all by himself. Not only did he allow the initiative to be taken over by Lloyd George and Clemenceau at an early stage, but he also remained influenced by all kinds of delegations and interest groups, primarily the “small nations.” Having increasingly lost control as the negotiations progressed, Wilson perceived the inquiry delegations as some sort of tool to gain time. With the most optimistic approach, he thought, the findings of the delegations would help him achieve his goals. Though I do not possess clear evidence on this matter, my conclusion is confirmed by the facts that he randomly appointed the inquiry delegations that he even neglected to read the written reports, and that he in fact had rigid judgments and biases on most issues.<sup>93</sup>

Consequently, the missions of official and unofficial inquiry delegations demonstrate that there were many effective reasons, some of which contradicted each other. Despite the existing false beliefs, the delegations did not come into being solely as a result of President Wilson’s decision. Various interest groups exercised a great influence.

### **King-Crane Commission**

The comprehensive debate on the dispatching of an inquiry delegation that had been officially started by Bullitt intensified in February 1919 with the involvement of James L. Barton and Howard Bliss, leading names in the missionary lobby. The missionaries were not pleased with the fact that Syria

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<sup>92</sup> Levon Marashlian, “Economic and Moral Influences on US Policy toward Turkey and the Armenians 1919-1923”, **XI. Turkish History Congress**, vol. V, (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1994), p. 1873

<sup>93</sup> GRABILL, **op.cit.**, p. 146  
GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 70-71  
DILLON, **op.cit.**, pp. 148-149

had been ceded to France. The Arab nationalists, led by Emir Faisal, were not pleased with the Sykes-Picot arrangement, either. They desired to exclude France by getting the U.S. involved. On February 26, 1919, in an impressive speech before the U.S. delegation, Bliss emphasized that Syria, which counted on the Wilsonian Points, had to be protected. For this to happen, before a final arrangement, an inquiry delegation had to be appointed. Geographer Isaiah Bowman was against an inquiry that would solely cover Syria. He demanded that the inquiry cover Anatolia and Armenia as well.<sup>94</sup>

Having brought up Bliss' proposal at the Council of Four on March 20, 1919, Wilson requested that a delegation be set up to find out the real situation in Syria. Though opposed to it, Clemenceau did not reject the proposal outright. Lloyd George, on the other hand, supported Wilson right away. Following the debates it was decided to set up a delegation, whose mission would be to cover all the mandates to be set in the Ottoman Empire. Wilson assumed the task of writing the instructions for the commission.<sup>95</sup>

Believing in the necessity of an inquiry commission, though for various reasons, the U.S. delegation set to work at once. In the beginning of April the members of the commission were appointed. As commissioners, Wilson appointed Dr. Henry Churchill King, the President of the Oberlin College and a former missionary, and Charles R. Crane, his close friend and financial supporter. The main part of the commission was composed of Prof. Albert H. Lybyer, Dr. George R. Montgomery, Captain William Yale, Captain Donald M. Brodie, translators, and secretaries. Although Wilson claimed to have appointed unbiased and responsible people with no interests in the Ottoman Empire, the reality was not such at all. King had frequently traveled to the Ottoman Empire and was on the board of directors of Robert College. He

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<sup>94</sup> GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 137-140

<sup>95</sup> In his memoirs, Lloyd George explains how President Wilson brought up the proposal as follows: "President Wilson suggested that the fittest men that could be obtained should be selected to form an Inter-Allied Commission to go to Syria, extending their inquiries, if they led them beyond the confines of Syria. Their object should be to elucidate the state of opinion and the soil to be worked on by any mandatory. (...) If we were to send a Commission of men with no previous contact with Syria, it would, at any rate, convince the world that the Conference had tried to do all it could to find the most scientific basis possible for a settlement." GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 1065-1075

was one of the most influential leaders in the missionary lobby. Lybyer, the real brain on the commission and the author of the final report, had a missionary background as well. Not only did he teach at Robert College, but he also played an effective role in the missionary lobby. In September 1917, he proposed that American troops be dispatched to the İskenderun Bay in order to support the Armenians. He was a member of the Peace Delegation and served as the expert in the Middle East affairs under Colonel House. As an employee of Standard Oil Company between 1912 and 1917, Captain Yale had also worked in the Ottoman Empire. Captain Brodie, born in Maraş, was a missionary as well. After serving as a missionary for many years, he became a special assistant to ambassador Mortgenhau in 1916.<sup>96</sup> In brief, their backgrounds clearly demonstrate that most of the commission members could not be unbiased. This situation was to be better revealed more clearly in the writing of the final report.

Having seen that all their attempts to delay the process had failed, the French declared that they were not going to appoint any members to the commission. Fearful of the French reaction, both the British and the Italians avoided appointing members as well. However, there was no return for Wilson. The news about the assignment of a commission had led to much sensation in the Middle East, especially in Syria. Finally, on May 29, 1919, the American members of the commission, the official name of which was “American Section of Inter-Allied Commission on Mandates in Turkey” (unofficially called the King-Crane Commission) left Paris to begin their work.<sup>97</sup>

The King-Crane Commission arrived in İstanbul on June 4, 1919. In the group that enthusiastically welcomed them were not only Admiral Bristol and Mary Mills Patrick, but also Halide Edip Hanım and Hüseyin (Pektaş)

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<sup>96</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 36-41

GRABILL, **op.cit.**, pp. 51-52

Lynn A. Scipio, **My Thirty Years in Turkey**, (West Rindge: Richard R. Smith Pub, 1955), pp. 167-168

<sup>97</sup> For French opposition and hesitations expressed, please see HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 41-82

GEORGE, **op.cit.**, pp. 1075-1078



Bey, who saw the Ottoman liberation in a U.S. mandate. Having met the people representing various groups, the commission left İstanbul on June 7 for Syria, which was considered the commission's real place of duty.<sup>98</sup>

The commission visited all of the important towns in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan. In accordance with the pre-designed plans, they met the representatives of the people and various interest groups, including the commanders of the British and French occupation forces. The unexpectedly high number of talks put pressure on the commission members. They avoided trips into the heart of Anatolia, though it was within their purview. They settled for daily trips to İskenderun (13 July), Adana (20 July), and Mersin (21 July). The main purpose of these trips was related to whether these towns were to be incorporated into Syria or not, rather than to reveal the real situation in Anatolia. The commission did not see a need to travel to Mesopotamia either. It was declared that except for Britain there was no suitable candidate to assume the mandate.<sup>99</sup>

Spending forty-two days and visiting some thirty-six large towns in the region, the King-Crane Commission received 1,863 requests and petitions.<sup>100</sup> On July 23, they returned to İstanbul. As the results of the trip to Syria were put down in writing, the talks with the people and delegations representing various groups regarding the mandates on Anatolia and Armenia continued. Captain Brodie summarized the situation as follows:

In northern Turkey limitation of time forbade such an extensive tour of the country as had been possible in Palestine and Syria. The Americans were forced to adopt the oriental policy of having the mountain come to Mohammed. Delegations representing all sections of Anatolia and Armenia appeared before the Commission at

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<sup>98</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 87-88

Stationed in Havza at that time, Mustafa Kemal Pasha was carefully following the workings of the Commission through his friends in İstanbul. Please see the telegraph from 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Inspectorate to the Vilayat of Erzurum, 15 June 1919, number 9342, Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri, **op.cit.**, p. 380.

<sup>99</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 88-142, 163

<sup>100</sup> About the towns the Commission visited and its activities see Henry C. King, Charles R. Crane, "Report of American Section of Inter-Allied Commission on Mandates in Turkey; An Official United States Government Report (August 28, 1919)", **World War I Archives Project**, 6 September 2002, <<http://www.cc.ukans.edu/~kansite/ww-one/doc5/kncr.htm>>

Constantinople and the results were virtually the same. All shades and varieties of opinion in the Turkish Empire were presented to the Americans from all classes and conditions of mankind.<sup>101</sup>

As mentioned above, the commission attempted to define the future of Anatolia and Armenia based on the talks in İstanbul and without traveling into the interior of Anatolia. The Armenian demands were already known. The demands of the rest of the population in the region were not to be taken into consideration for Armenia was somewhat being established partially as a punishment for the Turks. This approach as such was reflected in the final report:

For in the case of the proposed State of Armenia, for example, the territory was not yet set off, nor its boundaries even approximately known, the Armenians were not largely present in any of the territory to be assigned; the wishes of the Armenians themselves as to mandates were already known, and the wishes of the rest of the population could not be taken primarily into account, since the establishment of the Armenian State would be in a sense penal for the Turkish people, and naturally to be accepted only as a necessity.<sup>102</sup>

The biases of the commission members appeared to be shattered as a result of the impressions gained during the talks in İstanbul. Especially, Crane was much influenced by the statements of representatives from various Turkish political groups and associations. It must be pointed out that Halide Edip Hanım played a prominent role in this respect. She participated in all of the activities of the commission from the start. She helped such patriotic organizations as the National Congress and the Association for the Defense of the National Rights in Eastern Rumelia, as well as the representatives of the Turkish groups to hold talks with the Commission. She served as an interpreter at these talks. Her influence is reflected in the entire correspondence of the commission.<sup>103</sup>

In an assessment of the situation on August 12, 1919, Lybyer and Crane concluded that it was imperative to travel to Eastern Anatolia and meet Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his colleagues. However, the time was limited, and the news was received that a separate inquiry commission headed by

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<sup>101</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 161-163.

<sup>102</sup> KING, CRANE, **op.cit.**

<sup>103</sup> HOWARDS, **op.cit.**, pp. 164-174

General Harbord was to arrive soon.<sup>104</sup> Despite this, on August 14, Crane tasked Louise Edgar Browne, a correspondent for the Chicago Daily News, to contact Mustafa Kemal Pasha. He asked Browne to attend the Sivas Congress and report back to him on the decisions to be made and his own impressions. Halide Edip Hanım and Kara Vasıf Bey were to be in charge of making sure that Browne arrived in Sivas.<sup>105</sup>

Having mostly completed its work and produced its report, the King-Crane Commission left İstanbul on August 21, 1919. After the commission submitted its final findings to the Peace Delegation on August 28, a summary of the report was communicated in a telegram to President Wilson on August 30, given the urgency of the situation. The proposals and findings of the commission on Syria were such as to ruin the existing balance: it was recommended that Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine shall be placed under a US mandate as a whole. Should this prove impossible, Britain would assume the mandate. Since the realization of the Zionist plans was contrary to the demands of the majority, it would be examined in more detail. Emir Faisal would be made the head of the Syrian state to be established. The proposals of the Commission regarding Anatolia and Armenia were also troubling to Armenian nationalists.

We are recommending for Turkey: first separate Armenia state under mandate limited in area for their own sakes; second separate international Constantinopolitan State under League of Nations administered through mandatory; third mandatory for continued Turkish state according to their own desire; fourth that no independent territory be set off for Greeks for present; fifth appointment of Commission on precise boundaries; sixth a general single but composite mandate for non-Arabic speaking portions of Turkish Empire to include subordinate mandates as indicated with governors and governor-general; seventh that America be asked to take the whole if reasonable conditions can be fulfilled; not to take any part if not the whole.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 174

<sup>105</sup> We do not dwell on this issue in detail, since it will be dealt with in the section. For the details on Browne's appointment and attendance at the Congress in Sivas, please see Deniz Bilgen, **(Sivas Kongresi'ne Katılan Amerikalı Gazeteci) Louis Edgar Browne**, (Erzurum; Atatürk University, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 1996), supra. p.67.

<sup>106</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 217-219

Despite producing interesting findings and proposals, from the start to the end, the report was full of biases and was not based on specific evidence. The Ottoman Empire had to be dismembered, primarily because of “the historical misgovernment by the Turks of subject peoples and the terrible massacres of Armenians and others in recent years.” Moreover, the most strategic region in the world could not be left to the Turks, who were deemed incapable of governing even themselves. Throughout the report many references were made to the alleged Armenian massacres as the only reason for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, the commission looked down on the Turkish nation and the independence movement launched by Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colleagues. The weakness and the collaboration of the Ottoman Government in İstanbul were thought to be valid for the entire Turkish nation as well, even though they had met many Turkish patriots in İstanbul, and all the necessary information was available to them.<sup>107</sup>

There existed many inconsistencies in the report. Though criticized in every section of the report, the Turks were claimed to possess superior qualities. It was added that if one were to spend some time in the Ottoman Empire, among the peoples of the region one would like the Turks most. According to the report; “one many recognize fully the agreeable and attractive personal qualities of the Turks that commonly make them the best liked, probably, of all the peoples of the Empire, and that almost unconsciously turn most foreigners who stay long in the country into pro-Turks.” Furthermore, in assessing the Ottoman Empire, one should not forget the destructive effect of the European powers: “It is only fair, also, to remember the very considerable amount of demoralization caused by the perpetual intriguing of European powers in Turkish affairs.”<sup>108</sup>

The report, which contained inconsistencies and findings shocking to the existing international balance, led to much discomfort in the U.S. administration. There was no agreement on how to use the report, and the

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<sup>107</sup> KING-CRANE, **op.cit.**

<sup>108</sup> **Ibid.**

decision was made to sweep it under the rug given multiple pressures coming from various interest groups. More interestingly, the report was not even considered by President Wilson who played the leading role in the establishment and appointment of the King-Crane Commission. The report reached Wilson's office on 27 September 1919. However, it is known that Wilson was unable to read the report due to his nationwide campaign across America to present the League of Nations Pact and to get public support, and his illness during this campaign. Suspended for a long time, the report was finally published unofficially in 1922. The contents of the report were not available to the bulk of the U.S. administration, including the Senate. In sum, the King-Crane Commission, which had led to much sensation in the Middle East and kept the Peace Conference occupied for days, vanished without exercising a meaningful influence.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> HOWARD, **op.cit.**, pp. 257-262, 311-320.  
GRABILL, **op.cit.**, p. 160.  
TRASK, **op.cit.**, p. 26.

## PART II

### 4. THE PROCESS OF THE COMMISSIONING OF THE HARBORD MISSION

As stated in previous chapters, despite all the expectation and hopes of the Armenian nationalists and lobby, there was no significant development in the Armenian cause. Great Britain and France were busy with securing the gains they had acquired as a result of the war and overcoming the economic and social woes caused by the long lasting war. Neither was willing to fulfill the promise of presenting a large area as a homeland to the Armenians by facing Turkey and Russia and assuming all the required political, military and economic obligations. They tried hard from the beginning to make the U.S. assume responsibility for Armenia. Nevertheless, despite the statements made by Wilson, the U.S. administration did not take concrete steps, because of the determined opposition within and outside the administration that stood against a possible mandate for Armenia due to various reasons. This opposition, which was not publicized, grew stronger in time.

Within these developments, the Armenian lobby once again applied the tactics they had employed with success over the years. Messages and telegrams began to pour into the western capitals and media stating that the Turks, in collaboration with the Azeris, had resumed their massacres. It was also reported that the Armenian refugees could not return to their homes, that there was a serious danger of starvation and, worse than that, the Turkish nationalists attached to the Committee for Union and Progress were mobilizing the military units to wipe out the Armenians totally. In exterminating the Armenians, the Turks sought to set up a Muslim belt in the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James B. Gidney, **A Mandate for Armenia**, (Oberlin: The Kent State Press, 1967), pp. 89, 170

The following quotations of the messages are good examples to show how deeply the American relief organizations and consulates in the Caucasus involved in the intensive propaganda activity:

"Following message joint telegram of conference of consulate at Tiflis, military attaché, military observer in Turkey, ACRNE and ARA [American Relief Administration]... Situation in Russian Armenia, i.e., Armenian Republic is approaching crisis. Unless political and frontier questions are settled soundly and military and relief measures on large scale undertaken immediately Russian Armenian Republic which is now only a part of Armenians of the former Russian and Turkish Empires will succumb to starvation and aggressions of neighboring peoples and organization of Armenian State will become

### **The Morgenthau Project: The Disguised American Mandate**

Henry Morgenthau was troubled by these developments. Not only was the Armenian cause that he led in serious crisis, also his political future was being destroyed. Morgenthau, playing the final card in hand, made one last effort. Up to now, the U.S. had reconciled itself to providing food and medical aid only through private aid organizations. Not satisfied with this, Morgenthau wanted the launching of a program that would realize the return of the refugees to their homes. Furthermore, he was convinced that a commissariat, equipped with extraordinary authority, had to be established to supervise and coordinate all the aid and return of refugee activities. This commissar, who would command all the Allied personnel in the Caucasus, would be an American officer. Morgenthau's candidate was already present: Major General James Guthrie Harbord.

For Morgenthau, General Harbord was the ideal candidate. He had already served in the Philippines successfully, both in civilian and military posts. But, most importantly, he was a harsh and authoritarian soldier and definitely did not like strangers intervening in his sphere of duties. Thus, Morgenthau planned to limit the influence of the State Department, the Joint

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impossible. Armenia is surrounded on the west by hostile Turks, on the south by hostile armed Tartar forces under Turkish direction, on the east by hostile Azerbaijan organization directing Tartar activities and cooperating with the Turks emulated north by the unfriendly Georgian Republic. Turks and Tartars becoming daily more aggressive, Turks are openly violating terms of the armistice and covertly defying the British. Massacres have taken place on several occasions in various localities during the last six weeks." From Dolittle to Ammission (American Commission to Negotiate Peace), 23 July 1919, **Record Group 256, General Records of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace 1918-1931 (Micro Film Pub. No. 820) Field Missions of American Delegation, Harbord Military Mission to Armenia, (Hereafter as HMMA) 184.021/126**

"Vice Consul Randolph after visiting personally every other part of Armenia reports: Need of mandatory or immediate action by Allies most urgent.... More than 200.000 refugees from Turkish Armenia... are lined up at different points within southern boundary of Russian Armenia longing to return southward to their former homes but prevented by bands of Kurds and also by the well equipped military forces of Turkey. Two attempts to force their way homeward have been in vain, resulting only in bloodshed and further massacres. Unless prevented the Turks apparently intend the total extinction of Armenian race. Turkish emissaries inspire the warlike attitude of Azerbaijan and are arousing the Tartars... the purpose being according to information received by Armenian government to totally wipe out or drive away Christian population and by means of a broad Mohammedan belt to connect up Turkey and Azerbaijan." From US Commissionery to Ammission, 24 July 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/126**

Chiefs of Staff and the head of the American Relief Administration, Herbert Hoover, who were not in favor of an American Mandate. In a letter dated June 25, 1919, after expressing the miserable condition of the Armenians to General Harbord, he made his proposal in the following way:

The President is keenly interested in this matter and so are the other Peace Commissioners, and I am confident they will do everything in their power to aid in this work Mr. Hoover feels positive that the "Big Four" will designate the American we select as the absolute representative of the Allied Nations, with such dictatorial powers as he may require to enable him to prevent the destruction of this vast number of people. The Armenian Government is willing to accept such representative and to give him the full support of that government.

The humanitarian phase of this Armenian question is so broad, involving questions of police, finance, sanitation and all other governmental operations, I am of the opinion that the desired results could only be accomplished by giving the individual designated a power similar to that exercised by certain "British Residents" in certain of their colonies, where somewhat similar situations are encountered. Until such time as it is definitely determined which particular power is to assume the mandatory of this country, it would probably be preferable for this Resident to exercise his authority under an Allied Mandate conferred upon him by the "Big Four."

... I believe that if you would consent to act we can comply with any reasonable conditions that you may make, provided you accept the appointment.... I believe that if we can secure a man of your calibre he would be, for all practical purposes, the dictator of this [Armenian] government, and that you could by this means place your own representatives either in direct charge of the various Armenian Government Departments and Bureaus, or as co-ordinate heads, whichever in your judgment, would accomplish the desired results."<sup>2</sup>

Morgenthau revealed his real intention at the end of the letter. After the American commissar, who was authorized with extraordinary power, started his duty, the subsequent steps could easily be taken and the subject of assuming the mandate for Armenian could be expressed as a fait accompli: "While, of course, having no authority in the matter, it nevertheless occurs to me that, with an American appointed as Allied Resident today, when America officially consents to itself assume the Mandate for this same country, the proposed organization would continue, simply making a more or

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<sup>2</sup> From Henry Morgenthau to Maj. Gen. J. G. Harbord, 25 June 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/28**



less theoretical change from acting under the Mandate of the “Big Four” to acting under the Mandatory of the American Government.”<sup>3</sup>

Without waiting for General Harbord’s answer, Morgenthau presented his plan to Wilson. Wilson responded positively. Nevertheless, he demanded that Hoover be included in the activity. Morgenthau quite unwillingly had to contact Hoover and cooperate with him. Hoover had a rather different attitude towards the Armenian question. Hoover, who was one of the leaders of the group which thought that the American foreign policy should be based on more realistic principles, and that it was necessary to quit idealism, was suspicious of the subject of an Armenian mandate. While Great Britain and France set aside the richest territories of the Ottoman Empire for themselves, they proposed that the U.S. take on the area of Armenia, which was full of problems. Armenia was surrounded by enemies. Aid organizations and the Armenian government were examples of corruption and mismanagement. Without the consent of the American public, the U.S. was being forced into a dangerous adventure similar to the intervention in Russia.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, General Harbord, after discussions with General Pershing, his senior commander and the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, gave his answer in a letter dated 28 June. After stating the difficulties of the problem considering the information provided by Morgenthau himself, Harbord drew up the required conditions for the success of the mission in the following words:

The Essentials without which no American officer should be willing to undertake such a difficult and conspicuous work are:

1. The free choice of a reasonable number of officers of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps in addition to selected American civilians, for control with the Armenian officials of the various executive departments of their Government.
2. The certainly of adequate funds to carry on the work.
3. Sufficient disciplined troops absolutely under the control of the Allied Resident as would enable him to carry out the supply,

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<sup>3</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>4</sup> Richard G. Hovannisian, **The Republic of Armenia**, vol. 2 (Berkeley: Uni. of California Pres, 1982), pp. 49-50

For the reports on the corruption of the American aid organizations see. From Capt. Abraham Tulin to Herbert Hoover, 4 May 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/16**  
From Maj. Joseph C. Green to Herbert Hoover, 17 June 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/25**

repatriation, and subsequent protection of the 750,000 Armenians. This can not be done with Armenian troops; otherwise they would surely be doing it today without outside help.

4. Certainly as to his authority.<sup>5</sup>

According to Harbord, it would not pose any difficulty to perform the first and second conditions. He had some concerns about the third. According to him: “no military man would feel confidence without some troops of his own nation. The reason these Armenians are where they are today is that they were driven there by force. It will take force -at least a display of force- to put them back into Turkish Armenia and protect them there. The number of troops is a military question not to be determined by political expediency... I should roughly estimate the necessary American contingent at a minimum of a division.” However, the most problematic one was the fourth. He presumed that the Allied Nations would not hand over to him the “dictatorial” powers required for the execution of the duty. The experience gathered from the previous co-administrations supported his conviction. A mission of this magnitude could be solved only if the U.S. assumed it alone. Harbord expressed his decision in the following way:

I should be proud to undertake such a duty as this under our own country alone, but under the conditions as I understand your letter to state them, I think success impossible.

I therefore thank you for your confidence which I value highly, and regret that I cannot undertake the duty.<sup>6</sup>

Hoover evaluated Harbord’s refusal in the best possible way. First of all, he proposed Colonel William N. Haskell in his place. Second, contrary to the demands of the Armenian lobby, he transformed the duty to the administration of the present aid activities.<sup>7</sup> After the American Peace Mission had met Harbord and the representatives of the Allied Nations accepted Hoover’s proposal they made:

“We have concluded that the temporary measures necessary to strengthen relief and administration in Armenia should be separated from the problems involved in repatriation and expulsion of present trespassers, and permanent pacification of the territory. We have

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<sup>5</sup> From Gen. Harbord to Henry Morgenthau, 28 June 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/28**

<sup>6</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>7</sup> From Herbert Hoover to President Wilson, 27 June 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/33**

therefore recommended the appointment of Colonel William N. Haskell.”<sup>8</sup>

The Peace delegation not only took this decision, but considering Harbord's idea that it was necessary to find out what was going on in Anatolia and the Caucasus, it also concluded that in addition to the King-Crane Commission another investigation mission should be appointed. The mission stated its justification to Wilson in the following way:

The broader question of repatriation etc, requires an examination as to the measures and force necessary to cope with the problem successfully and will require congressional action to grant sufficient funds and forces. We therefore recommend that mission should immediately be sent to Armenia headed by General Harbord who should choose his own assistants to investigate this question together with the general political and economic problems involved in setting up the new state of Armenia. Such investigation as a basis of determination of policy is, in our minds, necessary before even the repatriation of refugees can be begun. We believe General Harbord could be persuaded to undertake such a mission.<sup>9</sup>

In fact, Hoover was behind this decision. According to him, if what was happening in the Ottoman Empire was put forward in a complete manner, it could be possible to make a decision suitable to the true American interests. What was needed to realize this aim was a comprehensive investigative mission broader than the previous ones. Moreover, as the mission was executing its duty, the risk of taking a quick decision would fade away as time passed. Hoover easily persuaded Morgenthau. He disclosed his ideas to Wilson and the State Department.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> From Ammission to President Wilson, 5 July 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/34**  
For the same document see. From Ammission to President Wilson, 5 July 1919, (ed.) Arthur S. Link, **The Papers of Woodrow Wilson**, (hereafter **PWW.**) vol. 61, (Princeton: Princeton Uni. 1989), p. 486

<sup>9</sup> From Ammission to President Wilson, 5 July 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/34**

<sup>10</sup> From Herbert Hoover to State Department, 27 June 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/33**  
In his memoirs, Hoover presents the developments as follows: “Colonel House, in mid-May, informed me that the President had the United States in mind to be mandatory of Armenia and Constantinople and that I would be appointed Governor.... I was sure the President knew little of the conditions which had to be met in undertaking such a mandate... I proposed to the Colonel (and later to the President) that a competent mission be sent to Armenia to investigate the problem and suggested General James G. Harbord as chairman.” Herbert Hoover, **The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson**, (New York: Popular Library, 1961), pp. 235-236

As Harbord began to prepare for the investigation mission, Wilson did not declare his final decision. The peace treaty to be signed with Germany took up all his time. On the other hand, he was overwhelmed by the pressure of the Armenian lobby.<sup>11</sup> He wanted to make a concrete contribution to the future of the Armenians but he did not strong enough to launch an attempt that would satisfy the Armenians. This state of mind showed itself clearly in a letter of reply sent on May 13 to Aharonian, the representative of the Republic of Yerevan:

I have learned of the sufferings of the Armenian people with the most poignant distress, and beg to assure you that if any practicable means of assisting them in their distress presented themselves at the moment, I for one would rejoice to make use of them... I can only hope that as the processes of peace are hastened and a settlement is arrived at which can be insisted upon that an opportunity may then promptly arise for taking effective steps to better the conditions and eventually assure the security of the people of Armenia.<sup>12</sup>

In short, Wilson needed time. One way or another, the decision of undertaking the mandate for Armenia had to be postponed. Despite the severe opposition of some advisors, the dispatch of a mission to the area under the leadership of General Harbord could secure the time needed.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the findings of the mission could be used as a basis for propaganda to weaken the opposition and draw the support of the public opinion. In order for Wilson to make up his mind, he did not need additional

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<sup>11</sup> A good example of the pressure towards President Wilson is the message dated 22 July 1919 and signed by some outstanding politicians: "We believe that without regard to party or creed the American People are deeply interested in the welfare of the Armenian people and expect to see the restoration of the Independence of Armenia..... We now believe that prevailing insecurity of life and intense want in the major portion of Armenia make immediate action imperative and sacred duty." From State Department to Ammission, 28 June 1919, **HMMA**, **184.021/34**

<sup>12</sup> From President Wilson to Avetis Aharonian, 13 May 1919, **PWW**, vol. 59, (Princeton: Princeton Uni., 1988), pp. 103-104

<sup>13</sup> A good example of this subject are the objections of D.Baker: "This portion of this dispatch dealing with a mission to be sent to Armenia, headed by General Harbord, I have not undertaken to execute, because I feel somewhat doubtful about the wisdom of such a mission until the Senate shall have acted upon the treaty..... every advantage is taken by those apposed to the treaty of the presence of our troops in various parts of the world, and it occurred to me that Senate might feel that we were anticipating its action if it discovered that General Harbord and a group of American officers were in Armenia." From Newton Diehl Baker to President Wilson, 15 July 1919, **PWW**, vol. 61, p. 486

information or to learn the real situation in Asia Minor or the Caucasus. He wholeheartedly believed that the Armenian allegations were genuine. Nothing could change his conviction.<sup>14</sup>

Wilson decided to dispatch a mission under the leadership of General Harbord to the Ottoman Empire on July 29, 1919.<sup>15</sup> On August 2, 1919, the decision was forwarded to Harbord, who had already started his preparations.<sup>16</sup>

In sum, in the tasking of the Harbord mission, the clash of conflicting thoughts and interests played a great role. The initiative by Morgenthau and the Armenian lobby to establish a covert American mandate for Armenia was brushed aside by the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. An investigative mission to find out the real situation in the Ottoman Empire was to be established. Wilson approved this proposal, which he considered suitable to gain time and to make propaganda.

### **The Establishment of the Commission and the Period of Preparation**

With the forwarding of the tasking order to Harbord on August 2, 1919, the preparations were officially started. While Harbord was trying to select the most suitable experts to be employed on the mission, he was also dealing with the transportation and technical details.

From the archives documents, it is obvious that Harbord selected the members of the mission with the help of primarily Hoover, the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as many other institutions and persons whom he personally interviewed before considering them eligible. However, as some of the experts that Harbord wanted to include in

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<sup>14</sup> GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 71, 170-171

<sup>15</sup> From the Desk Diary of Robert Lansing, Cabinet Meeting, 29 July 1919, **PWW**, vol. 62, (Princeton: Princeton Uni. Press, 1990), p. 27

<sup>16</sup> From Lansing to Gen. Harbord, 1 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/35**  
Armenian Narrative Notes, 2 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/106**

the commission declined the invitation for various reasons, he was forced to settle for the second best experts in most of the fields.<sup>17</sup>

From Harbord's initial meetings it is clearly seen that, in the tasking of the investigation mission, the purpose of making propaganda had a significant role. President Wilson and some members of the Peace Mission thought that there was need for an extensive propaganda campaign in order to persuade the U.S. Congress and public opinion to accept the undertaking of the mandate for Armenia. To General Tasker H. Bliss, the military member of the Peace Mission, who met Harbord on August 3, Harbord expressed this purpose very explicitly: "During the conversation I was informed by him [General Bliss] that the intention of Administration was that the widest publicity would be given to our mission to Armenia. That it was considered desirable that the country should know to the fullest the horror of the situation there and that pending action by Congress the President was doing all he could by sending someone for moral effect and to get information."<sup>18</sup>

On August 5, another significant meeting was held. The American members of the Peace Mission, Deputy Secretary of State Frank Lyon Polk, General Bliss and Henry White met Harbord upon his request. Harbord summarized the aim of the meeting as follows:

I stated to the Commission that I had desired to appear before them to learn whether their conception of the purpose of my proposed mission to Armenia was the same as my own. That I conceived it to secure information which the President might use in presenting to Congress the question of a Mandatory for the United States for that region, or possibly to be used by Congress itself in deciding the question.<sup>19</sup>

As General Harbord received the approval of the members of the mission about the method to be followed in the investigation, the list of the temporary staff, the medium of transportation and the allocation of allowance,

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<sup>17</sup> There are several similar documents in the archives. For example see, Armenian Narrative Notes, **HMMA, 184.021/106**

<sup>18</sup> Armenian Narrative Notes, 3 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/106**

<sup>19</sup> Armenian Narrative Notes, 5 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/106**

he did not hesitate to draw their attention to a significant danger: the tasking of the investigation mission had created great hopes and expectations in the region. However, even though the aim was this development “but in case such [American] interest was not followed by action, I thought there would be a reaction that would be worse than before the moral effect was created.” It is understood from the proceedings of the meeting that the warning was not considered at all.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, the official document of tasking dated August 13, brought a new dimension to the arguments that had been made up to that time. Right from the beginning, even though the basic objective appeared to be making the required investigation for a mandate for Armenia, in the document signed by Polk there was not a word about the mandate. On the contrary, a detailed investigation of all the Ottoman Empire had been demanded:

The President has designated you as Chief of a Military Mission to proceed without delay on a government vessel to Constantinople, Batoum, and such other places in Armenia, Russian Transcaucasia and Syria, as well enable you to carry out instructions already discussed with you. It is desired that you investigate and report on political, military, geographical, administrative, economic and other considerations involved in possible American interests and responsibilities in that region. It should seem that this could be done in an absence of about two months. Upon the completion of this duty, you will return to the United States with your mission and report in person to the President.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, despite the pressure and expectations of the Armenian lobby and its supporters, it is fairly visible that this was the ultimate success of the staff of both the State Department and Joint Chiefs of Staff, who suspiciously approached the subject of a mandate for Armenia, and who demanded that the U.S. policy in the Middle East should be determined on the basis of genuine interests. Even though the official name of the mission was the “American Military Mission to Armenia,” its task was no longer to investigate

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<sup>20</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>21</sup> From Frank L. Polk to General Harbord, **HMMA, 184.021/151**

the Armenian problem but to investigate the Ottoman Empire with regard to the American interests.

After receiving the absolute tasking instructions, Harbord and the new members of the mission, through meetings with the representatives of various interest groups, statesmen, soldiers and scholars who were gathered in Paris for the Peace Conference, tried to obtain information about the different aspect of the area to be investigated.

The representatives of the Armenian lobby and supporters of Armenia had visible influence on the meetings. The first message that the members of this group tried to give the mission was that the situation was critical and that the U.S. should immediately assume the mandate for Armenia. British Major General Bridges, who met the mission on August 5, claimed that the British troops would withdraw from the Caucasus on September 15, the latest and therefore the situation would get even worse, commented that “It was a great pity that America is not ready to take hold as the British withdraw.” The representatives of the American aid organizations, Smith and Vickerey, who met the mission on August 6, on the other hand commented that following the withdrawal of the British troops, aid activities would come to a halt and the American aid of thirty million dollars would be ruined.<sup>22</sup>

The Armenian lobby, on the other hand, was doing its best to provide arms and financial support to the Republic of Yerevan. In a letter dated August 6, to Prime Minister Clemenceau, a copy of which was submitted to Harbord, Alexander Khatissian, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Yerevan, claimed that Turkish and Azerbaijani troops had gathered in the Aras valley for a joint attack and the situation was critical:

At the head of this movement is Col. Kiazim Bey [Kâzım Karabekir Paşa] and many Turkish officers.... Conference immediately dispatch English detachments to Armenia. Our situation is extremely critical. The Allies should at least aid us military by sending us munitions.... Encouraged by the retreat of the English troops, the agitators, expecting a general attack by the Turkish forces, are trying to establish relations with the Russian Bolshevists.... It would at least be desirable to give the

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<sup>22</sup> Armenian Narrative Notes, 5-6 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/106**



Armenians some means of defense against this sudden attack, by furnishing them with arms, munitions and supplies.<sup>23</sup>

On August 15, the representatives of the Republic of Yerevan brought up the issue of the Ottoman attack at their meeting with Aharonian and General Gabriel Karganoff. According to the representatives, the Ottoman Empire had no authority in the area whatsoever. The commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps, which was stationed in Erzurum, had all the authority. This commander who had fought at Çanakkale (Dardanelles/Gallipoli campaign) and had been in Austria during the armistice was “Mustapha Kamil Pasha”.<sup>24</sup> As it can be easily understood, this so-called Mustapha Kamil, whose name was confidently expressed, was in fact a fictitious character created by the confusion of the inspector of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army, Mustafa Kemal Paşa, and commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps, Kazım Paşa. Contrary to their allegations, the meeting is proof that the Armenians did not know anything about what was happening in the region beyond the rumors. However, they tried to give the impression that they were aware of all the developments in order to have influence upon the Peace Conference. Therefore, all information whether false, inaccurate, based on rumors or totally full of lies, was used without restraint.

As Harbord obtained more information about the region of his investigation and listened to the exaggerated and conflicting claims of the representatives of the Armenian lobby he became increasingly suspicious. In addition, although so many American and European officials had visited the Ottoman Empire and Transcaucasus, it was very strange that there was no first hand information. The records of the archive documents of the meeting dated August 12, with the co-chairman of the Armenian National Delegation

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<sup>23</sup> From Delegation of Integral Armenia to President Clemenceau, 6 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/118**

In fact this was not a new demand. There had been demands of arms, munitions and supplies needed for at least 50 000 troops. See. From State Department to Ammission, 28 June 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/34**

<sup>24</sup> Armenian Narrative Notes, 15 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/106**

News related to the fictitious character of Mustapha Kamil Pasha even appeared in the newspapers. See. “Britain is Held Responsible for Safety of Armenians”, **The New York Herald**, 10 August 1919

Boghos Nubar Paşa, Prof. Der Hagopian and Malcolm, reflect the suspicions he had felt:

Boghos Nubar Pacha... after talking very convincingly of Armenia, General Harbord said: 'You interest me immensely, how recently have you been in Armenia?' To which he replied 'Never'. The majority of the people who have called on this mission on Armenian subjects are people with an interest in Armenia but who have never been there or not for years.<sup>25</sup>

Even though Harbord mission met with many people including representatives of Azerbaijan, Iran, Northern Caucasus Republic, they did not meet anyone representing the Ottoman side. Therefore, even before the mission started its actual investigation, they had been misinformed unilaterally and erroneously. Most of the books which were submitted for the use of the members of the mission were either outdated, incorrect or advocates of one side.<sup>26</sup> In order to obtain additional sources, they had applied to the propaganda organization, The Armenian Bureau, which was based in London, sent twenty-six publications, all of which were propaganda materials, and they were distributed to the members of the mission.<sup>27</sup>

However, what really influenced the members of the mission greatly were the reports that the Inquiry organization had prepared for the usage of the American Peace Mission. An absolute anti-Turkish pro-Armenian attitude was prevalent in the reports, which were claimed to have been written by experts in their fields. These reports, which were full of stereotyped, one-sided and false information, were used extensively both before and after the investigation when they were writing down the final report.<sup>28</sup> Since the report,

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<sup>25</sup> Armenian Narrative Notes, 12 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/106**  
Harbord described the conversation using nearly the same words in his article. See. James G. Harbord, "Investigating Turkey and Trans-Caucasia", **The World's Work**, vol. XL, May 1920, pp.35-36

<sup>26</sup> For the list of the books the members of the Commission used for their final report see. Maj. Gen. James G. Harbord, Appendix L, Bibliography, **HMMA, 184.02102/17**

<sup>27</sup> Even the titles of the brochures that the Armenian Bureau had sent gave enough information about their content: "*The Tragedy of Armenia*", "*The Tragedy of the Caucasus*", "*The Clean Fighting Turk*", "*The Christian Peoples of the East*", "*The Plight of Armenian and Assyrian Christians*", etc. See. From the Armenian Bureau to General Harbord, 12 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/146**

<sup>28</sup> For the list of the reports the Commission used see. From American Peace Mission, 9 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/146**

a part of which is presented below, had been prepared for the members of the commission as a summary of the other reports is a good example for our subject:

Ever since 1453 the struggle in the near east has been continuous between progressive humanity on the one side and mediaeval barbarity on the other. Complaints have always been met with massacre and plunder. The massacres and depredations, and attempted extermination of the Armenians down to 1915 are matters of history.

... The Jews also, both Turkish and Levantine have sided with the Turk against the Armenian... It is a well-known fact that no Jew can compete in trade with the gifted Armenian of Asia Minor and the Levant, and as a result the Jews, felt that the Armenian must go.

... It has been estimated that from 1, ½ to 2 millions of Armenians have been killed since 1914.

... The Armenian State consists of Magna Armenia which would block Pan-Islam and Pan-Turanian, and form a barrier against the "drang nach Osten". The future state should include a line extending from the Russo-Persian frontiers to the Gulf of Alexandretta.

... As there is practically no portion of this territory in which the Armenians now have a preponderance of numbers, the assignment of boundaries to the Armenian State is a matter which will have to be decided upon a basis of history, and of natural geographical frontiers. The Peace Commission therefore has rather a paradoxical problem of constituting an independent state for a minority people, over a region in which the majority of the people have hereto fore held the reins of government. However paradoxical this may seem, it is the only method by which a great people can be given a national existence.<sup>29</sup>

Harbord was not happy about his conversations with the so-called specialists in Paris and reports prepared by them. The information was old, unreliable and problematic. And none of them had visited the Middle East recently. Harbord described his experiences jokingly:

Reliable information of conditions in that region from witnesses recently on the ground was difficult to obtain. There were experts who had not been nearer to Armenia than the Congressional Library, and yet others who had approached as near as France but almost no one who had recently visited the Near East. This was as true of Armenians as of others in Paris.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> From Lt. Col. E. G. Bliss to Harbord Mission, 4 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/112**

<sup>30</sup> HARBORD, **loc.cit.**, pp.35-36

The meeting held on August 13, with Mary Mills Patrick, the president of the Constantinople American College for Girls, is an exception. As stated in the Part One, Patrick wanted all of the Ottoman Empire to be taken under U.S. mandate. She had the support of the Turkish intellectuals in İstanbul. She did not consider the Armenian allegations to be true. To her “peace in the Near East cannot be brought about by force but must come from within.” She considered the Turks as the best nation in the Middle East. A mandate comprising only the Armenians had little chance of success. Since all the nations wanted a U.S. mandate, the best course of action was to take all the Empire (except maybe Mesopotamia and Southern Palestine) under one she said, “America must bear her share of the burden in the new order of things.” According to Patrick, Admiral Bristol was a candidate of sufficient ability and knowledge to take over this mandate administration.<sup>31</sup>

By August 12, the selection of the staff for the Harbord mission had been completed and most of them had begun work. There were two more high ranking officers in addition to Harbord: Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Frank Ross McCoy, and Brigadier General George Van Horn Moseley. The remaining members of the mission were eleven officers (Colonel Henry Beeuwkes, LTC Jasper Y. Brinton, LTC John Price Jackson, LTC Edward Bowditch, Jr, Commander Wallace Bertholf, Major Harold Wantworth Clark, Major Lawrence Martin, Captain Stanley K. Hornbeck, Captain David Loring Jr. [aide-de-camp], Captain Lovering Hill [aide-de-camp] and Captain Gustave Villaret Jr. [aide-de-camp] ) as well as three civilian experts (Prof. William Wilson Cumberland, William B. Poland and Eliot Grinnell Mears). There were some additional personnel: two U.S. officers of Armenian descent (Major Haig Shekerjian and 1st Lt. Harutiun H. Khachadoorian) and three enlisted (MSgt. Aram Kojassar, Sgt. Ohanessian and Pvt. Dicran Serijanian) in order to work as interpreters and provide information about the region, as well as a history teacher from Robert College, Y.Hüseyin Hulusi (Pektaş). The total number personnel of the mission passed fifty when the additional military and service personnel were included (liaison, catering, transportation, clerk secretary etc.), as well as secretary Robert W. Anstey

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<sup>31</sup> Armenian Narrative Notes, 13 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/106**

and journalist Walter Sanders Klatt who had been appointed by the Associated Press.<sup>32</sup>

As soon as the U.S. troops of Armenian descent heard about Harbord mission, they tried to get assigned to it through various ways. It was definitely a desirable purpose for them to join and become effective in the research and investigation of the mission, which would have a very influential role in determining the future of Armenia. As an example, the documents show that 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Khachadoorian, who would assume a significant role during his assignment with the mission, had been included in the mission by W. H. Buckler, a member of the American Peace Delegation.<sup>33</sup> It is quite probable that such preferential treatment was effective in the selection of the other Armenians. However, as a result of his impressions during the preparation activities, Harbord thought that the Armenians would not be impartial. In order to balance these two interested parties, he decided to include Hüseyin (Pektaş) Bey in the mission in order to check the translation and interpretation. Hüseyin Bey was a founding member of the Wilsonian League, the association set up by the Turkish intellectuals who favored a U.S. mandate. He was a person loved and respected by both the Turkish and

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<sup>32</sup> For detailed information, see, List, **HMMA, 184.021/48**  
American Military Mission to Armenia, **HMMA, 184.021/99**  
American Military Mission to Armenia, **HMMA, 184.021/100**  
Who's Who: Members of the Mission, **HMMA, 184.021/101**

<sup>33</sup> "Lieutenant Khachadoorian, whose card I enclose, and who has recently been in Armenia on a job for Mr. Hoover has asked whether he should stay here on the chance of General Harbord desiring him in the staff of the mission if and when this is sent." From W. H. Buckler to Lt. Col. E. Bliss, 25 July 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/42**

Khachadoorian, in fact had been influential even before being selected to the mission, during the period of gathering information and impressions. The reports, which supported the Armenian theses and which had been written after his return from previous duties, were presented by the American Peace Delegation for the use of the members of the mission as official and up-to-date reports. See, "The Following Prominent Men were Interviewed by Lieutenant H.H. Khachadoorian in Bakou-Azerbaijan, April 19-26 1919", **HMMA, 184.021/11**

"Report on Zangezur and Karabagh by First Lieut. H.H. Khachadoorian", 22 July 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/44**

Khachadoorian, joined the mission on 14 August. From AEF Chief of Staff Fox Conner, 18 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/99**

American officials.<sup>34</sup> It was during the investigation that this precaution taken by Harbord would prove useful.

The appointment, organization and the preparation of Harbord mission drew a lot of attention. While on one hand there was unfortunate news criticizing the Peace Conference,<sup>35</sup> on the other hand, news about the mission and its significance abounded. By particularly emphasizing the personal qualifications of Harbord and previous achievements, the newspapers proclaimed Harbord the most suitable governor of the mandate for Armenia. Pro-Armenian newspapers spread the news of an even more optimistic attitude in the area:

General Harbord, who will have a complete staff of military, financial, political and railway experts with him, is generally regarded as one of the ablest men in the American Army. He has the confidence of President Wilson. His report on the situation which is expected late in September will bear much weight not only with the American, but with all the other Allied and Associated Governments.”<sup>36</sup>

Upon this great interest Harbord, in a news conference on August 13, gave information about the purpose of the mission and the execution of the investigation:

There has been much pressure brought to bear to have the United States accept the mandate for Armenia, but there has not been a serious investigation of the problems involved in taking over that country. The mission will go into every phase of the situation –political, racial,

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<sup>34</sup> “Our mission included two American officers of Armenian birth one of them a graduate of West Point though a native of Asia Minor, and the other a civil engineer and graduate of the University of Vermont. To balance these two interested parties and to afford a mutual check on translation and interpretation, we were fortunate enough to secure for our inland journey professor Hussein Bey, a Moslem Turk of the Department of History in Robert College.” HARBORD, **op.cit.**, s.37

<sup>35</sup> “If the Allied Powers turn a deaf ear to the appeals for protection of the Armenians against the assassins now organized for their destruction, history will hold their leaders to account, and no plea of commercial advantages or political gain will avail to save them from stern condemnation.” “Britain is Held Responsible for Safety of Armenians”, **The New York Herald**, 10 August 1919

<sup>36</sup> The approach of The New York Herald, the American newspaper known for its pro-Armenian attitude towards the tasking of the mission is a good example: “While the United States has not as yet decided to take over Armenia, there are many observes who think it is only a question of time, and that the Harbord Mission is the step in this direction. General Harbord’s thorough investigation of the Armenian situation, together with his own personal fitness, would make him, his friends believe, the best possible man to administer and develop Armenia”. “General Harbord Suggested As Governor of Armenia”, **The New York Herald**, 15 August 1919

economic, financial and commercial. I shall also investigate highways, harbors, agricultural and mining conditions, the raising an Armenian Army, policing problems, and the raw materials of Armenia. I expect to return to Paris with details about Armenia, upon which a decision can be based.<sup>37</sup>

It should not be forgotten that the U.S. administration's purpose of exploiting the mission as a means of propaganda influenced and encouraged the media. All these publications were a part of the endeavor to constitute public opinion. However, there were people who were disturbed by these propaganda activities and media campaigns. According to Admiral Mark L. Bristol, the interest shown in the Armenians created unease among the Muslim population. In addition, excessive publicity would hinder a dignified and proper investigation: "the increased interest that we seem to be taking in the Armenian question by sending out Colonel Haskell and now sending your Mission, there is tending to increase the tenseness amongst the Moslems. ... It will be a most unfortunate thing if disorder should break out in Asia Minor. Therefore I would recommend to you for your consideration the question of proceeding with your work with no more advertisement or ostentation that is necessary for a dignified and proper investigation."<sup>38</sup> With his opposition, Bristol, in fact, was putting forth the reservations of those who were suspicious of the mandate for Armenia.

Following the technical preparations and the assigning of the USS Martha Washington, an American cargo ship, after some difficulties,<sup>39</sup> the mission left Paris on August 20. The ship left the port of Brest on August 25.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> "General Harbord Explains Mission to the Caucasus", The New York Herald, 14 August 1919

<sup>38</sup> From Admiral Bristol to General Harbord, 20 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/196**

<sup>39</sup> The biggest challenge after the selection of the members of the mission was the technical preparations and provision of transportation. A significant amount of the limited time was assigned to these difficulties instead of a determined investigation. See. From Lansing to General Harbord, 18 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/183**

From Lansing to General Harbord, 18 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/186**

From Admiral Knapp to General Harbord, 19 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/180**

From Admiral Knapp to Comfran, 19 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/91**

From Halstead to Admiral Knapp, 19 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/189**

<sup>40</sup> From Ammission to B.B. Moore, 20 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/192**

From General Harbord to General Helwick, 20 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/194**

In his article Harbord stated the departure of the ship on August 24. HARBORD, **op.cit.**,

## 5. INVESTIGATION TRIP IN ANATOLIA

### Istanbul: Warm-up and Period of Final Preparation

The mission members passed through the Çanakkale Strait, thinking of scenarios of the Gallipoli battle and trying to differentiate facts from propaganda. Harbord explained his feelings about Armenian Question at that time:

We literally dreamed Armenia and massacres. Much of the literature was of the class that in another cause might have been classed as propaganda, but the witnesses were unimpeachable in the case of poor Armenia, as we were soon to learn on the ground. One member of the mission told of an Armenian he had met in Paris who, when asked if the stories we had heard of the Armenian massacres were really as bad as represented, replied: 'Yes, quite as bad! Why, I have been massacred twice myself.'<sup>41</sup>

The mission arrived in Istanbul on September 2, a day behind schedule.<sup>42</sup> Members of the mission were met with great interest and curiosity. In the aftermath of the King-Crane commission, the arrival a new and bigger investigation caused intense arguments and speculations. All the newspapers in Istanbul gave the news of the arrival of the mission with big headlines. While all of them used praiseworthy statements, the Armenian newspapers expressed their delight for their cause:

The American Mission, which is presided by General Harbord and which includes many generals, officers and civilian officials of important posts, and composed of 40 people arrived in Istanbul the previous evening by the ship named Martha Washington. As we had already informed you, this American mission who is tasked to investigate Eastern Anatolia has been assigned by President Wilson. The purpose of the mission is to investigate Armenia and Armenians, with the purpose of an overall evaluation of the towns and villages they live in, their ethnic, economic, military and financial situation etc. for the last time. With this reality in mind, there are many distinguished experts and technicians in the mission who have been successful in their fields and come together for a noble cause on behalf of humanity... As we welcome General Harbord and his working group with the most sincere feelings, we

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p.36

<sup>41</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp.36-37

<sup>42</sup> From Bertay to Lt. Com. Simpson, 23 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/199**



would like to say they we wholeheartedly and sincerely support the American effort to revive Armenia.<sup>43</sup>

The mission immediately paid its courtesy call to the High Commissioner of the Allied Nations. They stuck to the advice of U.S. Department of State and did not visit any member of the Ottoman government. But the newspapers printed stories of their visit to Prime Minister Damad Ferid Paşa and other notables. Meanwhile, with the inclusion of Major Shekerjian, Commerce Attaché Mears and Hüseyin Bey in the mission, the permanent staff was completed. In order to compensate for the time lost during the selection and technical preparations in Paris, the mission, considering its heavy load of work, started its investigation. They met the representatives of various political, ethnic and religious interest groups.<sup>44</sup>

In fact, a procedure similar to that of the investigation by the King-Crane commission was being repeated. Now, the more experienced representatives of the interest groups strove to express their purposes in a more convincing manner and presented information and documents to influence the mission's final report.<sup>45</sup> The basic point that was different this time was the presence of the U.S. High Commissioner Admiral Mark L. Bristol and his headquarters.

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<sup>43</sup> "American Mission", **Renaissance** (Constantinople), 4 September 1919

As in the USA and Europe, another point that was emphasized in the newspapers was that General Harbord had successfully served in Cuba and the Philippines. "The most prominent and noteworthy member of the mission, the president of the mission, General Harbord following his brilliant career in Cuba and the Philippines... came to France". "Général Harbord's mission", **Renaissance** (Constantinople), 4 September 1919

"General Harbord is an officer who has distinguished himself both in Cuba and the Philippines." "American Mission -The arrival of General Harbord", **Moniteur Oriental** (Constantinople). 4 September 1919

<sup>44</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp.37-38

"The mission was also accepted by the Swedish ambassador who represented the American interests as well as the British, French and Italian high commissioners.", "General Harbord's Mission", **Renaissance**, 4 September 1919

"The Allied high commissioners visited General Harbord at the American Embassy yesterday. Grand vizier Ferid Paşa returned General Harbord's call after his visit to the Sublime Porte yesterday. In the afternoon the leader of the Protestant community, Armenian Patriarch Zaven and the representatives of the Catholic church met General Harbord for a long time." "General Harbord in İstanbul", **Journal d'Orient** (Constantinople), 5 September 1919

<sup>45</sup> It is understood from the documents that many applications had been made in this subject. The letter of the Armenian Agricultural Association is a good example: "Sir, the Peace Conference has trusted you with a high mission in Armenia. Availing ourselves of your presence in this town we beg to be allowed to put at your disposal our services, if you want to make any use of the knowledge and the experience that we have acquired. We will feel happy and grateful if we could in this way be useful and serve also our

### The Admiral Bristol Factor

As stated in the previous part, Admiral Bristol was not pleased with the US policy in the Middle East. He thought that the policies that had been developed under the influence of the missionaries and various lobbies, particularly the Armenian one, were wrong and incongruous with the political and economic American interests. Moreover, he felt that by distorting the realities of the region, the American administration and public opinion had been cheated. In the peace negotiations, justice was not being done to the Turks. He was convinced that no solution that kept the Turks outside would be a fair solution and, on the contrary, would start a new war in the region. If the U.S. was willing to settle in the Middle East politically and economically, it definitely had to gain the support and confidence of the Turks.<sup>46</sup>

A prominent figure of the period, journalist Mr. Ahmed Emin (Yalman), described the role Admiral Bristol played and his contribution to the Turkish War of Independence as follows:

The choice of Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol as American High Commissioner must be mentioned as one of the few favorable outside factors against thousands of adverse ones in the first phase of the Turkish "National Struggle"... His activities from the beginning to the end of our struggle for independent national existence amounted, in effect, to almost an informal alliance between Turkey and The United States"<sup>47</sup>

As soon as Admiral Bristol had started his work in İstanbul, he had contacted all the parties without any prejudice, made some investigative trips and established a sound web of intelligence across the territory of the Ottoman Empire. He also had won the support of the officers, diplomats,

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country" From Agricultural Society to General Harbord, 6 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/363**

For another example, see. From Elia Mailian (Scientific Industrial Commission) to General Harbord, ?, **HMMA, 184.021/304**

<sup>46</sup> "Bristol advised Allen Dulles, chief, Near East Division, State Department, that he used about one-third of his time trying to keep our relief organizations from getting mixed up in politics and having a detrimental effect upon our American interests'. "Thomas A. Bryson, "Admiral Mark L. Bristol, An Open-Door Diplomat in Turkey", **International Journal of Middle East Studies**, vol.5, 1974, pp.451-453, 457

<sup>47</sup> Ahmed Emin Yalman, **Turkey in My Time**, (Norman: Uni. of Oklahoma Press, 1956), pp.78-79

businessmen and some educational missionaries who were disturbed by the U.S. policy in the Middle East that was under the influence of the pro-Armenian missionaries. Through the numerous reports that he had sent, a healthy and timely flow of information to the U.S. administration had been realized for the first time in the history.<sup>48</sup>

Bristol was well aware of the importance of the Harbord mission, and, he knew that the Armenian lobby was working hard to influence the mission. However, he felt confident that as soon as the mission, which was primarily composed of officers, faced the realities of the region, they would realize where the true American interests lay. For this purpose, he had prepared many solid reports and a briefing together with his staff.<sup>49</sup> He was aware that in some ways he had not been able to transfer all the information and experience he had gathered so far to the U.S. administration. Considering this thought, Harbord's Mission appeared to be a good opportunity.

However, Bristol was charged with the task of going to İzmir to investigate the massacres conducted by the Greeks during and after the invasion at city. Despite all his preparations, he would not be able to meet the Harbord Mission while they were in İstanbul. He expressed his unhappiness about it in a letter dated 20 August in which he warned General Harbord on some subjects:

As I am proceeding to Smyrna today on duty with an Inter-Allied Commission, it is very probable that I will not see you when you pass through this place. I'm very sorry for I would like very much to meet you and especially to have a talk with you before you proceed to the Caucasus... At the present time, the situation in Turkey is very tense. The constant agitation of the Armenian question on top of the occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks and the continued disorders around Smyrna are causing a great deal of unrest throughout Asia Minor. It is my impression that in certain quarters especially amongst foreigners and the Armenians and

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<sup>48</sup> **Ibid.**, p.455

Laurence Evans, **United States Policy and the Partition of Turkey**, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Pres, 1965), pp. 270-272

<sup>49</sup> All the American diplomats stationed in İstanbul did not see eye to eye with Bristol. Consul general in İstanbul, Bie Ravndal, who was known for his pro-Armenian attitude, is a good example of them. See Bie Ravndal, "Memo to Major General Harbord", **HMMA, 184.021/292**

Greeks, this unrest in Asia Minor is exaggerated. I feel that the Turks are not planning any outbreak as some would believe.<sup>50</sup>

The report and the briefings which Bristol had ordered to be prepared and which were submitted to the Harbord mission contained striking information that was the result of investigations carried out in the troublesome areas by experts. Harbord finally was able to reach the first-hand information that he had been seeking. As these reports, particularly two of them, are very important for our subject, it is necessary to quote their more significant parts.

### **The Dunn Report:**

The first report, to which Bristol attached high value, was the one prepared by intelligence naval officer 1Lt Robert Steed Dunn on July 24, 1919. Dunn<sup>51</sup> prepared his report following his investigative trip in eastern Anatolia, the Black Sea coast and the Caucasus. During this investigation, he met civilian and military officials, politicians, aid officials, members of the invading armies and various civilians. The first striking point in the report is that the American and the British civilian and military officials in the region had unfavorable opinions of the Armenians and, despite all the previous accusations, felt sympathy for the Muslims: "On all sides was heard the complaint as to the hopelessness of Armenian character and government and –often by more than implication- the likeability of the Mussulman."<sup>52</sup> There was widespread corruption and putrefaction in the Yerevan Republic. For their own financial and economic benefit, the Armenian government

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<sup>50</sup> From Admiral Bristol to General Harbord, 20 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/196**

<sup>51</sup> For information about 1Lt. Dunn See Heath W. Lowry, "Richard G. Hovannisian on Lieutenant Robert Steed Dunn", **Journal of Ottoman Studies**, vol. 5, 1985, passim.

<sup>52</sup> Lt. R. S. Dunn, "Intelligence Report", **HMMA, 184.021/46**, Part I, pp. 1-3, 8

The same sympathy was prevalent among most of the troops serving in the Ottoman Empire at that time. Memoirs of a British officer who served in the Dardanelles and Istanbul is a good example: "in spite of the official attitude and official orders, it is unquestionably true that the sympathies of the British Army, as a whole, were entirely on the side of the Turk. I never heard anyone speak with even moderately genial sentiments about Greeks and Armenians or any of the Levantine rabble; but I rarely found anyone who had not a good word to say for the Turk" **Fusilier Bluff: The Experiences of Unprofessional Soldier in the Near East 1918 to 1919**, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1934), p.191

officials, instead of delivering the American aid materials to those in need, either distributed them to their supporters or sold them for money. As a result, thousands of people were starving.<sup>53</sup>

The second finding of the report was that the scheme of establishing a free Armenian state had been put forth by the rich Armenian diasporas, but that the majority of the common Armenians preferred to live under Russian administration:

...at every other town and camp visited in Russian Armenia, it was stated that the majority of the present inhabitants preferred being under Russian rule to that of their present government. This was represented as the unanimous feeling of the peasantry, and was stated by Armenian Army officers... A plebiscite would declare for Russian rule... Both British and American officials confirmed the idea that the cry for an independent Armenia was the propaganda of rich absentee Armenians, who would not return to the country unless given political or commercial favors.<sup>54</sup>

Consequently, it was highly probable and expected that the Russians, as soon as they mustered up their strength, would invade the region again. The British officers that Dunn interviewed claimed that the absentee Armenians were also the real provocateurs of the previous incidents: "...at Erzerum, British officers temporarily on duty from Russian Armenia, declared that absentee Armenians from England and America had in the past encouraged Russian Armenians to kill Moslems by providing them with bombs, thus as agent provocateurs, to stir sympathy for Armenians when Moslems began reprisals"<sup>55</sup>

The third finding concerned the American missionaries and aid officials working in eastern Anatolia. According to Dunn, the majority of them were collaborating openly for the establishment of a greater Armenia. Particularly Mary L. Graffam, who had been working in Sivas for over eighteen years, was the advocate with the most extreme ideas. Following his meeting with her, Dunn expressed his opinions about her as follows:

A strong supporter of an independent Armenia on the grounds that this is the Armenian's country; that they can never live under

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<sup>53</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 3, 6-9

<sup>54</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 5-6

<sup>55</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 5-6, 15

Turkish domination; that the Turks are whipped and must be cleared out.... She starts from the standpoint that there must be an independent Armenia, assumes the superiority of Armenian character over all others in the near east “when given a chance”, and shapes all arguments to this axiom. As a veteran worker for the race, she sees her life-efforts vindicated by a free Armenia, and failing without it... She stated that she would support any scheme, honest or no, cruel or no, for an independent Armenia. When told of successful Greek intrigue on the coast deceiving Allied officers, she professed to admire it, saying that she would “work” any one she could for her own –Armenian- ends, had she the chance.<sup>56</sup>

From Dunn’s report, it is clear that Graffam would do anything for the cause in which she believed. In fact, Graffam had made her best contribution to this cause through the reports she had written during the World War I. In these reports, which had been forwarded to the U.S. and Europe through Morgenthau, Graffam had claimed that the Turks were massacring and torturing the Armenians. Graffam’s reports were used in the books which the British government had prepared for propaganda purposes, and which today are accepted as the basic source books for the Armenian allegations of genocide.<sup>57</sup>

The fourth and the most important finding in relation to the subject at hand was the impossibility of setting up a greater Armenia even under a mandate. All of the Allied officers, Turkish officials, civilian populace and even some missionaries Dunn had met expressed their thoughts in this line. As an example, according to the missionary Stapleton, who had been living in Erzurum for twenty years; an independent Armenia “could not possibly work, ever under a mandate.”<sup>58</sup> Even the impressions Dunn had made during his trip verified this reality. It was because of the fact that the Armenians lacked the required attributes to realize such a project and also it was obvious that the Turks would not hesitate to show their reaction to the realization of such a project. Furthermore, despite all the poverty, economic woes and hardships, the Turks were gradually getting organized and apparently preparing for a possible struggle: “in the light of the present

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<sup>56</sup> **Ibid.**, Part II, pp. 24-25

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter One footnote 16

<sup>58</sup> DUNN, **op.cit.**, Part II, pp. 31-32

organized movement of the Turks under the Nationalist Party and Mustapha Kemal to fight any sacrifice of Turkish territorial sovereignty.”<sup>59</sup>

According to Dunn, the project of establishing a greater Armenia under an American mandate, which had no chance of success, would require both thousands of American troops and except for Great Britain, this new state would be useful to no one. This new Armenian state, which would stretch between Russia, Azerbaijan and, Turkey, would be a buffer state to protect the new colonies the British had acquired. Moreover, in order to sustain this new state, Britain would not undertake any financial burden through the protection of the U.S. The British officers posted in the area in also acceded to this opinion.<sup>60</sup>

### **The Niles-Sutherland Report**

The second report<sup>61</sup> is even more important for the study at hand because it contained detailed information about the Bitlis-Van-Bayezid region. This region had suffered the most from the effects of the war but had not been visited by an investigative mission. Captain Emory H. Niles and Arthur E. Sutherland, Jr. were charged on June 25, 1919 with the duty to investigate the situation in eastern Anatolia and to determine the needs of the area. Between July 14 and August 12, 1919, Niles and Sutherland visited important cities like Mardin, Batman, Bitlis, Van, Bayazid, Erzincan, Erzurum and Trabzon and covering a total of 1426 km. They handed in their final report on August 16, 1919.

Niles and Sutherland not only visited an area where no foreigner had ever set foot and which had suffered terribly because of the war and uprisings, but also carried out a different type of investigation. They passed

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<sup>59</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 2-32

<sup>60</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 7-9,33

<sup>61</sup> The Report of Niles-Sutherland was first published by Justin McCarthy. See, Justin McCarthy, “The Report of Niles and Sutherland on American investigation of Eastern Anatolia After World War I”, **XI. Turkish History Congress**, volume V., (Ankara:TTK Basımevi, 1994)

In our thesis, the archival copy of the report was used. “Report of Captain Emory H. Niles and Mr. Arthur E. Sutherland Jr. On Trip of Investigation Through Turkish Vilayets”, **HMMA, 184.021/175**

on information based on their own observations, and avoided presenting the information which they could not prove or confirm. Nowhere in the report were imaginary historical proofs, prejudices or racial statements made. Except for this novel impartiality, a second important factor that distinguished mission was the preference of hiring Turkish interpreters instead of Armenians or other local minorities.

Over the centuries, interpreters had always posed a problem for European visitors that traveled in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, after all that had happened during the war, how could one expect the interpreters who were mostly Armenian or Greek nationalists to behave impartially? In the presence of the interpreters who belonged to minorities, how much could the Turkish populace and officials behave freely and provide sound information? Caleb Gates, as a result of his experience he had during his investigative trip in March 1919, gave us the following information: "In some places the British were employing Armenians as interpreters because of their knowledge of languages, and they were also giving them authority over Turks, which greatly exasperated the latter."<sup>62</sup> LTC Arthur Rawlinson, who did not count on the impartiality of the Armenian interpreters, preferred to employ Russian interpreters in his investigative mission in eastern Anatolia and Caucasus during the beginning of 1919s.<sup>63</sup>

The matter of interpreters was stated in the final report by Niles-Sutherland in the following words: "Our interpreter, Osman Rohi, was of invaluable assistance to us; the fact that he was a Turk seemed to have a great influence upon the people with whom we came into contact. He proved himself thoroughly capable and reliable."<sup>64</sup>

The first thing that draws attention in the Niles-Sutherland report is that the investigators were grateful for the support and help provided by the Turkish authorities. Contrary to the allegations, it was not the intention of the Turkish administration to disguise any incident or fact. It was also not

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<sup>62</sup> Caleb Frank Gates, **Not to Me Only**, (Princeton: Princeton Uni. Pres, 1940), p. 258

<sup>63</sup> Alfred Rawlinson, **Adventures in the Near East 1918-1922**, (London: Andrew Melrose, 1924), p. 256

<sup>64</sup> NILES-SUTHERLAND, **op.cit.**, p. 2



possible to conduct the investigation without the support of the both the civilian and the military authorities:

The means of transportation used by us were furnished entirely by the Turkish authorities, chiefly military who placed every facility at our disposal. Besides the horses and carriages, we had the use of automobiles from Erzerum to the Black Sea and two special trains were run for us between Bayazid and Erzerum. Throughout the trip we were furnished with guards of soldiers and gendarmes. At most times these seemed unnecessary, but at certain points it would have been impossible for us to proceed without them. (...) At every point we were treated with great courtesy by the Turkish authorities, both civil and military. They seemed friendly and anxious not only to give us information, but to aid us in every other way.<sup>65</sup>

The first and the most important finding of the report concerned what had happened in the area of Bitlis-Van-Bayezid during the war. Almost of all the towns and villages in the area had been demolished. Everywhere were signs of brutality and massacre. The main problem lay at the point of who had conducted all of this destruction and massacre. Even though the writers of the report did not believe at the beginning, by the end of their investigations they became convinced that the main culprits were the Armenians. Despite all the terrible conditions they were in, the first demand of the Muslim populace was to keep them away from the Armenians. Considering all the incidents that had happened during the war, the return of the Armenian refugees was not probable even though the Turkish military provided security:

In this entire region we were informed that the damage and destruction had been done by the Armenians, who, after the Russians retired, remained in occupation of the country, and who, when the Turkish army advanced, destroyed everything belonging to the Muslims. Moreover the Armenians are accused of having committed murder, rape, arson and horrible atrocities of every description upon the Muslim population. At first we were most incredulous of these stories, but we finally came to believe them, since the testimony was absolutely unanimous and was corroborated by material evidence. For instance, the only quarters left at all intact in the cities of Bitlis and Van are the Armenian quarters, as was evidenced by churches and inscriptions on the houses, while the Moslem quarters were completely destroyed. Villages said to have been Armenian were still standing, whereas Muslim villages were completely destroyed. The verbal

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<sup>65</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 2-3

testimony of the inhabitants regarding personal atrocities was supported by the violent hatred of Armenians manifested everywhere.... An inevitable result of the feelings of the inhabitants is that it is impossible for any Armenian to come into the region to live, without any regard to the number of troops which may be stationed there.<sup>66</sup>

The second important finding of the report was that within the borders of Yerevan Republic and areas close to the border the Armenian, attacks continued, the Muslim populace was massacred, tortured in many ways and was forced to emigrate. Along their way, Niles and Sutherland met many Muslim refugees who were in miserable conditions, who told assault and massacre stories that were similar to each other. All these impressions verified the information the Turkish authorities had provided earlier. These ongoing massacres upset the security and stabilization of the area greatly. In addition, at the congress, being held in Erzurum at that time, it was also decided to resist any kind of Armenian attacks and atrocities with all the Turkish strength:

In this region [Bayezid-Erzurum and border region] the racial situation is entirely aggravated the proximity to the frontier of Armenia, from which refugees are coming, with stories of massacres, cruelty and atrocities carried on by the Armenian Government, Army and people against the Musulman population.... Here also the Armenians before retiring ruined villages, carried out massacres, and perpetrated every kind of atrocity upon the Musulman population. And the doings of the Armenians just over the frontier keep alive and active the hatred of the Armenians, a hatred that seems to be at least smouldering in the region of Van. That there are disorders and crimes in Armenia is confirmed by refugees from Armenia in all parts of the region and by a British officer at Erzerum... An important indication of the general feeling against the Armenians in this region is the congress being held at Erzerum when we were there to protest against any annexation of Turkish territory to Armenia.<sup>67</sup>

Contrary to the previous investigations, this report provided detailed statistical data supported by up-to-date observation and investigation. The report consisted of twenty-one pages and fifteen pages which had statistical data under the titles of transportation, population, status of destruction food,

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<sup>66</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 3-4

<sup>67</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 3-5

security, aid and suggestions province by province. Even only in this consideration the contribution of the report was invaluable.<sup>68</sup>

The report of Niles and Sutherland ends with recommendations about the aid that should be provided following the summarization of the findings. The most significant lines in the conclusion part are about the Caucasus. The experts, who could not cross the border due to security concerns, from the information they had gathered from the refugees determined that the situation was rather serious. Finding out what was going on in the Caucasus had great significance and urgency: "It is most strongly urged that conditions in the Caucasus be investigated with a view to ascertaining the true state of affairs."<sup>69</sup>

As seen, these two reports which were presented to the Harbord mission, were very significant both for being based on up-to-date and original data and for cross-examining the established convictions and data. The data that Bristol's headquarters passed on orally, however, was probably in the form of complementing or verifying the data in the reports mentioned above. Unfortunately, the content of these interviews was is included in the archives.

Another significant chance of the Harbord mission was the presence in İstanbul of the Turkish intellectuals who, except for the American mandate, could not see a way of salvation. This group, which was headed by Halide Edip, was at the peak of its strength in August 1919. With the arrival of the Harbord Mission, even those who were suspicious of an American mandate could not state their opposition openly.

### **Efforts of Independence in Occupied İstanbul**

The Allied nations completed the occupation of İstanbul in two phases. The de facto occupation of İstanbul was completed on November 13, 1918 and the de jure occupation was completed on March 20, 1920. Furthermore, the occupation was realized despite the oral guarantees given at the Mondros Armistice Agreement by the British member, Admiral Arthur Calthorpe. In other words, it did not have any legal basis. It was inevitable for the Allied Nations to occupy İstanbul. Because, first of all they wanted to

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<sup>68</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 5-20

<sup>69</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 20

guarantee that the terms of the ceasefire had been met. It was assessed that keeping the Sultan and the government under control would be enough. Second, they wanted to show the Turks that they had been defeated severely and they were going to pay for their participation in the Great War.<sup>70</sup>

The deceptive and disguised occupation of İstanbul first stupefied the Turkish officials and intellectuals and then forced them to reconsider their positions.<sup>71</sup> The advance of the enemy on all fronts without meeting any resistance, the surrender of the allies, specifically of Germany convinced the Ottomans of their total defeat. With the occupation of İstanbul, they began to look for ways of salvation. Immediately, the ranks began to clarify. The group under the leadership of the supporters of Sultan Mehmed Vahidettin and the political party of Liberty and Accord (*Hürriyet ve İtilâf*) found their salvation in total surrender. They believed that with complete cooperation with the occupying nations and obedience to whatever was ordered, the sympathy and appreciation of the European nations could be secured. After gaining this sympathy it would be possible to regain some of the losses. Under the total surrender of this group lay anger against the Committee of Union and Progress. They planned to settle old scores under the protection of the occupying nations. Needless to say that those whose political and economic interests overlapped with the occupiers had plans specific to themselves.<sup>72</sup>

A great majority was against total surrender. Nevertheless, just a small minority was ready to resist the occupation at once. Furthermore, a small number of those in favor of an armed struggle were in İstanbul. The majority had already begun to get organized and struggle in Anatolia. Most of the officials and intellectuals in İstanbul first tried to gain the support of the French and the British. When it became obvious that this would not be

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<sup>70</sup> Bilge Criss, **İşgal Altındaki İstanbul**, 2.Baskı, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), pp. 13-14, 25-28

<sup>71</sup> Halide Edip was explaining her feelings at that time: "I felt stupefied, tired and utterly sick at heart of all that had happened since 1914. I was conscious that the Ottoman Empire had fallen with a crash." Halide Edib, **Turkey Faces West: A Turkish View of Recent Changes and Their Origin**, (New Haven: Yale Uni., Press, 1930), p. 161

<sup>72</sup> Many academic studies were made about collaborators and traitors. For their organization and activities see Tark Zafer Tunaya, **Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler**, c.II, 2. Baskı, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1986), pp. 2-20, 34-35, 138-149, 264-329

possible and that the French and the British intended to share the Empire, disregarding the Turkish nation, the only choice appeared to be the U.S. mandate.<sup>73</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, the leading figure of the intellectuals who were in favor of the U.S. mandate, stated the situation in the following words:

As America was the only Power that seemed to have no desire for territorial acquisition in Turkey, and as President Wilson had shown the one gleam of justice and common sense which had illuminated the prospect before the defeated countries, most of the enlightened Turks imagined for a short time that America might help to clear up the situation without anyone taking up arms and beginning another war.<sup>74</sup>

As a result of this approach, on January 14, 1919 the Wilsonian League was set up by Halide Edip (Adivar), Celalettin Muhtar, Ali Kemal and Hüseyin Hulusi. According to the articles of the association, it was looking for a salvation formula which was above the political movements. However, in the implementation phase, it had the conviction that there was no other way of salvation but the American mandate.<sup>75</sup> The members of the association wrote letters to the officials of the Allied Nation to attain their goals. They tried to influence and collaborate with the foreigners (especially the Americans) residing in the Ottoman Empire. In a letter dated December 5, 1918 and

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<sup>73</sup> CRISS, **op.cit.**, pp. 81-82

Falih Rıfıkı Atay, **Çankaya: Atatürk'ün Doğumundan Ölümüne Kadar**, (İstanbul, Bateş Yay., 1984), pp. 125-144

YALMAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 65-67, 71-73

<sup>74</sup> EDİB, **op.cit.**, p. 174

Similar statements are used by Ahmed Emin Bey: "When the British authorities revealed themselves as merciless enemies of the very existence of Turkey, the eyes of patriotic Turks turned to America. There was a special reason for this; An armistice had been accepted readily because President Wilson's Fourteen Points had promised an equitable peace... Now that the European victors were entirely disregarding the Fourteen Points, the obvious thing to do was assert them as loudly as possible. The Turkish papers of patriotic tendencies, which included all but two newspapers, agreed among themselves to publish every data, on their first page. with as much emphasis as possible, Wilson's twelfth point. The idea was to remind the Americans of their moral responsibility and to urge them to defend their principles." YALMAN, **op.cit.**, s. 71

<sup>75</sup> TUNAYA, **op.cit.**, pp. 245-246

"Growing numbers of Turks came to the conclusion that co-operation with America was the least dangerous and worst hopeful course. Such a course... would save Turkey from partition, and would supply expert guidance for a period of years.... Halide Edip Hanım, well-known writer and courageous patriot, was the moving spirit of this project". YALMAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 73-74

written to Wilson, they expressed the reason why the Ottoman Empire needed the American mandate in the following words:

In view of the attempts and failures of recent years, these patriots and intellectual men of Turkey have arrived at the conviction that any system attempted by themselves is likely to degenerate into despotism, because of difficulties of historical tradition and of race prejudice. For this reason they are convinced that their nation needs to be under the guidance of foreign instructors... for a fixed period of time.... We hope that the President of the great American Republic will look with favor upon our appeal... Our desire is not for a tutelage which would limit our ultimate independence but for a period of instruction that would elevate an underdeveloped and backward people to an honored position in the family of nations.<sup>76</sup>

The association, on the other hand, tried to meet and win over American individuals and delegations visiting the Ottoman Empire to their side. As stated in the previous part, during the visit of the King-Crane commission to İstanbul, all members of the association, particularly Halide Edip, tried hard to get their thesis to be included in the commission's report after great efforts.<sup>77</sup> The assignment of the American journalist Louise E. Browne to attend the Sivas Congress was the result of the efforts of the association. Halide Edip, in her letter to the president of the Delegation of Representatives, Mustafa Kemal Paşa, with great pride stated that many Americans who had come to İstanbul as friends of the Armenians, returned to the U.S. as friends and propagandists of the Turks:

A movement that is rather in sympathy with us can be noticed among the prominent personalities in official America. A large number of influential Americans who have come to İstanbul as friends of the Armenians have departed as staunch friends of the Turks, resolved to make active propaganda in our favour.<sup>78</sup>

For Americans such as Bristol, Mary Mills Patrick and Caleb Gates, who wanted to take the Ottoman Empire under the U.S. mandate as a whole, the

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<sup>76</sup> TUNAYA, **op.cit.**, pp. 260-261  
EDİB, **op.cit.**, p. 174

<sup>77</sup> In Yalman's words "many of us were given a hearing at the American Embassy".  
YALMAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 77-78

<sup>78</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, **The Speech**, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1981), p.78  
YALMAN, **op.cit.**, p. 74

association was of great importance. They were very influential in organizing and directing the association. Particularly during the visit of the King-Crane commission, Patrick, who opened her college to the use of the members of the commission, made it possible for the association to get closer to the commission.<sup>79</sup> The inclusion of Hüseyin Bey, the founding member of the association, into Harbord mission as an interpreter during the period of commissioning and organization of the mission was the significant proof of how important the Americans considered the association.

The supporters of the American mandate, with the encouragement of their protectors, were ready to give up concessions in certain areas. For example, it was not a big problem to give in to the demands of making adjustments to the borders in order to establish the Armenian state, which American friends of theirs wanted so much. Ahmed Emin Bey described to the American Consul General, Gabriel Bie Ravndal, some border concessions including the province of Trabzon, even though he had no authority to do so: “A prominent nationalist (Emin Bey, editor of the VAKIT) has told me that the Turks would be disposed to give to an independent Armenia sufficient territory for the actual needs of the Armenians and a port at Trebizond.”<sup>80</sup>

Halide Edip, in order to win Mustafa Kemal Paşa to their cause, in a letter dated August 10, 1919 expressed why it was necessary to accept an American mandate:

We who are living in Istanbul consider that a provisional mandate by America, extending over all provinces of old and new Turkey would be a minor misfortune for us. The following are our reasons for thinking so:

1. Whatever the terms may be, the Christian minorities will still remain. They will enjoy the privileges of Ottoman subjects and, relying on foreign countries
2. ... we must... ensure the welfare and the progress of the nation and transform the people... We possess neither the financial means nor the special knowledge and power requisite for the execution of such an idea.... America is the only country that understands what the soul of a nation means and how a

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<sup>79</sup> Harry N. Howard, **An American Inquiry in the Middle East: The King-Crane Commission**, (Beirut: Khayats, 1923), pp.162, 164-179

<sup>80</sup> Bie Ravndal, “Memo to Major General Harbord”, **HMMA, 184.021/292**

democratic regime is constituted – the only country that has succeeded in creating modern state machinery operating automatically in a country as wild as the Philippine Islands.

3. ... We want help that will be capable of protecting our own country from the influences and rivalries of foreign nations.

4. ... If we can win America over to our side and lay before her a form of mandate under which she could protect us from the thousand fold methods of oppression that are practiced on us by imperialistic Europe... the solution of the Oriental Question.

... In consideration of what I have just said, and distressed by the fear of the possible dismemberment of the State, I feel sure that we would do well to put our trust in America, without losing this favourable opportunity, and rely upon her to defend our cause.<sup>81</sup>

The arrival of the Harbord mission in İstanbul was a significant development for those supporting the American mandate. According to them, arrival of the missions in İstanbul one after the other was clear proof that the U.S. was really going to assume the mandate. However, since it is not clearly stated in the archival documents with which the mission had met, we do not know exactly what the relations between the Wilsonian League, the supporters of the American mandate and the mission were. As far as can be understood from the documents, we presume that the association provided help in the subjects of providing the security of the Harbord mission during their investigation in Anatolia, supporting them in whatever ways and getting important people ready to meet the mission.<sup>82</sup>

The Association and its supporters did their best to influence The National Association to Safeguard the Rights of People in Anatolia and Rumelia, (*Rumeli ve Anadolu Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*) which was getting organized under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Paşa to accept the U.S. mandate. The visit of the King-Crane commission to the Ottoman Empire had been used as a means of persuasion. Now, the Harbord Mission provided an even greater chance. The reason was that the mission would visit Sivas and Erzurum as well as the other important cities in Anatolia. Thus, the chances of accepting the American mandate in Anatolia would increase even more.

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<sup>81</sup> ATATÜRK, **op.cit.**, pp. 77-79

<sup>82</sup> "...we also took the precaution to make a similar request to representatives of the Nationalist Party in Constantinople and were assured that our mission would be welcomed and afforded every opportunity for inquiry." HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p. 38



### **Inquiries on the Middle and Eastern Anatolia**

Once the preparations were completed, Harbord announced the execution plan for the inquiry trip through inner Anatolia to be carried out. According to this plan, the delegation was to be divided into two groups: The first made up of Cumberland, Mears, Brinton, Bertholf, Hill, and Hornbeck accompanied by eighteen enlisted personnel were to stay in their ship in Istanbul for some more time, and subsequently were to sail towards Batum via Samsun. The main group consisting of fifteen delegates and seventeen enlisted personnel were to travel by land from Haydarpaşa to Konya, Adana, Mardin, Diyarbakır, Harput, Malatya, Sivas, Erzurum, Kars direction and meet the other group in Batum. According to the initial plan, it was thought that the main group would reach Sivas on September 23, while the naval group would get to Batum on September 17.<sup>83</sup>

Given this plan, the main group led by Harbord, left the Haydarpaşa train station in a specially assigned train on September 7, 1919 at 08.20. Stopping in the towns along the way, the delegation was greeted by crowds waiting in excitement. The greeting groups consisted mainly of Armenians. Given their preparations, it was obvious that they acted on orders issued from a single place because Harbord was submitted petitions with similar requests by the Armenian delegations at every station.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> "The principal sources of information for certain of the subjects to be studied, such as government, finance, trade and commerce, were in Constantinople and Tiflis. I therefore divided the party, leaving on the Martha Washington at Constantinople those members detailed to make reports on those subjects, with instructions to remain there for the security of all available data, and then to proceed to the Black Sea and go to Tiflis" **Ibid**, p.37

From General McCoy to Colonel Haskell, 5 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/225**  
"Tentative Itinerary for Overland Party As far As Sivas," **HMMA, 184.021/242**  
"Overland Party, Ship Party, Personnel List", **HMMA, 184.021/243**

<sup>84</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, s.39

For the petition of the Adapazarı Armenian community dated 8 September 1919, see **HMMA, 184.021/247**

For the petition of the Afyon Armenian community dated 8 September 1919, see **HMMA, 184.021/250**

For the petition of the Bahçe Armenian community dated 12 September 1919, see **HMMA, 184.021/263**

Having spent one night in Konya and met the aid mission members there, the delegation continued on its way and reached Adana on September 10. At the Ulukışla station, on the orders of Harbord, Major Shekerjian, Captain Villaret, and a soldier split from the main group in order to go to Sivas via Kayseri. Their task was to acquaint Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colloquies with the delegation directly, to coordinate tasks, to find out the latest situation, and to carry out a road survey.<sup>85</sup> The Shekerjian team managed to reach Sivas on September 13. After meeting and coordinating with Mustafa Kemal Paşa, they continued on to Erzincan in order to carry out a survey of the situation and the roads. In an order issued on the same day, Mustafa Kemal Paşa, as the Head of the Representatives' Delegation, directed the civilian and military authorities to give the delegation the necessary help:

American General Harbord has set out on a trip to Anatolia in the direction of Mardin, Diyarbakir, Harput ve Malatya, Sivas, Erzincan, and Erzurum. A major and a captain came to Sivas today. Until the General gets to Sivas, they will go to Erzincan in order to explore the situation and the road, and then they will return to Sivas to meet the General there. It is requested that they be warmly welcomed and extended a helping hand by both the military commanders and the public servants, as well as by the leaders of the local notables and national communities, and that the issues about their developing correct opinions on our country and national movements upon their return be paid utmost attention.<sup>86</sup>

During the first day he spent in Adana, General Harbord witnessed all the aspects of the chaos into which Anatolia had been plunged in. The members of the local American aid mission and the leaders of the Armenian community put out a great effort to prove that Adana was part of Armenia. They absolutely did not accept a French mandate. According to them, it was

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<sup>85</sup> From Mc Coy to Maj. Shekerjian, 8 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/248**

<sup>86</sup> Fethi Tevetoğlu, "Milli Mücadele'de Mustafa Kemal Paşa-General Harbord Görüşmesi III", **Türk Kültürü**, yıl:7, sayı: 80, June 1969, p. 531

The Shekerjian visit was also reflected in the newspapers: "Amerikan Orduları Erkân-ı Harbiyesi Reisi General Harbo'nun Erkân-ı Harbiyesinden bir Binbaşı, bir Yüzbaşı Kongre'nin âmâl-i istekleri) meşruiyesi ve teşkilâtının vesait ve ehemmiyeti hakkında bir çok malumat edinerek bu babda daha ziyade tahkikatta bulunmak üzere Erzincan'a müteveccihen bugün azimet etmişlerdir.", "General (Harbo) Delegation Arrive in Erzincan", **İrade-i Milliye**, no. 2, 17 September 1919

a region to be established under a short-term American mandate and it would become an inseparable part of Armenia extending from sea to sea. They believed that the massacres befalling them both prior to and during the war justified the Armenian claims. Another issue they complained about was that Turkish bandits, with the condiment of the local authorities, continued their attacks on the Armenians. The Turkish authorities vehemently rejected the Armenian claims and pointed out that Cilicia was the cradle of Turkish culture and could not be abandoned.<sup>87</sup>

From what Harbord wrote it can be seen that he was influenced by what he had seen, rather than the e propaganda: "At Adana we found that a considerable percentage of the deported Armenians had returned and with them several thousand Armenians originally deported from other places. They are being well treated by the Turkish authorities and there is nothing to indicate any probable disturbance."<sup>88</sup>

As the main group continued its work, Harbord, McCoy, Khachadoorian, and Hüseyin Bey went to Tarsus and Mersin on a day trip. Following this visit, they reached Halep on September 12. There they first met a group of British generals and the American Consul Jesse B. Jackson in the city. The authorities explained that some 75,000 Armenians had returned to Anatolia from Syria and Iraq and the only attack that had taken place until then had occurred in Halep under British control. General Gregory especially noted that Major Edward W. C. Noel, being in Malatya at the time, had a great influence on the Kurds, and that the delegation would greatly benefit from meeting him. The Armenian representatives, headed by Cilicia Catholicos Sahak II, repeated the complaints the delegation members had heard elsewhere. In their opinion, there had occurred massacres in the past, and the attacks still continued. They wanted America to move into action immediately and to assume the mandate. According to Consul Jackson, it was not enough that the U.S. to only take over the Armenian mandate when

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<sup>87</sup> "Dr. William N. Chambers", 10 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/255**  
"Story of Miss Mary Webb of Adana", 11 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/257**  
HOVANNISIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 338-340.

<sup>88</sup> From Gen. Harbord to Admiral Bristol, 31 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/276**

all of the Ottoman Empire, except for Mesopotamia, needed to be placed under a single mandate. This could be the only long-term solution.<sup>89</sup>

On their way to Mardin, the delegation met British Colonel Wooley at Carablus. The meeting was interesting on all accounts. To begin with, Wooley did not recognize the Armenian claims. According to him, in the whole region from southern Anatolia to Sivas the Kurds were in the majority. The Armenians made up just the 5% percent of the population. This is why Wooley called the region "Kurdistan." The Armenian claims about the massacres were also inconsistent. He believed that had any massacres happened before, they would have been the work of Turks, not the Kurds. Besides, not as many Armenians as the statistics had shown could have died. Also, many Armenians still lived happily together with Kurds. On the contrary, the Armenians had massacred thousands of Kurds:

In 1916, after the Russians had advanced and taken Kurdistan they permitted the Armenians freedom in the treatment of the Kurdish population. The Armenians in the Russian Army at this point numbered in the neighborhood of 20,000 men. The result of this freedom was that the Armenian soldiers massacred between three and four hundred thousand Kurdish people irrespective of classes or conditions, including old men, women and children. In addition to killing them, they tortured the people, performing such acts as burning them alive, driving nails into their heads, skinning them, etc.<sup>90</sup>

The information Wooley gave regarding the local population having been massacred by the Armenians mostly overlaps with the Niles-Sutherland report. But Wooley distorted the realities to the British interests. Some British officers posted in that region at the time were of the opinion that the chances

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<sup>89</sup> **Ibid.**

"Speaking psychologically the oriental peoples have no initiative, are lazy, and speculators to the highest degree. The greatest crime will be committed if the Europeans and Oriental should be considered of the same rank.... It is the opinion of many that, for the good of this ignorant humanity, the victorious and civilized occidental must alone possess the intangible right to govern, control and bring to safe anchor the destinies of a people for centuries oppressed... The only hope for liberal participation by the Mohammedans in the government is in the event the United States accepts a mandate.... Should America accept the mandate for Armenia without that of Syria and Anatolia, possibly including Mesopotamia, the probable difficulties would be too numerous to mention." From J.B. Jackson to General Harbord, 15 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/267**

<sup>90</sup> "Colonel Wooley of the British Army", 13 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/265**

of the existence for an independent Kurdistan were higher than those for Armenia. To Britain, Kurdistan could play a better role as buffer state. Wooley, who seems to have belonged to this group, tried to influence the Harbord delegation by praising the virtues of the Kurds as a nation.<sup>91</sup>

The delegation reached Mardin station in the evening on September 13. The following day they began work in Mardin. At a meeting with other authorities LTC Mehmet Kenan (Dalbaşar), the Commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, complained about the British instigation of the Kurds. A British Major, Noel had gone to Malatya with some radical nationalist Kurds and attempted to provoke a rebellion with the help of the Governor of Malatya, Halil Bey. Their aim was to create a pretext in order for the British to occupy the region. But unable to hold against the military forces sent to deal with the, they fled into the mountains. In fact, the members of the delegation also witnessed the propaganda attempts by the British: "A member of our party traveling on the train from Aleppo to Mardin saw leaflets in Turkish signed by the British Commander, one of which he read, which were being distributed to Kurdish passengers and were quite in the nature of British propaganda, enjoining the Kurds to confidence in the British, etc., etc." The two Arab sheiks, who visited the delegation in Mardin, complained about the British as well. They said that they had not been able to return home due to the fear for their lives.<sup>92</sup>

The same issue was also raised on September 15, when the delegation arrived in Diyarbakır. Colonel Ahmet Cevdet Bey, the Commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps, asked Harbord to act as a mediator for the dismissal of Major Noel,

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<sup>91</sup> "The Kurd is a very decent minded chap. He is inclined to deal fairly and honestly with people and is very anxious for progress. He is a good worker and has shown his ability to become skilled in the trades... the Kurds are quite liberal minded and inclined to permit freedom of belief and of thought among those not of their belief." **Ibid.**

For the similarities between the British approach to the Kurds and the attempts of the Kurdish nationalists, see From Sureya Bey (Secretary General of the Committee on Kurd Independence) to the President of the American Delegation, **HMMA, 184.021/137**

Also see. Mim Kemal Öke, **Belgelerle Türk-İngiliz İlişkilerinde Musul ve Kürdistan Sorunu 1918-1926**, (Ankara: TKAİ, 1992), pp.24-40

<sup>92</sup> From General Harbord to Admiral Bristol, 31 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/276**  
HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p.47

James G. Harbord, "Mustapha Kemal Pasha and His Party", **The World's Work**, vol. XL, June 1920, p.178-179

who had attempted to provoke a rebellion in Malatya. In addition, the British were expanding the occupation zones in disregard of the ceasefire conditions. Furthermore, since effective control had not been established over the regions under the British rule, there had occurred a number of incidents. Ahmet Cevdet Bey submitted an official report to Harbord so that these issues could be recorded.<sup>93</sup>

The complaints to the Harbord mission concerning Noel's provocation of the Kurds for a rebellion turned out to be effective in a short. When the mission reached Harput on September 17, among those welcoming the delegation was British LTC Bell, who was in charge of investigating the activities of Major Noel. He asked General Harbord to call a meeting to be attended by the Turkish commanders as well. At the meeting, Bell acknowledged that Noel, together with radical Kurds, had attempted to instigate an uprising. He explained that Noel had been called back to Halep, and that if the Turks were to withdraw their forces from Malatya, there would be no more problem. From the information collected and his own observations Harbord concluded that: "It seemed to me that what Colonel Bell had to say and the fact that he sent Major Noel back to Aleppo practically substantiated the statements of the Turks as to what Noel had been doing in that region".<sup>94</sup>

Upon their arrival in Malatya on September 18, the delegation noted that the chaos had come to an end, and that the peace had been restored. All those who had been responsible had fled. The local tribal chiefs said that the British had offered them gold, but that they had refused it. It was soon found out that the four Arab officers who had tried to spread propaganda among the Kurds had been sent back. The delegation's visit had obviously spoiled the British plans and the British were trying to cover up the past incidents.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> **Ibid.**

From Ahmed Cevdet to General Harbord, 13 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/360**

<sup>94</sup> From General Harbord to Admiral Bristol, 31 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/276**

<sup>95</sup> **Ibid.**

The testimonies of the tribal leaders confirm the official letter of Colonel Ahmed Cevdet Bey. See From Ahmed Cevdet to General Harbord, 13 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/360**

Khachadoorian was rather discontent with the positive observations the members of the delegation had made in the places they had visited. In his opinion, the presence of the Turkish governors had prevented the Armenian representatives from speaking openly. Thus, they had made wrong observations about the real situation:

In Malatia, September 18, no Armenian dared to talk to me while I was with the Turkish officers... While in the market place, I talked to an Armenian (American citizen) employed by ACRNE. He informed me that the Armenians were openly threatened by the Malatia Turks who had been armed by the Nationalistic Movement. When the Turkish officials heard American Mission coming they suppressed the open threat.

In Su Shehri, September 22, the Armenian representative, in presence of Turkish officials, told me that only in few cases the Armenians received back their property. The process was very slow. All Armenian orphans and young girls were still kept in Turkish harems.<sup>96</sup>

Under the military protection provided by the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, the Harbord delegation reached Sivas on September 20. The most important meeting of the mission was to be held.

### **Mustafa Kemal Paşa-General Harbord Meeting**

As mentioned above, in İstanbul General Harbord had made the necessary contacts in order to meet Mustafa Kemal Paşa and had sent Shekerjian to Sivas for the initial preparations. Harbord stated in his memoirs the importance of Sivas to him: "Sivas had an especial interest for our mission."<sup>97</sup> Similar importance was also attached by Mustafa Kemal Paşa, who followed the daily developments in İstanbul via his friends and warned the authorities involved.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> H.H. Khachadoorian, "Memorandum for General Harbord", 8 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/324**

<sup>97</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p.180  
Peter F. Sugar ; "A Reinterpretation of the Significance of General James G. Harbord's Mission", **Uluslararası Atatürk Konferansı 10-11 Kasım 1983**, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üni. Yayınları, 1980), s.8-9

<sup>98</sup> TEVETOĞLU, **op.cit.**, pp. 527-530.  
The decision of the Delegation of the Representatives signed by Mustafa Kemal on 14 Eylül 1919 is an example. See. **Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri**, c.4, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2000), p. 32

Mustafa Kemal Paşa had dealt with the question of an American mandate, which had already become an important issue in a smart fashion before the Harbord delegation reached Sivas. A rather general decision that did not mention anything about the U.S. and a mandate was accepted as the 7<sup>th</sup> point of the Final Declaration at the Sivas Congress, despite all the efforts of the mandate supporters.<sup>99</sup> In order to appease the mandate supporters, it was decided to request an inquiry commission from the U.S. Congress in order to analyze the situation in the country:

...the National Congress of Sivas, this day [9 September 1919], by unanimous vote, requests the Senate of the United States of America to send a committee of its members to visit all confines of the Ottoman Empire for the purpose of investigating with the clear vision of a disinterested nation conditions as they actually are in the Ottoman Empire before permitting the arbitrary disposal of the peoples and territories of the Ottoman Empire by a treaty of peace.<sup>100</sup>

Harbord was informed of this message only after his arrival in Sivas. He wrote about his experience on this issue as follows:

I found that they had sent a cablegram to the United States Senate asking that a Committee be sent here... Subsequently, I learned that a man named Brown [sic], a newspaper man, had been present at the sessions of the Congress and according to Americans here, had used your name [Admiral Bristol] very freely as having sent him here as your representative. It was also stated that he drew up the

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<sup>99</sup> Mustafa Kemal Paşa explained this in his Speech in detail. See ATATÜRK, **op.cit.**, pp. 69-93.

The mandate supporters attempted to influence the Congress by arguing that a decision by the Congress to pass a resolution accepting a mandate would influence the US Administration. Deniz Bilgen, **Sivas Kongresi'ne Katılan Amerikan Gazeteci Louis Edgar Browne**, (Erzurum: Atatürk Uni. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 1996), pp. 35-36

<sup>100</sup> "To the President of the Senate of the United States of America", 9 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/253**

Mustafa Kemal Paşa explains the writing of the document as follows: "The interminable debates that took place, interspersed with lively discussions on this question, resulted in a compromise which brought the partisans of a mandate to silence. It was Rauf Bey who proposed it. The chief point consisted in demanding that a delegation from the American Congress should be sent over to study the country and report upon its real position, in order to counteract the effect of hostile propaganda which had been carried on against us for several years past in America. This proposal was unanimously agreed to. I remember very well that a document to this affect was drawn up and signed by the Chairman of the Committee, but cannot remember exactly whether it was sent off or not. In any case, I never attached any particular importance to it." ATATÜRK, **op.cit.**, p. 93.



cablegram sent to the Senate. It is suggested from Armenian sources that the cablegram sent to the Senate was sent in anticipation of my arrival in order to give the Turkish peasants the idea that our Mission had been sent in response to the request.<sup>101</sup>

No matter what purposes the mandate supporters had in mind in writing the message to be sent to the U.S. Congress, it is clear that Mustafa Kemal Paşa became relieved after the decisions of the Sivas Congress and found the opportunity to welcome the Harbord Mission with much ease.

Upon Harbord's request, Mustafa Kemal Paşa was not present at the official welcome ceremony. The members of the Delegation of the Representatives and the notables of the town welcomed the Harbord delegation in a ceremony that also included an escort of honor. Harbord was impressed by the presence of both the town notables and the escort of honor. Contrary to the rumors in İstanbul there stood a real political will in front of him. The group first visited the American missionaries. Subsequently, Governor Reşit Paşa was visited in his office. The mission members attended a dinner arranged in their honor.<sup>102</sup>

At the meeting at the Sivas High School were present Mustafa Kemal Paşa, Rauf (Orbay) Bey, Bekir Sami (Kunduh) Bey, and Ahmed Rüstem (Bilinski) Bey. From among the delegation members in addition to Harbord were also present McCoy, Moseley, and Hüseyin Bey as a translator. It is unknown what exactly they talked about at the meeting because the talks were not recorded, and the memoirs are contradictory. This was rather natural. For not only one forget about the details over time, but also the following events and the information learned distort the memoirs. This is why as the primary source one needs to take the reports written right after the talks.

General Harbord wrote about the meeting in a letter he sent to Admiral Bristol on September 31, 1919:

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<sup>101</sup> From General Harbord to Admiral Bristol, 21 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/276**

<sup>102</sup> "As I did not wish our official welcome to be complicated by the leader of a movement almost revolutionary toward the Constantinople Government, an intimation was sent that we did not wish Mustapha Kemal Pasha to be featured on that occasion" HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp.184-185  
TEVETOĞLU, **op.cit.**, pp. 538-541

On arriving here, I found that the Sivas Congress had adjourned, but that Moustapha Kemal Pasha and a Committee were still here. I had an interview with them and listened patiently to their statement of the aims of their party which briefly are their desire that the integrity of the Turkish Empire shall be preserved by a mandatory under a disinterested power, preferably our own country... The conference lasted about two hours with Moustapha Kemal Pasha as the spokesman, and the tenor was their loyalty to the Turkish Empire and Sultan; their belief that the Ferid Cabinet was entirely in the hands of the British and that the British are working to secure control of the Empire, and that rather than undergo a mandatory from Great Britain, they would prefer to die fighting. He emphasized their desire to have all races and religions in the Empire treated justly and assured me that he would reassure Christians to calm the anxiety that has existed... Unquestionably, the atrocities committed by the Greeks at Smyrna have put the whole Turkish Empire on edge, although the excitement is passing with time. Their position is that the occupation by the Greeks under the auspices of the Peace Conference was a violation of the Armistice and naturally the politicians are making use of this as propaganda pointing out that further encroachments on the Empire are likely to be made before Peace.<sup>103</sup>

Mustafa Kemal Paşa wrote about the meeting in a message sent to Kazım Paşa on September 21, 1919:

General Harbord, with his entourage, got here yesterday. On his wish we talked so secretly for about 3-4 hours. With him came two more generals, and, as a translator, Hüseyin Bey, a teacher from Robert College. And we were together with Rauf, Bekir Sami, and Rüstem Beys. Some of the questions the above-named asked were as follows:

1. The formation of the National Forces, its extent of power and acceptance
2. Our view on non-Muslim subjects, especially Armenians.
3. Our opinion on aid and assistance.

In the explanatory answers to these questions, the following points were stated.

1. National Organization: Sad about the existing unfair treatment the nation was organized everywhere in order to defend its just rights, and united in whole eastern Anatolia with the Erzurum Congress and in whole Anatolia and Rumelia with the Sivas General Congress. Its might is great. And it is spread throughout the motherland. We have no other desire and attempt except within the borders that appeared after the Treaty.
2. We have an evil approach towards none of the non-Muslim subjects, including the Armenians living in this land. On the contrary, we observe all their subject rights. All the opposite writings are nothing but lies and British tricks.

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<sup>103</sup> From General Harbord to Admiral Bristol, 21 September 1919, **HMMA**, **184.021/276**

3. We would admit the need and gladly accept the aid from an impartial and mighty state in accordance with the first point of our Declaration. The General appreciated all our national movement and undertakings and said that “had I been a Turk, I would have acted the same way,” and expressed rather warm and hopeful statements and opinions. He especially asked that our conversation be kept secret. He departed for Erzurum today via Erzincan. He recommended I to talk to your Excellency. Moreover, the General stated that there existed some rumors about a force of 40,000 to be gathered and ordered to attack to Armenia in order to achieve the goal of Turanism. In response, he was told that such rumors were groundless and that the total forces in the Eastern vilayats were approximately 10,000. It would be appropriate to put Hüseyin Bey from his entourage in touch with the Center of the Erzurum Delegation, and to show the still existing results of the Armenian massacres over there. Hüseyin Bey has given the necessary information.<sup>104</sup>

An article by Harbord, published in June 1920 in the popular magazine “*World’s Work*,” deals with the issues he had mentioned in his report in addition to the physical description, manners, and attitude of Mustafa Kemal Paşa. The biggest difference between the article and the report is the claim that the article talked about Armenian massacres. General Harbord does not hesitate to state that he was greatly impressed by Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his friends:

Our conference lasted about two and a half hours with Mustapha Kemal doing most of the talking. I initiated the conversation by telling him through Hussein Bey that much hysterical news of the Nationalist aims, intentions, etc., had reached the outside world and asked him to tell me of them. He talked very easily and fluently. His marshalling of his facts through the interpreter was orderly and logical, though he was apparently under considerable strain... He explained the origin of their movement after the Smyrna atrocities committed by the Greeks, a number of small National Defence Leagues being formed throughout the Empire which their Congress was designed to coordinate and unify. Briefly, the movement stands for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire under the mandate of a disinterested great power, preferably America... Their idea of a mandate differs from ours, however, in that they conceive it as advice and assistance from a big brother, with such slight exercise of authority as not to interfere with their interior government or their foreign relations... There was much reference to the integrity of the Empire and a death before-dishonor attitude if the Peace Conference dismembered the Empire. I pointed out that nations as well as individuals could commit suicide, and reminded them that if

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<sup>104</sup> **Atatürk’ün Bütün Eserleri**, vol.4, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2000), pp. 82-83.

they could not win with Germany and Austria on their side, they had little prospect of surviving a contest undertaken alone against the Allies.<sup>105</sup>

In his work 'Speech' Mustafa Kemal Paşa talked, as much as he could remember, about the issues not reflected in the report as follows:

You must remember that at this time the American Government had sent a Commission, under the leadership of General Harbord, to study our country and the Caucasus. This Commission also came to Sivas. On the 22nd September [sic.], I had a long conversation with General Harbord on the question of the aims of the national movement, its organization and the main factors that would contribute to the establishment of national unity, and about our feelings with regard to the non –Moslem elements, and concerning propaganda and the hostile acts committed by certain foreigners in our country.

The General asked me some strange questions, such as: 'What will you do if in spite of every imaginable effort and sacrifice made by nation, it should all end in failure?'

If my memory does not deceive me, I replied that the nation that exerts every imaginable effort and makes every possible sacrifice to secure its freedom and independence cannot help being successful. But if we failed, we would have to admit that our nation is dead. The possibility of failure, therefore, cannot be dreamed of in the case of a nation that is full of life and capable of making every kind of sacrifice.

I did not trouble to attempt to ascertain what could have been the General's real object in putting this question to me. I only mention the matter, incidentally, to tell you that the respected my reply.<sup>106</sup>

From among the witnesses to the meeting only Rauf Orbay published his memoirs. Rauf Bey claimed that he was the main translator during the meeting, and that there were two more meetings, and that the Harbord mission stayed in Sivas for 4 days. According to the data available, all this

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<sup>105</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp. 185-188

Lord Kinross, dramatized this meeting in his book. See, Patrick Kinross, **Atatürk; The Rebirth of a Nation**, (London; Phoenix Books, 1995), pp. 189-190

<sup>106</sup> ATATÜRK, **op.cit.**, p. 144

The memoir of Mazhar Müfit Kansu confirms Atatürk. In a friendly conversation of 25 September 1919 Mustafa Kemal Paşa used similar statements. See Mazhar Müfit Kansu, **Erzurum'dan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk'le Beraber**, vol.2, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yay. 1968), pp. 345-348.

information is wrong. The statements that he claimed Mustafa Kemal Paşa had made add nothing new to our knowledge.<sup>107</sup>

As it is seen, Mustafa Kemal Paşa was able to explain convincingly to Harbord about the main character of the National Movement under his leadership. Not just content with this situation, Mustafa Kemal Paşa proposed to submit a memorandum containing the resolutions accepted by the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses, as well as the points of view of League for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Roumelia on the issues. Harbord accepted the proposal right away. It was decided that the memorandum and the resolutions would be sent to Samsun, where the Harbord Mission was to make a stop on its return trip.<sup>108</sup>

Given its importance, the memorandum, titled “Condensed Memorandum Concerning the Organization and Points of View of the League for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Roumelia” and handed to the Harbord mission,<sup>109</sup> was attached by Harbord to the mission’s final report. Thus, in his own writing the views of Mustafa Kemal Paşa were submitted to

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<sup>107</sup> Cemal Kutay, **Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyete Yüzyılımızda Bir İnsanımız: Hüseyin Rauf Orbay (1881-1964)**, vol. 4, (İstanbul: Kazancı, 1992), pp. 544-549;

Also see Cemal Kutay, **Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyete Yüzyılımızda Bir İnsanımız: Hüseyin Rauf Orbay (1881-1964)**, vol. 3, (İstanbul: Kazancı, 1992), pp. 717-719.

<sup>108</sup> SUGAR, **op.cit.**, p. 5.

In the resolution of the Delegation of the People’s Representatives of 22 September 1919 signed by Mustafa Kemal this issue is mentioned as follows: “*When the General Harbord Commission sent by the American Administration to the Ottoman lands and Caucasus for investigations came to Sivas, they were told about the just cause and aim of the national movement, and the reason for the unity to emerge, the sensitivity towards non-Muslim subjects, British propaganda and treacherous activities in detail and with accompanying proof. It was also decided that all these issues mentioned above would be written in a memorandum and sent to Sivas to be picked up by the Commission on its return trip.*” **Atatürk’ün Bütün Eserleri**, vol. 4, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2000), p. 89

From Moustapha Kemal Pasha to General Harbord, 29 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/288**

<sup>109</sup> From Mustafa Kemal Paşa to Canik Hamid Bey, 27 September 1919, Atatürk’ün..., **op.cit.**, p. 138

From Mustafa Kemal Paşa to Commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division Cemil Cahid and Osman Bey, 7 October 1919, Atatürk’ün..., **op.cit.**, p. 233.

the American decision-makers. As it is essential for our topic, we need to lay out the main characteristics of the memorandum.

The memorandum was written in ten parts. The Harbord mission was handed the copies in both English and Ottoman. Both copies contained the seal of the “League for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Roumelia”, and the signature of Mustafa Kemal Paşa. The signature on the English copy was in Latin letters.<sup>110</sup>

The first part of the memorandum talked about the grievances borne out by the Armistice, which had been signed with the hopes spread by Wilson’s points. Contrary to the decisions of the Armistice, various parts of the country had been unjustly occupied and the minorities had been instigated so that a Greater Armenia and a Pontus state could be established. The clumsy government in İstanbul which did not represent the people had become a British puppet. Consequently; “national organizations sprang up spontaneously in every part of the country.” None of these organizations was related to the established political parties. What this meant was that they were not the extensions of the Committee of Union and Progress.

The second part made the complaints of the first part more concrete, and especially emphasizes the massacres and oppression brought about by the Greek occupation.

The third part gave a brief history of the Turkish nation’s struggle to defend its rights against the injustice. Amasya Circular, the Congresses at Erzurum and Sivas were mentioned chronologically, and the resolutions of the congresses are attached to the text. The most important resolution accepted was that the territories that had been under the Turkish rule at the time of the signing of the Armistice constituted a whole and could not be divided.

The fourth part shed light on two issues. First, the National Movement was tolerant towards the minorities and intended to treat them equally. The

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<sup>110</sup> In this work we used the archived hand-written copy “Condensed Memorandum Concerning the Organization and Points of View of the League for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Roumelia.” **HMMA, 184.021/288**

The same document in Ottoman titled “Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti’nin Teşkilat ve Nokta-i Nazarları Hakkında Muhtelif Muhtıradır” is attached to the English version.

second issue was that the Turkish nation was to defend itself against attacks: “It will be natural and inevitable for us, however, to defend ourselves and retaliate in answer to attacks in a material form upon our existence in violation of the laws of justice and humanity.”

The fifth part constituted the longest section of the memorandum. Essentially, it was written to answer the accusations brought against the National Movement at the time. To begin with, the two accusations uttered by Damad Ferid Paşa that the National Movement was Unionist and Bolshevik were refuted. Second, the Kurdish rebellion that the British under the leadership of Major Noel was tried to instigate. Last, a response was given to the allegations that the local Christians were massacred. Although, all the issues mentioned in this part were to lose their importance soon, were of vital importance at the time.

Mustafa Kemal Paşa described what the Yerevan Republic had done with the British support in the sixth part. The Armenians claimed that they had been attacked by the Turks, while they themselves had massacred and tortured the Muslim people. He believed that the British had provoked the National Movement so that the latter would attack the Armenians. However, the National Movement was not agitated despite the tragedies beyond the border.

The seventh part dealt with Turanism. Mustafa Kemal Paşa considered the attempts to capture Caucasus and Egypt during WWI big mistakes. He made it clear that the National Movement would stay within the country's borders and not make any incursions across the border despite the presence of the Muslims massacred in the Yerevan Republic and possibilities for cooperation with the Azeris.

The eighth part also answered the charges. The British claim concerning the National Movement's receiving financial support from abroad was rejected: “Our treasury is the conscience of the nation which has learnt to appreciate the value of independence and patriotism. The sources of our revenues are the spontaneous donations of the nation.”

The ninth part concerns how the Allied forces had tried to divide the country into several pieces by wrongly assessing the characteristics and soul of the Turkish nation, and how this had been stopped. At this point, Mustafa

Kemal Paşa did not hesitate to state that he trusted the American Congress to make the right decision in light of these realities.

Next, Mustafa Kemal Paşa issued a call. The history of the Turkish nation had proved that it deserved independence. But the intrigues of the Great Powers and ineffective governments had caused the country to end up in a bad situation. The Turkish nation was capable of getting rid of all these adversities. It just needed to stay outside of any intervention and intrigues: “We can give the most positive assurances that our country, if free from incubus of foreign intrigue and intervention and if its affairs are managed by a capable government respectful of the National will and wishes it will presently assume a condition which will be a source of satisfaction to the whole world.”

Last, Mustafa Kemal Paşa shed light on the talks about a mandate that had been the topic of discussion at the meetings. The National Movement said yes only to aid, not to any mandate. There was also no direct reference to the U.S. itself. Any assistance by an impartial power would be accepted: “We make a special point of adding that the assistance of a powerful and impartial foreign nation will be of great value to us in saving us the iniquitous oppression of which we are the victims and in hastening our development.”<sup>111</sup>

The whole memorandum laid out all the characteristics of the Turkish national struggle clearly and indisputably. The resolutions of the Erzurum and Sivas congresses, attached to the memorandum, supported the contents of the memorandum. As can be seen again, there was no positive reference to a mandate or a U.S. mandate in any part of the documents. The main idea was obvious: The Turkish nation would struggle to the end without giving any concessions with respect to its independence and the integrity of the country.

In a letter of 9 October 1919, Harbord acknowledged the receipt and thanked for the memorandum and its attachments: “I acknowledge receipt at Samsoun of your letter setting forth the aims of the party of which you are the Chief. I thank you for it. In our journey after leaving Sivas we were recipients of many courtesies from your people.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>112</sup> From General Harbord to General Mustapha Kemal, 9 October 1919, **HMMA**, **184.021/326**



Having made a short assessment of the investigation conducted from İstanbul to Sivas after the meeting, Harbord prepared a report addressed to Bristol. The first thing that grabbed my attention while reading the report is that Harbord did not pay attention to the claims of the Armenian representatives with whom he had talked or whose petitions he had received during the inquiries. In addition, he thinks that the American public, alarmed by the Armenian propaganda, needed to calm down:

In places visited the Armenians are gradually returning to their homes. They are meeting with no violence. In some instances the property which they owned is being returned to them and in a number of cases rent has been paid for the period which the Turks have occupied it since the deportation. There are no signs of disturbances in the country, and certainly nothing to indicate the massing of troops along the old Russian Frontier.... As to the danger of Turkish troops going into Russian Armenia to massacre Christians, I do not believe there is anything in it.... If our representatives in Paris or at home are still nervous and excited over the prospect of further Armenian atrocities along the Turkish border I believe that you can reassure them from the foregoing statements."<sup>113</sup>

The second noteworthy issue is that contrary to the widespread belief, the Turkish population had paid a big price during the war. Eighty to ninety percent of those recruited for the military service had not returned home. This situation was reflected in the absence of the population of the twenty to thirty-five-year old males in the villages. Turks were not aggressive. But they were discontent with the British and French activities in their country. The local occupation forces worked towards the non-acceptance of an American mandate, which totally contradicted their diplomats' position at the Paris Conference.<sup>114</sup>

The findings of this first report pleased Bristol very much, for he was trying since his posting to prove that the one-sided propaganda of the Armenians and the missionaries had nothing to do with the real situation. The fact that Harbord had reached the same conclusions in a short time played into his hands. In his reply message, Bristol explained his own opinions as follows:

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<sup>113</sup> From General Harbord to Admiral Bristol, 21 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/276**

<sup>114</sup> **Ibid.**

Your letter written from Sivas, has just reached me. I certainly am glad you sent me that letter. I want to let you know right away that it confirms many things that I had good information on before... I am very anxious to get your final report and also to see you and have a talk... I hope the remainder of your trip will be as successful as the first part.

... P.S. I again thank you for your splendid information. It was fine.<sup>115</sup>

Adding his own assessments to Harbord's report, Bristol sent it to the American Peace delegation. He especially emphasized that reaching a speedy decision without the proper understanding of the realities in the region would harm the U.S. interests. Had the U.S. decided to send its troops to the region in disregard of all the information available, it would have thrown itself into fire for the interests of the Allies. Hence, Bristol's assessments made Harbord's report more effective:

Before our government is committed to sending troops to Caucasus, the full consequences of such an act should be completely realized. The conditions in the Caucasus are result of war with Turkey and other European powers and well known Turkey joined Germany because of bad diplomacy Entente powers.... The occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks was not necessary to preserve order and was therefore another example of European intrigue and this occupation has inflamed race hatred in all Turkey and is largely responsible present conditions in Caucasus. There is in America as well as France a very strong propaganda for Armenian affairs that is giving wrong impression regarding affairs in Turkey and Caucasus... It is the Entente that is asking for order in Turkey whereas by their intrigues and political operations they are doing these things to disturb order... A small international force of British, French, Italian and Americans can police the Caucasus pending advices of Peace conference ... However, if we come alone no one could convince the Oriental mind that it did not mean the establishment of Armenia and Italian, British and Armenian interests would lose no chance to spread this propaganda amongst the Moslem races. Our people must not be deceived. Therefore, if they decide to send 2,000 troops, they must be prepared to follow with reinforcements, probably mounting up to 150,000, or ignominiously run away... If this question is now before the Senate I suggest that the Senate be informed of the American press propaganda and the probable selfish desire of England to have us mandatory for an Armenia that would become the buffer state between what they desire to get of old Turkey and their old enemy the Russians. I strongly and decidedly recommend that we bring pressure to bear on England, France and Italy to carry out their obligations to

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<sup>115</sup> From Admiral Bristol to General Harbord, 28 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/276**

preserve order in Turkey under the armistice by occupying strategic points along the border between Turkey and Russia and Persia, and not have us pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them.<sup>116</sup>

### **The Last Part of the Trip through Anatolia**

As the talks continued, Harbord sent three officers from the mission to carry out an investigation in the Merzifon region, because the Armenian lobby in the U.S. had issued calls for intervention claiming that the Turks had continued to attack the Armenians in Merzifon. On September 20, 1919, LTC Jackson, Major Martin and Major Shekerjian, who departed from the main group, reached Samsun via Tokat, Amasya, and Merzifon. Subsequently, the group went to Trabzon, and from there reached Tiflis via Bayburt, Erzurum, Kars and Erivan and met the main group there.<sup>117</sup>

During the inquiry trip, the Jackson group was unable to find any concrete evidence confirming the Armenian claims. The missionaries in Merzifon alleged that they awaited an attack at any moment, as the Turkish National Movement was actually made up of Unionists. It can also be inferred from the reports that Jackson was tasked with secret missions. For not only were Jackson and Martin the mission's experts on natural resources and industry, but the bulk of the report consisted of information concerning the road conditions and the location of the natural resources along the travel route.<sup>118</sup>

After spending the night at the residence of missionary Mary Louise Graffam, the Harbord mission left Sivas on the morning of September 21,

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<sup>116</sup> From Admiral Bristol to Ammission, 2 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.02102/-**

<sup>117</sup> From Lt. Col. Jackson to General Harbord, 7 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/317**  
Mustafa Kemal Paşa became informed of this mission and warned the authorities involved: *"It was decided that Canik Lieutenant Governor Hamid Bey was to be alerted about the trip of Colonel Jackson, who traveled via Samsun so that he wouldn't face any propaganda against us."* **Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri**, vol. 4, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2000), p. 89

The Jackson team arrived in Erzurum on September 29. Kâzım Karabekir tells the following about their conversation: *"The American lieutenant colonel wished to travel to Armenia via Bayezid. I asked him about the reason. Armenians complained to the Entente powers that whole Turkish military units allegedly were getting ready to attack Armenia. He said that things would be to our favor, if he were to be granted permission to travel. I told him that he also could see this region himself about the order in Turkey. And I allowed him to go with an escort."* Kâzım Karabekir, **İstiklal Harbimiz**, 2. ed., (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1969), pp. 312-313

<sup>118</sup> From Lt. Col. Jackson to General Harbord, 7 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/317**

1919. The mission visited Zara on September 22, and Erzincan on September 23. The local notables welcomed the mission with a ceremony. The representatives of various groups told the mission members about their claims. In sum, what had taken place in the towns that had been visited before was repeated once again.<sup>119</sup>

Harbord was surprised to see the devastation of the region from the conflicts during and after the war:

At Erzinjan, we had reached a region devastated by the war. No crops have been raised near there for several years. When the Russian army went to pieces in this neighborhood, after the fall of the Empire, the soldiers destroyed many villages, and the Turks claim that some thousands of Armenians who had accompanied the Russian advance, took the opportunity to destroy Turkish villages, which seems not unlikely, human nature being what it is.<sup>120</sup>

On September 25, 1919 the Harbord mission arrived in Erzurum, the last important stop of the inquiry trip in Anatolia. The people in Erzurum had been making arrangements for a week in advance. The mission was welcomed with a fascinating ceremony. They were much impressed by the guard of honor, the songs and games of the children of the war dead, the sports shows, the speeches of the peoples' representatives and the presence of the people with flags and placards in hands. After the ceremony, Kâzım Paşa accompanied the mission on a tour of the town. In particular, for the purpose of refuting the claims of the Armenian lobby the mission members were shown buildings in which the Armenians were said to have set the Turks on fire.<sup>121</sup>

Kâzım Paşa told Harbord about the essentials of the National Movement and the disappointments brought about by the failure of the implementation of Wilson's Points. He added that no one could raise an army that would negate the Turkish presence. Furthermore, Harbord was handed a

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<sup>119</sup> "List of Turk, Armenian, American, Georgian and Tartar Officials Between Adana and Tiflis." **HMMA, 184.021/96**

<sup>120</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p.191

<sup>121</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p.192  
KARABEKİR, **op.cit.**, pp. 285-290

detailed report enumerating the Armenian attacks and massacres after the ceasefire.<sup>122</sup>

Kâzım Paşa also gave Harbord Mustafa Kemal Paşa's message of September 21, 1919. Mustafa Kemal Paşa's message was a response to the accusations made by Damad Ferid Paşa in a memo of September 19, 1919. The government in İstanbul alleged that the Bolsheviks had entered the country through Samsun and Trabzon. Refuting these ungrounded claim, Mustafa Kemal Paşa called on all the authorities and the people in the country to oppose the activities of the government in İstanbul. The most important point in the message was that the struggle would become inevitable if such improper activities continued:

The Representative Delegation of the League for the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Roumelia announces once again that the government that has become a tool for treacherous goals and illegally used cruelty and tyranny against the people does not have any legitimate position, and that the people do not recognize it in any fashion, and that all the people are prepared to defend the high caliphate, royal order, national independence, and sacred legitimacy, and that the people demand a government consisting of trustworthy and reliable persons. And the League also announces that given all this just demand and the fact that the central government, together with foreign powers, is getting ready to induce discord and violence in the country, all the responsibility for the adverse consequences and bad fates to arise will fall on the members of the illegitimate government that had prepared the ground for such violence, and that the people will consistently be loyal to their own goals and real beliefs.<sup>123</sup>

The same day the Harbord mission reached Horasan. Here started the region that the Yerevan Republic occupied with the help of the British army. The Turkish protection unit that had been accompanying the mission from Mardin on completed its tasks without an incident and left the mission.<sup>124</sup> Harbord tasked I McCoy, LTC Bowditch, and Pvt. Serijanian as the translator

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<sup>122</sup> KARABEKİR, **op.cit.**, pp. 291-304.

During our research in the archive collection we could not locate the report that Kâzım Paşa submitted to the Harbord Mission.

<sup>123</sup> Mustafa Kemal Paşa, "To American Colonel Mister Jackson", **HMMA, 184.021/273**

<sup>124</sup> The security of the Mission during the trip between Mardin and Sivas was provided by the 5th Division CO, and between Sivas and Horasan by the 3rd Army HQ Group. See From General Harbord to Lt.Col. Kenan Bey, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/333**

to investigate the allegations that the Turkish units had begun a military buildup near Bayezid.<sup>125</sup> No report concerning the findings of this task is available in the archives. However, Harbord's reports indicated that the Turkish units had not set any military buildup and that no preparations for attack were detected, indicating that the McCoy group did not find anything near Bayezid.

On September 26, 1919, the mission arrived in Hasankale, and on September 27 in Sarıkamış. On a train assigned to their service the Mission reached Kars in the afternoon. At the station the mission members were welcomed by a guard of honor, school pupils, and the local people. At a dinner arranged in their honor the two notables repeated the statements the mission had become used to hear. The feast was in total contradiction to the poverty of the local people. Having visited the orphanages and women's shelters run by American aid groups, the mission left the town. After a difficult trip, they arrived in Kağızman at midnight.<sup>126</sup>

On the morning of September 28, 1919 the trip to Erivan via Kulp commenced. But due to the consecutive incidents the mission had to be divided into several groups. The two groups whose cars broke down at night were attacked by Kurdish tribal warriors in various places. Later on it was understood that the attackers had taken the mission members to be Armenian. Several times, Armenians posing as foreigners had managed to pass through their cordon. Once the identity of the travelers became clear, the tribal warriors apologized and escorted the mission which had regrouped again. In addition, they also hosted the mission all night long. It is a meaningful fact that the Harbord mission traveled without a problem in the areas under the control of the Turkish National forces, while it was subject to attacks in the areas under the Armenian occupation. It was clear that contrary to the claims the Armenians could not establish proper order and control in the areas under their own control, with the exception of some towns.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> HOVANNESIAN, *op.cit.*, p. 345.

<sup>126</sup> Diary of Overland Party, **HMMA, 184.021/323**

<sup>127</sup> **Ibid.**

Harbord talked about this in his final report:

In the portion of Turkey traversed, we heard of brigandage but experienced no inconvenience. Apparently the Turkish Government, inefficient and wicked as it sometimes is, can control its people, and does govern. In the region once policed by Russia the relaxation from its iron hand has been great, and life and property are unsafe in many regions. Our Mission was fired upon by the Kurds in Russian Armenia and several motor cars struck by bullets, and over half the party were kept prisoner one night by Moslems who claimed to have been driven from their villages by Armenians.<sup>128</sup>

On September 29, the mission set out on the road again. To prevent an incident the tribal warriors escorted and protected the mission for a while. By noon, the Mission crossed the border. Thus started the Caucasus part of the inquiry.<sup>129</sup>

## 6. INQUIRY TRIP TO CAUCASUS

At the noon of September 29, 1919, the Harbord mission arrived in Etchmiadzin, the center of the Armenian Gregorian Church. The mission was welcomed by Katolikos Grevorg V and other religious figures. According to Katolikos, the U.S. had the necessary qualities to help out Armenia. The mission left the town without spending much time. At the entrance to Erivan a ceremony was conducted with the presence of all the Armenian notables and townspeople. Along the road the mission was greeted by the children from orphanages and the local people. After the dinner the mission members rested.<sup>130</sup>

The following day an intensive schedule awaited the mission members. Moseley and Capt. Villaret were ordered to investigate the complaints in the

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<sup>128</sup> General Harbord, Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia, **HMMA, 184.02102/4**, pp. 11-12.

<sup>129</sup> Diary of Overland Party, **HMMA, 184.021/323**

<sup>130</sup> **Ibid.**  
HOVANNESIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 346-347.

Nahchivan area. Capt. Loring and Hüseyin Bey were dispatched to Tiflis to make preliminary preparations. The rest of the mission members' commenced work looking into the problems in the Erivan Republic. They held meetings with all of the Armenian authorities and America aid workers. Upon learning of the positive impression General Harbord had obtained from his trip to Anatolia and inquiries, Prime Minister Alexandre Khatisian became rather irritated. Especially the discovery that the Turkish side had made no military preparations despite the Armenian claims proved that the Armenian government had fabricated lies. Khatisian insisted that the Turks could not be trusted or negotiated with. He believed that the only condition for the return of the Armenian refugees was to take the region to be annexed to Greater Armenia from the Ottoman rule.<sup>131</sup>

Based on military intelligence reports, the Armenian military authorities alleged that the Turkish National Movement led by Mustafa Kemal Paşa was more dangerous than it was believed to be. The Turks, who at first thought that they had lost everything, had begun suddenly to gather strength, because they had figured out that the Entente powers were not capable of carrying out the occupation, and that they were more interested in the Bolsheviks. With the external support the Turks planned to eliminate all the Christians now. According to the Armenian officers:

The intentions of the Erzerum Unionists are. 1) To spread communism over Europe, 2) To prevent the Allies and Armenians from entering Turkey, and the Russians from entering Trans-Caucasia. Bolsheviks of Turkey, Adjara, Georgia, Azerbeidjan, the Mountaineers' Republic, Afghanistan and India were represented at the conference in Erzerum. ... In addition to these, conferences take place periodically within Turkey with a view to bringing about the federation of the Mohammedan states of Algeria, Soudan, East Turkestan, Afghanistan and East India.<sup>132</sup>

October 1, was completely taken up with meetings and conferences. While trying to gather the information, the mission members asked for the Armenian government and various experts also attempted to influence the mission so that the latter held a positive view of the Armenian attitudes. In the

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<sup>131</sup> Diary of Overland Party, **HMMA, 184.021/323**

<sup>132</sup> Colonel Shneour, "Chief of general Staff, War Office, Armenian Republic", **HMMA, 184.021/372**



evening the McCoy and Moseley teams came back after having completed their tasks. Neither team had found any evidence to confirm Armenian claims. Thus, it was proved once again that the Armenians had fabricated false news in order to incite a foreign intervention. After collecting the necessary information and conducting inquiries in the problematic regions, the Harbord mission left Erivan on the morning of October 2. Despite the preparations to welcome the mission along the way, the mission continued without a stop. After a long and tiring trip the mission arrived in Tiflis towards evening.<sup>133</sup>

The mission started its work in Tiflis on October 3, 1919. Long conversations were held with the Georgian authorities led by Prime Minister Yevgenii Gegechkori, the representatives of the Tiflis Armenians, the American aid workers, and the other representatives. Tiflis looked like a European town and it did not have the poverty and other kinds of problems the mission encountered in the other places it had visited. According to Harbord, the real problem had to do with the Georgian authorities. They were both under Bolshevik influence and stained with embezzlement. The mission's work continued the following day as well. In the afternoon, Harbord, Moseley, and McCoy, accompanied by some staff and support personnel set out for Bakü on a train assigned to them. Towards the evening the Jackson team that had been separated from the main group in Sivas managed to reach Tiflis.<sup>134</sup>

The group, led by Harbord arrived in Bakü on October 5, 1919. At the decorated train station the higher civilian and military authorities of Azerbaijan welcomed Harbord in a ceremony. After the dinner, the mission members held a long talk with Prime Minister Nasib Bey Uzbekov. Subsequently, they visited the city and some oil wells. Harbord was greatly impressed by Azerbaijan's economic potential, but he also felt that the Azeris

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<sup>133</sup> Diary of Overland Party, **HMMA, 184.021/323**

<sup>134</sup> **Ibid.**  
HOVANNESIAN, **op.cit.**, p. 349.

had not achieved the necessary political maturity. After this quick visit, the mission left Bakü in the evening.<sup>135</sup>

After the visit to Bakü, Harbord started preparing a preliminary report containing the information and impressions gained throughout the inquiry trip for the U.S. administration impatiently awaited a report on the situation in the Caucasus.<sup>136</sup> Harbord summarized the results of the inquiry trip in six clauses.<sup>137</sup> The first clause explained the schedule of the Commission's trip up to that point, while the sixth clause laid out an approximate schedule to be adhered to thereafter.

In the second clause, the findings mentioned in the first report that had been sent out from Sivas were repeated. Emphasis was put on the fact that the news the Armenian lobby had spread was completely unfounded. The perception perceived in both the U.S. and Europe was mistaken:

Purpose Nationalist movement is to try preserve integrity Ottoman Empire under mandatory of whole, preferably by American Government. They are under great fear territorial encroachments by great powers. We believe Turkish officials are carrying out terms of Armistice, and Army demobilized to skeleton. Find appalling loss of population in Turkey due to war and disease.... Found survivors Armenian deportation slowly returning, expressing no fears for their safety. Turkish officials state the Armenian refugees in Trans-Caucasus who fled before the War, or with Russian retreat, would be permitted in Turkey now if properly documented to prevent entrance with them of Russian Armenians whom Turkey believes revolutionary. We saw nothing on whole journey to indicate purpose Turkey to cross frontier and massacre Armenians as anticipated in cablegrams from Trans-Caucasus prior to our departure from Paris and no such iniquities reported by Armenian authorities. Believe Turkey has neither disposition nor ability to carry out such purpose and that present officials appreciate fatal defect in policy former Government. The whole country kept uneasy by events at Smyrna and representations agents foreign governments and conflicting orders foreign military commanders.

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<sup>135</sup> Diary of Overland Party, **HMMA, 184.021/323**  
HOVANNESIAN, *op.cit.*, pp. 349-350.

<sup>136</sup> From Lansing to Ammission, 9 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.02102/3**

<sup>137</sup> From General Harbord to Admiral Bristol, 6 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/307**

The US Peace Delegation received this report on 10 October 1919. Please see From Admiral Bristol to Ammission, 8 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.02102/1**

In the third clause Harbord described the state of affairs in Trans-Caucasus. Not only did the three countries have serious problems, but they also could not get along with each other. The Russians were expected to return to the region:

Actual attitude of Georgia, Azerbaidjan, and Armenia towards each other very discouraging for gaining peace this region except under strong hand. All are corrupt, all are existing on salvage from Persian collapse, all reflect Bolshevik influence, specially Georgia. Principal cause friction is disputed boundaries. Greater obstacle to tranquility is uncertainty as to whether a mandatory will be given for Trans-Caucasus and the fear that Denikin may come to the region.

The fourth clause described the dire economic conditions of the countries visited. Despite some improvements the lack of foodstuffs was still an enormous problem. There was need for any kind of aid. Tremendous improvements had been made in the aftermath of Colonel Haskell's appointment.

Harbord came to a surprising conclusion in the fifth clause. The people of the region lived inseparably. It was not possible to separate this mixed structure in a meaningful fashion. In this case, the best solution was for an impartial power to establish a mandate over all of them:

This problem is one which includes inseparably Turkey, Armenia, and Trans-Caucasia because of inextricable mingling of races, religions, and interests. Whole this region is familiar with principles self-determination and generally express faith in disinterested mandatory under League Nations as only solution for desperate situation.

All in all, the preliminary report refuted the on going Armenian propaganda, and confirmed the criticisms the U.S. State Department, the Office of the Chief of General Staff, Herbert Hoover and Bristol had leveled against the U.S. policy in the Middle East. Hence, by sending information before even leaving its task area and writing its final reports, the Harbord mission had a great influence over the American decision-makers.

Harbord arrived in Tiflis on the afternoon of October 6. Having completed its final preparations, the main group that had remained in Tiflis waited for his arrival. Once the equipment was loaded on the train and a small farewell ceremony was attended, the Harbord mission left Tiflis. However, some cars could not be delivered to the train due to technical malfunction, and it was decided that these cars were to remain in Batum. On

the morning of October 7, the train arrived in Batum. The Mission rapidly loaded the equipment on the USS Martha Washington that had been at the harbor. Following the meetings on board and final coordination it was decided that the final reports would be written.<sup>138</sup>

As the final preparations were being made on the ship, the talks with the representatives of various interest groups continued in Batum. The most interesting among these was the one held with Generals Chermin and Kowanko, the representatives of the Russian National Society of Batum. Chermin and Kowanko, who did not hesitate to say that they were supporters of the White Russian General Denikin, came to talk about the Russian interests in the Caucasus. To them Trans-Caucasia was indispensable to Russia: "the interests of Russia and Trans-Caucasia were inseparable; that since the establishment of Baku, and the Trans-Caucasian railroad, Russia could not exist commercially without Trans-Caucasia, nor could her southern boundary be protected." They said that despite widespread nationalism, the bulk of the people in Trans-Caucasia were open to Russian influence. Consequently, no matter which side won the civil war it would reincorporate the Caucasus into Russia. Chermin and Kowanko believed that Denikin would win.<sup>139</sup> Soon it became clear that they had been right. Denikin did not win, as they had hoped, but the Bolsheviks, the winners of the civil war, managed to get the Caucasus back into Russia within a short time.

After the broken cars arrived, and Haskell and his spouse, as well as some Russian and Armenian refugees got on board, the ship sailed away from the Port of Batum on 8 October 1919. Thus was completed the Harbord mission's inquiry trip to Caucasus.<sup>140</sup>

## 7. FINAL INQUIRIES

The Harbord mission arrived in İstanbul on October 11, 1919. The mission members worked on the final report, and also held the final talks with the representatives of various groups. In order to investigate the issue of

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<sup>138</sup> Diary of Overland Party, **HMMA, 184.021/323**

<sup>139</sup> Jasper Y. Brinton, "Memorandum of General Harbord" **HMMA, 184.021/318**

<sup>140</sup> Diary of Overland Party, **HMMA, 184.021/323**

İzmir's occupation, which the mission frequently had faced during its trip, Harbord tasked Moseley, Hornbeck, and Villaret. The group left İstanbul for İzmir on October 13. It conducted its investigation and held talks with the authorities in İzmir, Aydın, and Ömerli over three days.

Moseley's observations were in line with what the mission members had heard until then. The occupation authorized by the Peace Conference not only was based on the request of the local people, but also the Greek soldiers and the local Greeks had done much harm to the civilians. Although the situation did not become better, the people did not want the Greeks. The Greek army was in a precarious position. The Turks asserted that İzmir would become "Venizelos' tombstone." "They [Greeks] are having more trouble than is reported. They are constantly sending out wounded and sick soldiers on the hospital ship." <sup>141</sup>

The actual culprit in the occupation was undoubtedly Britain, which had allowed the Greek occupation to stop the Italian expansion. In addition, it had many secret plans regarding the region: "The British play a smooth, steady game. There are British intelligence officers throughout the region and within the Turkish lines. It is reported that there are British soldiers at numerous points in the interior beyond the Greek zone. It is thought that the British would like a mandate for the whole region from Bulgaria to Persia. It is urged that the United States should take a mandate for the whole region, and that this should include Syria and Mesopotamia." <sup>142</sup>

As the inquiry trip through inner Anatolia had demonstrated, the Turkish national movement increasingly gained strength. The Greeks faced difficulties holding on to the places they had occupied: "If there were no interference the Turks would probably drive the Greeks out." <sup>143</sup>

According to Moseley, the situation for the Greeks was hopeless. But the real problem was that the continuation of İzmir's occupation threatened the peace in the whole region. Some steps had to be taken immediately to

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<sup>141</sup> Notes on the Trip to Smyrna, 13-16 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/341**

<sup>142</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>143</sup> **Ibid.**

resolve the issue: "The general impression is that the present situation is hopeless; the occupation is unprofitable to the Greeks and gives no promise of any sort for the future. There will be no peace while this situation continues. Turkish officials have asked whether the Allies would have any objection if the Turks were to drive out the Greeks. Greeks, Turks and local foreign residents all seem ready to welcome measures which will lead to a substitution of some other authority for present Greek occupation." <sup>144</sup>

At the daily briefings Bristol was able to express his own views and opinions to the mission members. He ensured that the mission members were in touch with the representatives of various Turkish groups in Istanbul. Specifically, he found the opportunity to have private talks with Harbord. <sup>145</sup> In sum, Admiral Bristol played a leading role in the work of the mission.

The press was much interested in the Harbord mission's latest work in Istanbul and the fact that its inquiry trip had been completed. The widespread opinion was that the U.S. had accepted to take on the mandate in the Middle East, but that it had hesitations about its scale. For instance, "*Slovo*," the semi-official publication of the radical Taşnaksütyan Party printed in Tbilisi, came to the following conclusion: "All of this leads us to conclude that the United States is likely to accept the mandate for Armenia, and that General Harbord's Commission investigating the Near East has practically reached this conclusion already." <sup>146</sup>

The American businessmen that the mission had talked to eagerly expected that the mission's reports would fundamentally change the U.S. administration's Middle East policy because they believed that the Ottoman Empire offered many opportunities for American capital. In all aspects, it was a virgin country. It had both rich natural resources and a market hungry for everything. What needed to be done was to establish a mandate throughout the Empire. They were against the mandate covering only Armenia. This would have been a wrong decision both economically and politically. Besides, the Armenians did not possess proper characteristics as a people,

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<sup>144</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>145</sup> HOVANNESIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 351-352.

<sup>146</sup> US Navy Radio Press (wireless), **HMMA, 184.021/301**

despite the contrary propaganda. Based on his extensive experience, Mr. Gunkel, a manager for the American giant Standard Oil Company in charge of the company operations in the Middle East and the Balkans, was of the opinion that the Turks were the people to be invested:

Mr. Gunkel painted a very rosy picture of the Turkish character, claiming that much of the talk about his quality, bigotry, and inefficiency is merely slander. In fact, he went so far as to state that in his opinion the Turks is the superior of all the other races in the Turkish Empire.... He there upon stated an illustration to show that the Armenians particularly, are merely a designing people, at the present time imposing upon American and British generosity.... Mr. Gunkel had recently returned from Egypt and at Cairo he had found 6.000refugee Armenians who were being supported by the British Government. In spite of the fact that there is a serious labor shortage in Cairo, the Armenians refuse to work taking the position that they were being supported anyway and consequently were not in necessity of working.”<sup>147</sup>

The activities of the Armenian lobby designed to affect the Harbord mission and bring it to their side continued without a pause during the last days of the mission's work as well. The Armenian Joint Committee led by Patriarch Zaven Eghiayan and including Armenian Catholic Church representative Augustin Sayeghian and Armenian Protestant Church representative Zenope A. Bezdjian visited Harbord and told him about the Armenian claims for the last time. The Armenian religious authorities primarily directed Harbord's attention to the National Movement that was gathering strength in Anatolia:

Your Excellency, will you kindly allow us to call your attention to a serious change in the political life of this country, which has occurred since your Excellency's last visit to us. We believe that the so-called “Milli Teshkilat” (the national organization) has given an entirely new direction to the course of events in Turkey. The leaders of this movement, as Your Excellency already knows, stir up the Turkish people to arm themselves and be ready to require from the Entente Powers the integrity of the Empire and favorable terms for the Peace. At the same time they appeal to the religious and national fanaticism of the Turks, threaten to massacre Christians in case they failed in their demands and intimidate the Christian population to submit to them, even forcing them to military service. It is significant that these leaders and

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<sup>147</sup> Interview with Mr. Gunkel, Man for the Standard Oil, **HMMA, 184.021/365.**

their active followers are mostly the members of the Union and Progress Committee.<sup>148</sup>

According to the Armenian religious authorities, the Turks had avoided the effects of the defeat and gathered strength, as the European powers looked for new outlets due to the prolongation of the final peace agreement. Having reached their final goal, the Armenians were afraid of losing it:

Another significant fact is that in these days the interests of some of the Entente Powers have assumed a very ominous turn in the Turkish affairs.... But unfortunately just at this juncture the American Government has been prevented from taking an active part in this problem because she has had in hand more urgent affairs, and the result is that new decision of the Paris Conference in regard to the fate of Turkey is being postponed. The European interests in the Near East are getting more and more complicated, the Turks are becoming more and more audacious and threatening and the interest in Armenian cause is declining.<sup>149</sup>

There remained only one chance for Armenia to be established: a U.S. intervention on behalf of the Armenians: "And now, in this time of great trial and disappointment, our nation turn their eyes to America, because they believe that the immediate and energetic action of America will surely save the situation." However, they were also against the project of some U.S. circles that sought to establish a mandate over the whole Ottoman Empire. Actually, they expected the U.S. to take all of the risks and establish a politically, militarily, and economically viable greater Armenia, and hand it to the Armenians. They rejected all other options:

Giving a good government to the whole Turkish Empire will not induce the Armenians to gather up to their native land. They will still be scattered people the result of which will be the extinction of the race. But if their historic fatherland be restored to them under the mandate of a Great Power, it will be a real and effective inducement to them to come to gather and build their home.... We believe that all this evil can be avoided and all the good aspirations can be realized by the immediate and energetic military action of the mandatory Power. We hope America will hasten to our help before it is too late, and there remains no Armenian nation to save!<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> From Conseil Mixte Arménien to General Harbord, 15 October 1919, **HMMA**, **184.021/338**

<sup>149</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>150</sup> **Ibid.**



After the completion of the final preparations, the USS Martha Washington sailed away from İstanbul on October 15, 1919. On October 16 the Moseley group got on board in İzmir. The ship reached the port of Marseilles on October 23 without an incident. Thus, since they left the Port of Brest on August 23, the Harbord mission had covered a total of 9,711 km (4,025 km by train, 3,557 km by car, 2,053 km by ship, and 76 km on horse), and completed its task in fifty-eight days.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> General James G. Harbord, "Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia", 16 October 1919,  
**HMMA, 184.02102/4**, Exhibit A

### PART III

#### 8. VIEWS FOR AND AGAINST AN AMERICAN MANDATE

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Harbord mission focused on the drafting of the final report and appendices after arriving in Batum. However, the impatient U.S. Department of State and the Peace Delegation wanted to read the main findings of the inquiry trip at once. The two preliminary reports Harbord sent out through Bristol aroused excitement and expectations. Similarly, Harbord wished to find out the views of the mission members with respect to the mandate before sitting down to write his report. Finally, with an order of October 12, 1919, Chief of the Staff McCoy asked the mission members to submit their views on the pros and cons of an American mandate:

In view of the earnest desire of Gen. Harbord to sum up his report with an effective, plain statement of the PROS and CONS on America assuming Mandate, we very much desire each member of the Mission to submit a concise statement of the reasons for and against as same appear to him, for the region we have been studying.<sup>1</sup>

Of the eleven mission members asked to state their views eight submitted their statements in writing within three days. No documents confirm whether the other members submitted their statements. It is possibly that they stated their views orally.<sup>2</sup>

The most striking aspect of the written statements is that they all rejected the mandate extending to Armenia only. If the U.S. were to assume any mandate, it would have to include Thrace, the Straits, Anatolia, and Transcaucasia. All this land would have to be put under one single mandate without any political division. Considering the Russia factor and the existing anarchy, some mission members were also of the opinion that Azerbaijan

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<sup>1</sup> From Frank R. McCoy Memorandum for All members, 12 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/140**

<sup>2</sup> Eight different statements could be located in the archives. These were the statements of Colonel Beeuwkes, LTCs Brinton, Jackson, Bowditch, Prof. Cumberland, Poland, and Mears. One statement was unsigned. See **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

and Georgia ought to have included. But Anatolia was not to be divided. Moreover, all the foreign forces that still occupied the various parts of Anatolia and Thrace (including the Greeks) had to leave the region. Only when this condition was fulfilled should the U.S. assume the mandate. William B. Poland commented on the opinion unanimously held by every member as follows:

After our rapid, but extensive, trip over a large portion of this territory, interviews with its people of many different nationalities, classes and religious beliefs, I believe every member of the Mission has become convinced that the only practicable course is to extend such a mandatory over the entire territory, including Turkey in Europe, Anatolia, Turkish Armenia and Transcaucasia.<sup>3</sup>

The second issue on which all the members of the Mission agreed was that the best candidate for a mandate over the Ottoman lands was the U.S.: "Only two powers can be seriously considered as mandatories Great Britain and the United States. France does not possess the necessary strength, while Italy and Greece do not deserve to be trusted with the destinies of others, in addition to being too weak to support the burden."<sup>4</sup> However, preferring the economically viable parts of the Middle East, Britain did not pay much attention to the other parts. In addition, it had reached the limits of its power and was increasingly regarded by the local public with suspicion. However, the U.S. possessed all the qualities perfectly fitting the task. The developments in Cuba and the Philippines were proof of the U.S. success: "In Cuba, the Philippines, and elsewhere, we have proved ourselves capable of unraveling the knotty tangles caused by bad government, and putting peoples, hitherto oppressed and stricken, upon feet and on the road to prosperity and happiness."<sup>5</sup>

Another important U.S. advantage was that the people of the region preferred America to others. All the services it had had provided free in the region until then had enhanced U.S. prestige. Hence the U.S. could exercise

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<sup>3</sup> From W. B. Poland Note on a Mandatory to Cover Asia Minor and Transcaucasia, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>4</sup> From W. W. Cumberland An American Mandate in the Near East, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>5</sup> From Lt. Col. J.P. Jackson Memorandum to Chief of Staff, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

the mandate without encountering any resistance: "For many years the United States enjoyed an enviable reputation in the Near East. She has not participated in political intrigues. She has not tried to secure special economic privileges. On the contrary she has given to Turkey the best schools and hospitals that exist in the Empire. No other nation would have such an easy task in securing the confidence and co-operation of the native population."<sup>6</sup>

The third common opinion was that the mission members maintained their biases despite the inquiry trip they had carried out. In their statements other than Mears the imprints of the Armenian lobby and propaganda they had been subject to for years are clear. Not only had the Turks done nothing during their rule for centuries, but they also had destroyed what had existed before. The rule of these people incapable of even governing themselves had to be done away with:

Turkey has demonstrated by centuries of misrule that she is incapable of governing her own race and all other races making up her population. Turks lack initiative, they are non-constructive, and they destroy all that Armenians, Greeks and others build up. The development of any race under Turkish misrule is impossible. The whole area under Turkish misrule has become more or less depopulated, natural resources have not been developed, and deforestation has been practically universal.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, before their total annihilation this was the last chance for "the Armenians, the most intelligent, industrious, and economically promising portion of the population in the Empire."<sup>8</sup> Because the Armenians had been subject to "numerous massacres" until then and made many contributions during the war, they deserved to be saved: "The Armenians were our valiant Allies during the war. They sacrificed an even greater proportion of their

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<sup>6</sup> From W. W. Cumberland An American Mandate in the Near East, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>7</sup> From Col. Henry Beeuwkes to Gen. Frank R. Mc Coy, 15 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>8</sup> From Lt.Col. E. Bowditch, Pros and Cons on America Assuming the Mandate, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

people to our common cause than France. They are of our own race. They have been a tenacious outpost of Christianity from early Christian times.”<sup>9</sup>

Thus, a U.S. mandate would not only save the Armenians, but also control the Turks “who were even incapable of governing themselves.” But upon close scrutiny it is seen that after the inquiry trip the mission members became confused, and their biases were shaken up. On the one hand, they admitted that Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colloquies that they had gotten to know in Sivas and Erzurum, were different, and did not pose any threat to the Armenians.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, they added that none of the peoples in the region liked the Armenians. But more important was the reason LTC Bowditch referred to when he enumerated the reasons for an American mandate: “America has strong sentimental interests in the region. American missions and colleges. Armenian people and propaganda in America.”<sup>11</sup>

After this point, the number of common issues decreased. As some of the mission members emphasized the pros, the others tried to warn that the cons should not be ignored. For example, claiming that there was no convincing argument against a U.S. mandate, LTC Brinton mentioned only the pros for it.<sup>12</sup> To LTC Jackson, the cons “represent the views of a hard headed businessman,” but he himself supported the pros just as a gentleman would do: “The ‘Pros’ are written as I conceive they would be given by a gentleman inclined to be troubled by red blood and the demands of his heart in matters relating to such questions relating to humanity. I am personally inclined to sympathize with him.”<sup>13</sup>

Those mission members who approached the issue more realistically focused on important problems. Professor Cumberland, despite his sympathy

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<sup>9</sup> From Lt.Col. J.P. Jackson Memorandum to Chief of Staff, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>10</sup> From Lt.Col. J.Brinton Memorandum for General Harbord, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>11</sup> From Lt.Col. E. Bowditch Pros and Cons on America Assuming the Mandate, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>12</sup> From Lt.Col. J. Brinton Memorandum for General Harbord, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

<sup>13</sup> From Lt.Col. J.P. Jackson Memorandum to Chief of Staff, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

for the Armenians, was aware of the cons. First of all, Britain had great interests in the Near East. Britain's strategic borders stretched along the Caucasia-Black Sea-Straits line: "An American wedge between Russia, Germany and herself which the establishment of an American mandate would accomplish would unquestionably be an immense relief to Great Britain." Hence, by assuming the mandate the U.S. would serve as an unpaid guard for Britain.

Cumberland believed that there was no guarantee that Russia and Germany, excluded from the region due to their current problems, would not interfere in the region in the future. Besides the problems the responsibility over an economically and financially bankrupt region would bring along, the U.S. mandate would be a temporary solution. Following the mandate everything would go back to its original state for the European powers would continue to incite the region in accordance with their interests.

Abandoning the Monroe Doctrine would lead the U.S. to face great political and economic costs in the Americas and the Pacific. While Japan was emerging as a great rival, the problems in South America multiplied. The responsibilities to be taken on in the Near East would prevent the U.S. from giving necessary attention and importance to more significant issues. It is clear that of the reasons to which Cumberland alluded the most important was the one dealing with the most sensitive issue for the U.S. administration and public opinion: dragging the American military into an adventure with an uncertain end: "For doing of a job which apparently belongs to others and for which we would get scant credit there is a question as to how far we should feel obligated to go in sending our soldiers into a country which would mean physical and moral disaster for many of them." <sup>14</sup>

It appeared that Mears' unbiased and balanced statement was the most reasonable one of all. Unlike the other mission members, Mears wrote down and matched the pros and cons in two parallel columns. Thus, he clearly explained the main issues in a minimum number of words. According to Mears, the main reason for the US to assume the mandate: "is that this problem is after all, a great humanitarian problem, and the United States is

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<sup>14</sup> From W. W. Cumberland An American Mandate in the Near East, 13 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

better disposed toward and better qualified for the task involved than is any other country.” However, not only was the US not responsible for the problems in the Near East, but it also should not be forgotten that, “Humanitarianism should begin at home. There are a sufficient number of difficult situations which call for American action within the present recognized sphere of American influence.”

After all this matching assessment, Mears concluded that the U.S. had to reject all mandate projects in the Near East. “America should not become the mandatory power for any of the Near East because (a) Mexico will take our available capital and men, (b) the Monroe Doctrine would become a sham and (c) European nations are now more imperialistic than ever before.”<sup>15</sup>

Harbord used these opinions of Mears in the appendix of his report on the pros and cons of the U.S. mandate. While he emulated Mears’ writing style, he also tried to balance out the various tendencies of the other mission members. Harbord’s final assessment of a U.S. mandate will be assessed after an examination of about the report and its appendices.

## **9. THE FINAL REPORT AND APPENDICES**

Once the Harbord mission commenced its work, the coordination of its activities became an important issue. With the technical preparations get underway, new mission members had to go through orientation. After these initial problems, Harbord set up strict control so that similar problems and loss of time would not be experienced again. The main task of the mission was to compile a comprehensive report following the inquiry trip that would help the U.S. work out a policy towards the region. Initially, it was obvious that both conducting a difficult and long inquiry trip and compiling a report within a short time would create problems. Therefore, what had to be done was to agree on the main issues, concepts and principles first, and then to get to the writing of the report and its appendices during any spare time.

Once most mission members had joined, they set out to determine the main principles. Major Martin, in charge of geography and topography related issues in the mission, pinned down the borders of the region to be

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<sup>15</sup> From Eliot G. Mears to Gen. Harbord, 15 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/329 FW**

investigated and wrote a report about. Martin's delimitation was accepted as such. According to this delimitation, all mission members had to pay attention to the following borders:

- (a) On the Northeast, the crest of the Caucasus (including Georgia and Azerbaijan as well as Armenia in Russian Trans-Caucasia);
- (b) On the South, the Mediterranean and a line from Alexandratta [sic.] to the Persian border east of the southeast corner of Lake Van, then the Persian border North and east to the Caspian (with notes on the Armenians in Persia near Lake Urmi);
- (c) On the West, a line from the Gulf of Saros, North of the Gallipoli Peninsula, to Midia [sic.] on the Black Sea.<sup>16</sup>

Once the borders of the region to be investigated were delimited, William B. Poland proposed that all the information gathered be divided into categories in order to facilitate the compilation of the report, and the mission members were also divided into groups: "it is thought that best manner in which this can be accomplished is to divide the various General Subjects under consideration into Groups according to how they have been assigned each member for particular study. For reference and identification, each Group will be consecutively numbered, as will also the General Subjects under each separate Sub-division pertaining to any General Subject." The first group led by LTC Brinton, was to investigate "the Armenian State"; the second group led by LTC Jackson, "Population and Maintenance of Population"; the third group headed by General Moseley "Armenian Army, Military Problem of the Mandate Regime, Police Organization"; and the fourth group led by Poland "Transportation and Communication."<sup>17</sup>

In a memo on August 30, 1919, McCoy asked that the region of inquiry to be investigated part by part on the basis of five separate geographical areas. These areas were European Turkey (including İstanbul), Anatolia (the west of the line from the Taurus Mountains to Ordu), Armenia (according to the ethnic map of the Peace Conference [this means Cilicia, six Vilayets, Trabzon and its vicinity, as well as Russian Armenia]), Georgia and

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<sup>16</sup> It is interesting that Martin used the Midye-Enez line, which was recognized following the First Balkan War in Thrace as a base for border adjustment. From Maj. Lawrence Martin to Gen. Mc Coy, 25 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/140**

<sup>17</sup> From Gen. F. R. McCoy Memorandum, 26 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/140**



Azerbaijan.<sup>18</sup> It is noteworthy that this geographical division was based on Armenian claims for one of the main issues of the mission was to investigate whether a mandate over Armenia should be assumed or not.

It had become clear during the inquiry trip that these Armenia-centered principles were inadequate and incorrect. Therefore, a new group system had been introduced during the trip to Transcaucasia. Thus, the final report was to be written by Harbord himself, with the help of the mission members. It was decided that eleven appendices should be attached to the main report. Harbord was responsible for writing the bibliography as Appendix Twelve. According to the new tasking, the twelve appendices and the men in charge of them were as follows:

Appendix A: Political Factors and Problems, Capt. Stanley K. Hornbeck, HMMA, 184.02102/6

Appendix B: Government of Turkey and the Transcaucasus, Lt. Col. Jasper Y. Brinton, HMMA, 184.02102/ 7

Appendix C: Public and Private Finance of Turkey and the Transcaucasia, Prof. W. W. Cumberland, HMMA, 184.02102/ 8

Appendix D: Commerce and Industry in Turkey and Transcaucasia, Eliot Grinnell Mears, HMMA, 184.02102/ 9

Appendix E: Public Health and Sanitation of Turkey and Transcaucasia, Col. Henry Beeuwkes, HMMA, 184.02102/ 10

Appendix F: Peoples of Turkey in Europe, Asia Minor and Transcaucasus, Lt. Col. John Price Jackson, HMMA, 184.02102/ 11

Appendix G: Climate, Natural Resources, Animal Industry and Agriculture of Turkey and the Transcaucasus, Lt. Col. E. Bowditch, Jr., HMMA, 184.02102/ 12

Appendix H: Geography, Mining and Boundaries, Maj. Lawrence Martin, HMMA, 184.02102/ 13

Appendix I: The Press of Turkey and Transcaucasia, Maj. Harold W. Clark, HMMA, 184.02102/ 14

Appendix J: The Military Problem of a Mandatory, Brig. Gen. George Van Horn Moseley, HMMA, 184.02102/ 15

Appendix K: Transport and Communications in Asia Minor and the Transcaucasus, William B. Poland, HMMA, 184.02102/ 16

Appendix L: Bibliography, Maj. Gen. James G. Harbord, HMMA, 184.02102/ 17

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<sup>18</sup> From Gen. F. R. McCoy Memorandum for the Members of the Mission, 30 August 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/140**

In fact, the new assignment was in line with the expertise of the mission members and their initial task areas. The main differences were a more flexible geographical delimitation and the abandonment of the Armenia-centered approach. As mentioned above, the mission members wrote the reports throughout the inquiry trip. For example, Poland had begun writing a draft report before the mission had even left Paris. Similarly, when Mears joined the mission in İstanbul, he was quite prepared. It is likely that the other mission members began drafting their reports as soon as they left İstanbul on September 7, 1919 for as of September 8, the fifteen secretaries of the mission who began to type up the reports of the members had a heavy workload.<sup>19</sup> However, most mission members were able to make the final revisions and write the final reports only when they had arrived at the Batum Harbor.

On October 16, 1919, the main report and its appendices were completed and turned in to Harbord in three copies. Since the writing had been coordinated, there was no need for any revision. On October 25, 1919, Harbord submitted a copy of the report to Frank L. Polk, the head of the American Peace Delegation. The other copies were submitted by Harbord himself to the White House, and the War Department on November 12, 1919, after the main group of the mission had arrived in the U.S. Since Wilson was sick, Harbord did not find the opportunity to talk to him.<sup>20</sup>

The original text of the main report written by Harbord contained forty-three pages. In addition to the twelve appendices mentioned above, the main report also included seven exhibits, which were: a map showing the itinerary for the mission's trip (Exhibit-A), a petition from the Armenian Joint Commission (Exhibit B), a memo from the League for the Defense of the Rights in Anatolia and Roumelia (Exhibit C), Harbord's thank-you letter to Mustafa Kemal Paşa (Exhibit D), the Resolutions of the Sivas Congress (Exhibit E), Delegation of the Representatives' letter to the US Senate

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<sup>19</sup> From Chief Clerk Memorandum, 8 September 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/140**.

<sup>20</sup> Richard G. Hovannisian, **The Republic of Armenia; From Versailles to London (1919-1920)**, vol. 2, (Berkeley: Uni. of California Press, 1982), pp. 355-356.

(Exhibit F), and a chart showing the populations and resources of the inquiry area (Exhibit G).<sup>21</sup>

Despite some differences in outlook and style, the main report and its appendices constituted a whole. Therefore, it is appropriate to analyze them all together. The analysis will be carried out in accordance with the plan laid out in the main report written by Harbord, and accompanied by findings and comments.

After summarizing briefly the task given to the mission and the inquiry trip carried out to implement it in the beginning of the report, Harbord stated that the report consisted of five main parts. He justified such a division of the report in the following biased and partial fashion:

The interest, the horror and sympathy of the civilized world are so centered on Armenia; and the purpose and work of this Mission so focus on that blood-soaked region and its tragic remnant of a Christian population that this report should seem to fall naturally under the following heads:

- (a) History and present situation of the Armenian people
- (b) The political situation and suggestions for readjustment
- (c) The conditions and problems involved in a mandatory
- (d) The considerations for and against the undertaking of a mandate.<sup>22</sup>

### **Assessment of the Region's History**

It can be inferred from the reports that Harbord and his colleagues paid special attention to the history of the region, especially to that of the Armenians. However, they readily accepted the information contained in popular books, magazine articles, and orientalist literary works of the era, as

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<sup>21</sup> For the original report see. Maj. Gen. James G. Harbord, Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia, **HMMA, 184.021/4**

The report, with revisions and some parts omitted, was published by the US Congress. See Maj. Gen. James G. Harbord, **Senate Document 266, Conditions in the Near East: Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia**, (Washington; Government Printing Office, 1920)  
In this dissertation we used the archives copy.

<sup>22</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp. 1-3.

well as the Armenian propaganda, for they were not historians. In fact, this approach was not peculiar to the Harbord mission. However, it is noteworthy that the impressions and knowledge they had gained during their comprehensive journey did not change their view on the past.

According to Harbord, the Armenian people possessed two important qualities: their being the first nation to have accepted Christianity and their rooted past: "Armenia was an organized nation a thousand years before there was one in Europe except Greece and Rome.... Armenia was the first nation to officially adopt Christianity, with that entire act involved in a pagan world." However, because the "ill-fated" Armenians were settled on the borders of the Christian world, they suffered much loss in the name of their religion: "Persians, Parthians, Saracens, Tartars and Turks have exacted more martyrs from the Armenian church in proportion to its numbers than have been sacrificed by any other race."<sup>23</sup>

Harbord's approach towards the Turks was greatly biased and racist. To him, the Turk "was a raiding nomad from Central Asia. His mainsprings of action were plunder, murder and enslavement; his methods the scimitar and the bowstring." Moseley did not hesitate to call the Turkish history of the region as disastrous as well: "The Turk has constructed little himself. On the country, he allows whatever is turned over to him to go to pieces, to deteriorate and decay." Not taking into account the Turkish architectural works crowding Istanbul, which were mentioned with much praise by Western travelers, Moseley went on to accuse the Turks: "The Turks in Constantinople are simply camping on the remains of a once famous and well built city whose remains are now shown to the visitor generally surrounded or surmounted by shacks and hovels with their filthy inmates." Hornbeck, the expert on politics in the mission, also confirmed the prejudices of his superiors: "The Turks conquered but they conferred no benefits."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 5.

George van Horn Moseley, Appendix J: Military Problem of a Mandatory, **HMMA**, **184.02102/ 15**, p.25

The interventions the Great Powers had carried out in the nineteenth century for their own interests and the resulting chaos seemed fair to Harbord. The only issue bothering him was that the Armenians were not separated from the Empire at once, and were still subject to the Turkish oppression. He believed that as a consequence of the Turkish “massacres” since 1876, thousands of “helpless” Armenians had perished. Harbord also devoted one and a half pages to the post-1915 events and mentioned several cases incriminating the Turks.<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, the source for the cases he quoted was the missionaries working in Sivas. The real source, which Harbord could not identify openly, was nobody but Marry L. Graffam.

Following all these biased and partial statements, Harbord contradictorily states that the Turks and Armenians coexisted for centuries, and could possibly continue to do so were it not for the outside interventions: “There is much to show that left to themselves the Turk and the Armenian when left without official instigation have hitherto been able to live together in peace. Their existence side by side on the same soil for five centuries unmistakably indicates their interdependence and mutual interest.”<sup>26</sup> According to Harbord, the Great Powers continued to intervene for their own interests. Hence, they would have much responsibility for the resulting chaos and problems:

The activity of foreign military officers in Asiatic Turkey is very noticeable at this time. The moral responsibility for present unrest throughout Turkey is very heavy on foreign powers that pending the action of the Peace Conference are using the interval to spread propaganda for themselves, and have apparently resumed

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Stanley K. Hornbeck, Appendix A; Political Factors and Problems, **HMMA, 184.02102/6**, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp. 6-8.

The allegations regarding the Ottoman history in the memorandum presented by the Joint Armenian Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference greatly overlapped with General Harbord’s approach: “The whole history of Armenia under Ottoman domination during six centuries has been but one long martyrdom with periodical massacres; but those persecutions assumed a particularly virulent character in the last 50 years, since, that is, the Armenians have claimed the amelioration of their lot.” A. Ahoronian, Boghos Nubar, The Armenian Question: Before the Peace Conference, **HMMA, 184.021/94**, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p. 13.

the old policy of intrigue which has so long characterized the great powers of Europe in their intercourse with this unhappy country.<sup>27</sup>

Harbord appeared to be unaware of the contradictions in his writings. The actual reason for all these contradictions in the main report and appendices was obvious. During its trip the Harbord mission realized the huge differences between the realities in the region and the existing knowledge and convictions in the West. However, the mission members for some reason could not adopt a position to fundamentally reject the biased information and propaganda.

### **The Current Situation and Problems in the Region**

#### **The Population Structure in the Region**

Following this contradictory introduction Harbord explained the findings with respect to the population structure in the region. The claims of the Armenian lobby regarding the Armenian population were mistaken. The Armenians were the minority throughout the region: "Even before the war the Armenians were far from being in the majority in the region claimed as Turkish Armenia, excepting in a few places." Moreover, despite the great loss of Turkish population during the war, the Armenians could not constitute a majority in the region where an independent Armenia would be established even if all the refugees returned:

In the proposition to carve an independent Armenia from the Ottoman Empire there is something to be said on the part of the Turk; namely that his people even when all the refugees shall have returned to their homes, will be in the majority in the region contemplated for a reconstituted Armenia –and they were in the majority before the deportations took place."<sup>28</sup>

Jackson, the population expert in the mission, confirmed Harbord's conclusion. In addition, although acting in a biased fashion Jackson accepted to a great extent the Armenian and Greek population statistics to be correct. The results of the inquiry appeared to prove the data in independent sources. Not even settling for this, Jackson also tried to separately count every Muslim regional and cultural group in order to show the Turkish population reduced.

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<sup>27</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 14-15.

<sup>28</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 9, 26.

To him, Kurds, Lazs, Circassians, and Alawites were separate ethnic groups, and they would go their own way were the Ottoman rule come to an end.

However, none of these attempts changed the result. The Turks were the majority in eastern Anatolia claimed by the Armenians. If those Muslim groups superficially separated by Jackson were included in the count, the Turks would make up the absolute majority:

Anatolia is Turkish both as to population and institution it should remain Turkish, but under mandatory power.... There is no sufficient reason for partitioning it, that is for leaving portions of it in the hands of different countries, as at present, Greece, Italy and France. Perpetuation of the present occupations is altogether impracticable.

Turkish Armenia is still Turkish soil; its present population has a Turkish majority, excepting in parts of the easternmost provinces.<sup>29</sup>

Going even further, Jackson added that “the Russian Armenia, where the Armenians currently constituted the majority was historically a region in which the Turks once had been the majority.”<sup>30</sup>

The conclusion Jackson reached by analyzing the census data was another blow to the Armenian cause. He believed that establishing a separate Armenian state was impractical, let alone the territories the Armenians claimed. Despite all his sympathy for the Armenians, he was for the consideration of the region as one political whole:

Upon examination it appears that it would be impracticable to establish an Armenian state without at the same time disposing satisfactorily of the remaining portions of the Turkish Empire and securing or creating guarantees with regard to the internal conditions and the external relationships of the Trans-Caucasian countries. Opinion has been found expressed almost universally that separate and exclusive treatment of Armenia alone would be inexpedient. In the course of conversations with many observes, the writer has found none but Armenians, and a few only of Armenians advocating any such limitation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> In order to prove his views Jackson used 11 separate population statistical charts he had compiled from various sources. Please see John Price Jackson, *People of Turkey in Europe, Asia Minor, and the Caucasus*, **HMMA, 184.02102/11**, pp. 7-28, 57.

Though he divided the Muslim population into various ethnic groups in his report, Hornbeck also came to the same conclusion. Please see HORNBECK, **op.cit.**, pp. 5-6.

<sup>30</sup> JACKSON, **op.cit.**, p. 57

<sup>31</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 52.

### **Extensive Opposition to Armenians and its Consequences**

The most surprising finding for the members of the Harbord mission was that all the peoples in the region felt animosity towards the Armenians. Contrary to the propaganda and the widespread conviction in the West, the peoples in the region did not see the Armenians as an “aggrieved” and “helpless” nation “subject to massacres.” It can be seen in the pages of the report that the mission members had a hard time accounting for this situation.

Though he accepted the pro-Armenian propaganda texts as historical realities and praised the Armenians as a nation in the beginning of his report, Harbord felt the need to recount the knowledge and impressions he had gained during the inquiry trip in the subsequent pages of the reports and between the lines: “Notwithstanding his many estimable qualities, his culture, and his tenacity or race and religion, the Armenian generally does not endear himself to those of other races with whom he comes in contact. The Armenian stands among his neighbors very much as the Jew stands in Russia and Poland, having as he does, the strong and pre-eminent ability of that race.”

However, the actual surprising thing for Harbord was that even the American missionaries and aid workers who devoted all their lives to the Armenians liked the Turks more as a people: “Even the American missionary who in so many instances has risked his life for his Armenian charges, does not as a rule personally like the Armenian as well as he does the more genial but indolent and pleasure-loving Turk.”<sup>32</sup>

Harbord tried to justify the animosity towards the Armenians as resulting from their acquiring bad qualities due to living under foreign rule for centuries: “Such slavery leaves some inevitable and unlovable traces upon the character.” However, in subsequent pages he states the main reason:

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<sup>32</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p. 26.

Many observers of the era agreed: “*It is noticeable fact, however, that the regard of Europeans and Americans who come into contact with them [Armenians] decreases as their contact with them increases.*” From 2nd Lt. C. Amry Jr. Memorandum on the Present Situation in Trans-Caucasia, 9 July 1919, **HMMA, 184.021/ 27**



“The Armenian is not guiltless of blood himself; his memory is long and reprisals are due, and will doubtless be made if opportunity offers.”<sup>33</sup>

Harbord recounts what the local Muslims told him about their agony and hopelessness at the various stages of the inquiry trip as follows:

Kurds appealed to this Mission with tears in their eyes to protect them from Armenians who had driven them from their villages, appealing to be allowed to go back to their homes for protection against the rigorous winter now rapidly approaching on the high interior plateau.

The Kurds claim that many of their people were massacred under the most cruel circumstances by Armenian irregulars accompanying the Russian bolshevists when the Russian army went to pieces after the collapse of the empire. Similar claim is made by the people of Erzerum who point to burned buildings in which hundreds of Turks perished, and by the authorities of Hassan-Kala, who give the number of villages destroyed by the Armenians in their great plain as forty-three. According to British Consul Stevens at Batum, these statements were verified by a commission which examined into the allegations, and on which Armenians had a representation.<sup>34</sup>

The local people could not help but realize the Armenian political and military attempts to incite the intervention of Great Powers both prior to and after the WWI: “The Armenians have constantly called for intervention from without, which in itself has irritated the Turks.... The Armenians were also located on the southern high way over which Russia pressed toward Constantinople, Russia intrigued among them, and the Turkish Government considered them disloyal.”<sup>35</sup> It was well known that the Armenians wished to eliminate the majority and establish their own state.

Taking into consideration the massacres carried out by the Armenians, the animosity of the local people towards them and the massacres the

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<sup>33</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp. 6, 26.

<sup>34</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 26-27.

The Inquiry Commission Batum Consular Stevens referred to was established because LTC Rawlinson had reported about the past and ongoing Armenian massacres. The results of the investigation demonstrated that the Armenians were involved in massacres not only after the Russian battalions had withdrawn, but also after the British Brigade left Kars. See Alfred Rawlinson, **Adventures in the Near East 1918-1922**, (London: Andrew Melrose, 1924), pp. 196, 215, 218, 220-224, 227-228.

HORNBECK, **op.cit.**, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> HORNBECK, **op.cit.**, p. 7.

Greeks had carried out during their occupation of Smyrna, and it was not a right and long-term solution to carve out an independent Armenia from territories ripped apart from Anatolia. Harbord explains this as follows:

From the standpoint of this Mission the capacity of the Armenian to govern himself is something to be tested under supervision. With that still in doubt the possibility of an Armenian minority being given authority over a Moslem majority against whom its hearts are filled with rancor for centuries of tyranny, may well justify apprehension, particularly since the unfortunate occurrences at Smyrna.<sup>36</sup>

Moseley agreed. Given the fact that the Yerevan Republic was not even able to govern the territories already under its occupation, a greater and independent Armenia would be a bigger failure: "In no case have the Armenians shown ability to administer territory included within their boundaries and occupied by Tartars, Kurds and Georgians, that is they have not been able to keep the peace, and their administration has not been satisfactory to the inhabitants except when these inhabitants are Armenians."

Also considering the facts that the Armenians were not the majority anywhere and lived sparsely throughout the region, establishing an independent Armenia would have been as futile as establishing a German state in America:

It is a impracticable to try to solve the problem by attempting to assemble all the Armenians in the proposed state as it would be to try form a German state in America by joining Milwaukee and St. Louis with a view of assembling all the Germans in that area.<sup>37</sup>

### **An Assessment of the Political Situation in the Region**

When the Harbord mission arrived in the Ottoman Empire, the region was going through extraordinary days. The ceasefire signed in the aftermath of the crushing military defeat had led to the de facto collapse of the state. Some part of the country was under occupation. Not only was the military almost fully demobilized, but the political and governing organs were not able to function due to the obstructions of the occupying forces. Various ethnic groups and tribes were being incited to rebel against the existing authority. In sum, the order and peace had broken down throughout the Empire.

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<sup>36</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> MOSELEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 7-8, 22.

In its intensive propaganda campaign the Armenian lobby alleged that various attacks had been organized against the Armenians in the region, and that the Turkish Army was preparing to invade the Yerevan Republic: "Very alarming reports had been received from Transcaucasia for several months before its departure from France, particularly as to organized attacks by the Turkish Army impending along the old international border between Turkey and Russia."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, upon setting off for their inquiry trip the Harbord mission expected to encounter chaos and anarchy. However, they soon found out that the real situation was not as such.

First of all, the authority of the Ottoman government headed by Damat Ferid Paşa was challenged even in İstanbul. The National Movement, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Paşa, was trying to establish order and peace throughout the country. Harbord described Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colleagues as follows: "the dignified and able chiefs of the Turkish Nationalist Movement at Sivas and Erzerum." Contrary to the claims, the National Movement tried to establish the broken order in the country, not rebel against it. The effects of this situation were visible every place the mission visited. For example, unlike the claims otherwise, the Armenian refugees gradually returned to their homes. They did so despite the warnings of the occupying forces:

On the Turkish side of the border where Armenians have returned they are gradually recovering their property, and in some cases have received rent for it... We saw nothing to indicate that Armenians who have returned to their homes in Turkey are in danger of their lives, but their natural apprehension has been greatly increased by unbalanced advice given by officers on the withdrawal of foreign troops from certain regions."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p. 36.

General Moseley also agreed that the Armenian allegations were all lies. "At the time of our leaving Paris we were informed by the Armenian delegation that the Turks under the leadership of Moustapha Kemal Pasha were making extensive preparations to attack Armenia from across the border. That Moustapha Kemal Pasha had distributed 60.000 rifles with ammunition and grenades to the Turkish civilian population in the vicinity of Erzerum and had organized divisions and bands. It was stated that one purpose of this movement was to prevent the return of Armenians to their homes.... we saw nothing to confirm this Paris report.... No evidence of any crossing of the frontier by organizations of the Turkish regular army was found." MOSELEY, **op.cit.**, p. 21.

<sup>39</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp. 10-14.

The Turkish authorities helped the returning Armenians despite all setbacks. Not only the Armenians but the Turkish peasants were also in dire straits: "Things are little if any better with the peasant Turk in the same region. They are practically serfs equally destitute, and equally defenseless against the winter." According to Harbord, there were two reasons for this. Most of the Turkish villages had been destroyed: "Villages are in ruins, some being destroyed when the Armenians fled or were deported; some during the Russian advance; some on the retreat of the Armenian irregulars and Russians after the fall of the empire." Second, the bulk of the adult population had perished during the war. "Not over twenty percent of the Turkish peasants who went to war have returned. The absence of men between the ages of twenty and thirty-five is very noticeable."<sup>40</sup>

According to Harbord, the most important issue destroying the security and peace in the region was Smyrna's occupation and the massacres in which the Greeks were engaged. The news and propaganda spread by the Great Powers also made the situation worse. Moseley, who had carried out an investigation in Smyrna and its vicinity, talked about the Greek deeds and the heavy consequences of the occupation as follows:

The occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks appears to have been uncalled for; the actual execution of the occupation has been bungled by the Greek political and military authorities and it has demonstrated the total unfitness of the Greek to handle such a situation. The murders, massacres and atrocities which were committed under the eyes of Greeks officers and officials condemns their whole establishment before the world as barbaric and totally unfit to be in trusted with a duty involving the establishment of peace and order and the administration of peoples of other governments and of other creeds.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 25.

MOSELEY, **op.cit.**, p. 14.

"The occupation of Smyrna, whether authorized or permitted or merely tolerated by the Allies, occasioned great excitement and resentment. It was accompanied by atrocious misbehaviour on the part of the Greeks, both military and civilians. The Turkish people saw one of their best ports put in the hands of a people whom they hate; they saw outribiuds occurring under the very eyes of the Allied battleships; they looked upon this as evidence of insincerity on the part of the Powers and an indication that the integrity of Turkey was menaced." HONBECK, **op.cit.**,p. 23.

The Major Noel affair that broke out at the time of the Harbord mission's visit to Mardin and Malatya was illustrative of how the Great Powers had threatened the regional security and peace for their own interests. Despite all the refusal and refutations of the British commanders, it was not a separate incident involving Major Noel alone: "I am convinced that the British authorities were responsible for the entire affair; that Noel did what he did under instructions from his government. The whole incident is a good example of the way affairs are going in Turkey."<sup>42</sup>

Despite the difficulties stated above, the mission members were impressed by the National Movement's success in running the country and providing security and peace: "Apparently the Turkish government inefficient and wicked as it sometimes is, can control its people and does govern." However, the situation in Trans-Caucasia was just the opposite. Despite all the claims to the contrary, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan were in total anarchy. There was no protection of life. "In the region once policed by Russia the relaxation from its iron hand has been great, and life and property are unsafe in many regions. Our Mission was fired upon by Kurds in Russian Armenia and several motor cars struck by bullets, and over half the party were kept prisoner one night by Moslems who claimed to have been driven from their villages by Armenians. In Azarbaijan we were also fired upon."<sup>43</sup>

According to Harbord, the problems in Trans-Caucasia were not related to security and peace alone. The three governments did not have a real state structure: "The three governments from an occidental standpoint are now thoroughly inefficient, without credit, and undoubtedly corrupt. Alone each faces inextricable financial difficulty. Religions differences, added to racial, threaten to embroil them unless brought under a common control." In addition, the Russian influence in the region was considerable. Especially the Armenians preferred the Russian rule over their current situation: "They [Russian Armenians] absorbed many Russian manners and customs, and the wealth and ability of the race gave them a predominant role in the Transcaucasus under Russia.... They are friendly to Denikin and a

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<sup>42</sup> MOSELEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 16-18.

<sup>43</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp.11-12.

reconstituted Russia, and their refusal to join Georgia and Azerbaijan against Denikin caused the break-up of the Transcaucasian Confederation. The dominant civilization in Transcaucasia is Russian. Everything worth while in the country is due to Russian money and Russian enterprise.”<sup>44</sup>

As a result of comprehensive surveys, Brinton, the public management expert in the Mission, did not consider the future of the Transcaucasian republics bright. If an effective mandate regime were not set up, they would have no chance of standing on their feet alone:

On the whole, the survey of government institutions in Transcaucasia gives the impression of much good work and much wasted effort; of many excellent public servants and an army of incompetent and lazy ones; of dishonesty in public office and of a gross exaggeration of political life at the expense of more productive occupations; and finally of a total misdirection of “national spirit” and an almost tragic duplication of effort on the part of the three groups of leaders, many of whom are patriotic and more of whom are probably corrupt, who are trying to impose upon a district which above all needs strong central control, an elaborate and suicidal system of isolated state-hood.<sup>45</sup>

What is interesting was that the Harbord mission did not take into account the developments occurring in Russia. No matter which side won the war it was a well-known fact that the Russians would wish to re-conquer Transcaucasia. The mission members had acquired a lot of information about this fact during their inquiry trip. However, this information was not clearly reflected in the mission’s report. But one can infer from reading between the lines in the report that such a threat did exist. The research for this dissertation did not reveal any information as to why the mission did not pay much attention to Russia.

### **Assessment of the Military Situation in the Region**

Being an officer himself, Harbord paid close attention to the military aspect of the American mandate: “Our country has so recently sent its young manhood to war overseas, and the heart of the nation is as soldiers in distant lands that the greatest interest attaches to the military problem involved in

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<sup>44</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 18-19.

<sup>45</sup> Jasper Y. Brinton, Appendix B; Government of Turkey and the Transcaucasus, **HMMA, 184.02102/7**, p. 88.

any mandate to which our people may ever give considerations.”<sup>46</sup> As a sign of importance he attached to this issue, Harbord assigned General Moseley the task of writing of the appendix on it. Similarly, as the U.S. administration considered the military aspect of the mandate important, it published this appendix as opposed to the other ones.<sup>47</sup>

According to Moseley, the most important military structure was the National Movement, for the Ottoman government ceased to have any power: “The military situation in Turkey is at present largely wrapped up in the Nationalist movement, as we found the government of the Sultan actually exercising very little authority except in the near vicinity of Constantinople.” Moreover, it had a superior advantage. All the leaders of the National Movement were respected and successful: “The Nationalist movement is without doubt patriotic. Many of its active leaders are men of high repute.... All these leaders have worked with every means to arouse the local population. In all the talk of the leaders there is much said about fighting to the last drop of blood before they would see the partition of Turkey, and that Smyrna must be returned to them, an independent Armenia must not be permitted and a foreign power not placed over them.”<sup>48</sup>

The Turkish units under good and experienced commanders had been weakened due to the military defeat and the implementation of the decisions of the ceasefire. In terms of armaments, equipment, and logistics they were in bad shape: “The Turkish army presents today a very sad spectacle. The organizations we inspected generally lacked clothing and equipment. Both officers and men were very irregularly and poorly supplied and paid. Many units out of touch with Constantinople have to maintain themselves by local

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<sup>46</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> Moseley’s appendix was published at the same time as General Harbord’s report. See George van Horn Moseley, **Senate Document 281, Mandatory over Armenia: Report Made to Maj. Gen. James G. Harbord, United States Army, Chief of American Military Mission, on the Military Problem of Mandatory over Armenia**, (Washington; Government Printing Office, 1920)

<sup>48</sup> MOSELEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 10-12.

requisitions. The commissioned personnel are discouraged and demobilized soldiers are met everywhere on the highways.”<sup>49</sup>

In this state not only did the Turkish army pose no threat to the Yerevan Republic, but it also did not have any such intention unless provoked. The most important goal now seemed to be to maintain the integrity and unity of the country. Though the Turkish army was in such shambles, the Turks had been known as good soldiers for centuries. It should not be forgotten that they could reach a deterrent force within a very short time: “The Turks have been soldiers for centuries. They are courageous and good fighters, especially when their fanaticism is aroused.”<sup>50</sup>

The military situation in the Transcaucasian republics was worse. This was the first time they had set up their own armies; their military traditions and abilities were weak. In addition, the three republics had border disputes among each other. For example, due to the eight border disputes the Yerevan Republic was involved in military conflict with the Turkish, Georgian, and Azeri forces. According to Moseley, of the three, the Armenians had the best prepared army. But in terms of military qualities, the Azeris were much farther ahead. However, none of them was capable of resistance in case of a serious attack.<sup>51</sup>

According to Moseley, any state to establish a mandate throughout the region would encounter two major difficulties. The first was about providing peace and order and setting up a local police force. The second was about disarming and demobilizing the military units and militia groups. Moseley considered these difficulties in a rather optimistic light. He believed that the various ethnic groups in the region unanimously asked for an American mandate. Therefore, none of the groups was expected to start an armed resistance against the mandate regime. Despite this optimistic approach, Moseley calculated that in the initial stage two divisions (a total of 69,450 soldiers) supported by air force and technical classes were needed. He also

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<sup>49</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 20-21.

<sup>51</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 32-41.



pointed out, though inexplicitly, that additional soldiers would be required for the training of local police, work on the infrastructure, and humanitarian aid. However, he did not take into consideration how the U.S. administration and public opposing the dispatching of a limited number of soldiers to Russia would accept the deployment of a higher number of soldiers to the region for a longer period of time.<sup>52</sup> In other words, Moseley's analysis was a military work based on optimistic assumptions. The political aspect of the issue was not considered at all.

Harbord shared Moseley's optimism. He also believed that everybody without opposition would accept the American mandate. But he was doubtful about the necessary number of American troops. He not only thought that it was hard to provide the necessary number of troops, but also suspected that assumptions would turn out wrong given the ever-changing conditions: "Estimates of the necessary number of mandatory troops vary greatly, -from twenty- five thousand to two hundred thousand. Conditions change so rapidly that plans today for the use of troops might be obsolete in six months.... Uncertainty as to the time the mandate will be tendered and accepted make estimates merely approximate. Under conditions as they exist today the undersigned believes that a force of two American divisions, with several hundred extra officers, or a total force of fifty-nine thousand, would be ample."<sup>53</sup>

Harbord explained the possible tasks of American soldiers even more clearly. However, it is noteworthy that he did not expect any catastrophic scenario and consider extraordinary situations:

- (a) The suppression of any disorder attendant upon withdrawal of occupying troops and the initiation of the government.
- (b) The maintenance of order until a constabulary could be organized for the rural police of the mandatory region.
- (c) To help organize and train a native constabulary.
- (d) To constitute a reserve for moral effect; for possible actual use in supplementing the local constabulary in case of emergency; and for the prestige of the mandatory government in a region which has been governed by force since the beginning of history.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 41-46.

<sup>53</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 32.

Harbord was rather optimistic to believe that the number of American soldiers could be reduced within the first three years, and the tasks could be easily transferred to the local police forces. Thus, the initial high military outlays would be lowered over time: "For the first year \$ 88,500,000, at the end of two years perhaps \$59,000,000, at the end of three years \$ 44,250,000." But his optimistic figures, taken together with the other expenditures, were high enough to anger the members of the U.S. Congress. However, according to Harbord, to establish a successful mandate regime was possible only with vast expenditures, so that an effective and dashing military outlook could be shown. For the Easterners only respect force and deem military prestige extremely highly:

It is very important that a proper military at the naval setting be given the mandatory government at the beginning. In no part of the world is prestige so important, and in no region have people been so continuously governed by force. The mandatory could at the outset afford to take unnecessary risks among such a population in densest ignorance as to our resources and our national traits.<sup>55</sup>

### **An Assessment of the Economic Situation in the Region**

As mentioned at the beginning of this work, an important aspect of the debates concerning the establishment of an American mandate over the whole or some parts of the Ottoman Empire was related to the economic interests a mandate regime would bring to the U.S. Hence, one would expect Harbord to touch on this issue in his report. However, except for a short paragraph on the economic cost of the mandate regime, Harbord did not give any information about economic interests in the main report. Why did General Harbord hesitate to mention the economic interests a mandate regime would present to the U.S.?

Contrary to various opinions, this had nothing to do with him being an officer. The fact that he served as the president at one of the most important companies in the U.S. for years after his retirement is the best proof that he was not a person who did not pay much attention to economic and business life. It is argued that the actual reason had to do with the fact that during the

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<sup>55</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 34-36.

inquiry trip Harbord saw how the Great Powers had destroyed the Ottoman Empire for their own economic interests. He believed that if the U.S. were to assume the mandate, it would have to show that it did so for humanitarian reasons, not for economic ones. Otherwise, the U.S. would have been different from the other imperialist forces:

The problems for the United States would not be identical with those of any other nation which might undertake it. A not too sympathetic old World, without pretensions to altruism or too much devotion to ideals, will except of America in the Near East the same lofty standards shown in Cuba and the Philippines, -the development of peoples rather than of material resources and commerce. Distance, our time-honored detachment from the affairs of the Old World, our innocence from participation in the intrigues which have hitherto characterized intercourse with the Turk, our freedom from bias through the necessity of considering Moslem public opinion in other parts of the world, and the fact that we have no financial interest in the great foreign debt of the ottoman Empire, give America a viewpoint and an advantage in approaching the situation that are enjoyed by no other great power... We would again out that if America accepts a mandate for the region visited by this Mission, it will undoubtedly do so from a strong sense of international duty, and at the unanimous desire, so-expressed at least, of its colleagues in the League of Nation.<sup>56</sup>

Five of the twelve appendices in the report concerned economy. All of the existing information was gathered and compiled into these detailed and comprehensive appendices. In this regard, they represent the first proper analysis of the economy of the Ottoman Empire and Trans-Caucasia. Given the depth and details of the information contained therein, the appendices are valuable sources even today. Of course, some of the data are debatable. The authors of the appendices were honest enough to point out that the available quantitative data were questionable and not illustrative of the real situation, and that their aim was to make preparations for a more comprehensive work to be carried out later. For example, before beginning his work, Cumberland pointed out that: "Any attempt to analyze Turkish finances is seriously limited by the dearth of statistics, as well as by their unreliability. The present study, therefore, merely tries to present a concrete picture of the salient features of the financial system, and neither pretends to

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<sup>56</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 31-37.

describe it in detail nor to include an exhaustive statistical record of its actual condition.”<sup>57</sup>

Only the two of the five appendices dealing with economic issues were both technical and considered their repercussions on the political and international areas. These were Cumberland’s financial analysis and Mears’ commercial and industrial analysis. Here the main findings of these two appendices will be discussed.

Cumberland and Mears analyzed the issues optimistically, but they also tried to reveal the realities as much as possible. Despite their optimism, however, close scrutiny of their writings reveals that it was unlikely that the U.S. would reap any economic benefits from a mandate over the short and mid range. A considerable political transformation in the region that had struck the mission as being as chaotic required great expenditures without bringing much profit: “The big constructive work to be undertaken in Turkey would be for many years unprofitable to us from a money standpoint but would constitute the basis upon which our administration would be judged a success or failure.... There is no assurance that within the next twenty years the expenses of exploitation will be met by equivalent receipts.... far-off Turkey is a country of good ultimate possibilities but on the whole with no greater opportunities than are to be found in Canada, Mexico or in undeveloped areas of the United States.”<sup>58</sup>

Transcaucasia was economically more of a problematic region. Although Baku appeared to be attractive to business circles as a field of investment, Transcaucasia had a bleak future given the political uncertainty, lack of ties with markets, and the discovery and the cheap and reliable extraction of new petroleum resources in other parts of the world: “Transcaucasia is not Mexico and does not offer a field for large scale investments or bonanza profits.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> W. W. Cumberland, Public and Private Finance of Turkey and the Transcaucasus, **HMMA, 184.02102/8**, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Eliot G. Mears, Commerce and Industry in Turkey and the Transcaucasia, **HMMA, 184.02102/9**, p. 23.

<sup>59</sup> CUMBERLAND, **op.cit.**, p. 57.

Mears and Cumberland were of the opinion that the existing problems could be solved in the short and mid term with smart economic management and long-term investments. However, assuming a mandate without first resolving the economic interventions and capitulations of the Allies would create economic chaos. The resolution of this problem was possible only with the Great Powers abandoning their vested interests in the Ottoman Empire:

Before the United States takes a mandate for any part of Turkey she should assure herself that her financial administration would not be throttled by foreign vested interests. Unfortunately, Turkey has long been a hot-bed of conflicting foreign financial interest, and the mere fact of political interference by the United States would not straighten out these entanglements. In other words, the United States should specify before and not after she takes a mandate what conditions will have to be met. For practical purposes Turkish finances were, before the war, in the hands of France, Germany and Great Britain. Unless this state of affairs can be changed the United States would merely be inviting trouble by accepting mandate.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, the actual reason why the Ottoman economic and financial structure had broken down was exposed. It also demonstrated to what degree the American diplomats, who had opposed the removal of the capitulations during the war, but who worked so much to maintain them during the Lausanne Peace Talks, were biased.

After assessing the economic structure, problems and solutions in the Ottoman Empire and Trans-Caucasia, Mears and Cumberland reached the same conclusion: If there was going to be an American mandate, it had to be over the whole region. Although these two regions had never been parts of the same economic whole, the only way to attract the investments of the American economic circles was to integrate them into an economic whole:

In my opinion, the commercial benefits to the United States would be greatest if Turkey and Trans-caucasia were taken over under a single friendly mandate. Although these two sections are not economically related, the resulting concentration of territory would

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<sup>60</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 37-38.

Regarding this issue Mears stated the following: "One of the greatest problems that the United States would face at the outset, in taking a mandate for Turkey, would be in connection with past, present and future concessions.... There is no country in the world that presents greater difficulties in this respect, and an absolutely firm stand on the part of the United States would be necessary at the outset." MEARS, **op.cit.**, pp. 20-21.

call the attention of our business men to the possibilities of this whole region.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Final Evaluation on the American Mandate**

While Harbord investigated the region's history and present status in the first nineteen pages of his report, he made the final evaluation in the remaining twenty-five pages that constituted the main part.

Within the framework of the fundamental findings of the mission mentioned above, Harbord came to the conclusion that a mandate was to be established by all means since he was of the conviction that it was impossible for the peoples of the area to administer themselves in peace and achieve economic and social prosperity and welfare without outside help and supervision. As already stated, in a short while, Harbord's mission unanimously accepted that there was no other serious alternative except for the U.S. According to them, the U.S. was the only state which did not have imperialist and economic ambitions, which was preferred by everyone in the area and which had the required potential to do it. Therefore, now there were two subjects to be discussed: The area that would be under the administration of the mandate to be established and the problem whether the U.S. would assume the mandate or not.

All the political, military, social and economic evaluations made after the investigation trips executed so far had pointed at the same conclusion: The creation of a single mandatory administration for Armenia would create great problems and it was not possible for it to survive. If a mandatory administration was going to be created, all of Thrace, Anatolia, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan had to be put under the same mandatory administration:

A Power which should undertake a mandatory for Armenia and Transcaucasia without control of the contiguous territory of Asia Minor – Anatolia- and of Constantinople, with its hinterland of Roumelia would undertake it under most unfavorable and trying conditions, so difficult as to make the cost almost prohibitive; the maintenance of law and order and the security of life and property undertain [sic.]; and ultimate success extremely doubtful.... Conceded that there shall be a mandate for Armenia and Transcaucasia, and one for Constantinople and Anatolia, There are

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<sup>61</sup> MEARS, **op.cit.**, pp. I, 76.

many considerations that indicate the desirability of having such mandates exercised by the same power. If separate Powers exercised such mandates the inevitable jealousies, hatreds, exaggerated separatist tendencies, and economic difficulties would compel failure.... A single mandatory for the Turkish Empire and the Transcaucasus would be the most economical solution.... There is no wisdom in now incorporating Turkish territory in a separate Armenia, -no matter what the aspirations of the Armenians.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, Harbord, clearly acquiesced to the borders that had been accepted at the Sivas Congress. Since there was no mention of a detailed map, it is unclear to what degree the borders that Harbord had in mind fell into line with those of the National Pact (*Misakı Milli*). However, that they were quite similar is certain. Harbord's acquiescence of this situation alone was by all means a great support to the National Movement, because, no matter the reasons, Harbord was against the disintegration of the remaining territories of the empire.<sup>63</sup>

According to Harbord, the people of the region also took the idea of such a mandate administration seriously. Nevertheless, the Armenian lobby in the U.S. definitely did not want Armenia to be included in a mandatory administration that would cover all of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Patriarchate and the clergy who had shared similar opinions with Harbord at the outset changed their minds due to the pressure exerted most probably by the Armenian lobby and began to ask for a separate mandate for Armenia:

The Armenian Patriarch, the head of the Armenian Protestants and others at Constantinople, on our return from Armenia called and volunteered the belief that the Armenian question could not be settled within the boundaries of that country, and that they were prepared to pass under a single mandate which should include the other parts of the Turkish Empire. In a later written statement, however, they modified this, stating that while 'Different nations of this empire may enjoy the help of the same mandatory power' they felt that to bring Armenia under the same system of administration as that of the Turks would defeat the object of the development of Armenian ideals.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp. 20-25

<sup>63</sup> Peter F. Sugar, "A Reinterpretation of the Significance of General James G. Harbord's Mission", **Uluslararası Atatürk Konferansı 10-11 Kasım 1980**, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üni. Yayınları, 1980), s. 12-13

<sup>64</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp.23-24

Harbord did not have any suspicions towards the Turkish side. To him, all the different ethnic groups on the Turkish side who wanted to maintain the unity of the Ottoman Empire were in favor of an American mandate. But, it was also obvious that they would fight to death to prevent the disintegration of the country. Harbord expressed that particularly Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colleagues held this opinion too. Harbord clearly realized that the principal authority in the country was the Nationalist Movement:

It has been very evident to this mission that Turkey would not object to a single disinterested Power taking a mandate for her territory as outlined in the Armistice with the Allies, and that it could be accomplished with a minimum of foreign soldiery, where an attempt to carve out territory for any particular region would mean a strong foreign force in constant occupation for many years. The aim of the Nationalist, or National Defense Party, as its adherents style it, as stated by Mustapha Kemal Pasha, its head, is the preservation of the territorial integrity of the empire under a mandatory of a single disinterested Power, preferably America.<sup>65</sup>

Even though the conclusion that Harbord reached was proper for the İstanbul government and some circles of intellectuals, it was not good enough for Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colleagues. As discussed in Chapter Two, during their meeting in Sivas, even though Mustafa Kemal Paşa clearly had stated that they would only welcome foreign aid, Harbord had misunderstood this statement as an affirmative answer for an American mandate. Whereas, Moseley, who was also present at the meeting, in the appendix he had written to the report gives us the information that there really was some misunderstanding. Moseley repeated in the report what Mustafa Kemal Paşa had said at the meeting:

In regard to the question of a mandate, the idea of the Nationalist Party seems to be to accept scientific, industrial and economical assistance only. Their sovereignty and independence must not be interfered with. In conference with Moustapha Kemal Pasha and his principal assistants he stated it was necessary for his party to insist upon such conditions. Nothing less would have been acceptable to the congress.<sup>66</sup>

Why did Harbord fall into error in such an important subject? There is no clear answer to this question in the archives. However, to my understanding,

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<sup>65</sup> **Ibid**, p. 24

<sup>66</sup> MOSELEY, **op.cit.**, p.12



these are the reasons: First, Harbord misunderstood Mustafa Kemal Paşa's statement of their positive stance toward foreign aid as approval for a mandate. Second, he was influenced by the statements of the pro-mandate intellectuals in İstanbul who had expressed confidently that all Turks wanted an American mandate.

Harbord in the final part of the report submitted the pros and cons of the American mandate. As stated above, before Harbord began to write his report, he personally met with all the members of the mission and received their opinions about the mandate. Having determined all the reasons for and against the mandate in accordance with the opinions and impressions, he started to write his report. He avoided expressing a final opinion about the mandate because, in his opinion, the only task of the mission was to determine the situation of the region through investigation and present it to the U.S. administration and Congress who were the real decision makers: "The Mission has not felt that it is expected to submit a recommendation as to the United States accepting a mandate in the Near East. It, therefore, simply submits the following summary of reasons for and against such action, based on all information obtainable during six weeks constant contact with the peoples of the region."<sup>67</sup>

As he was doing it, he chose to present the reasons for and against the mandate in a parallel way which was the format used by Mears in his proposal.<sup>68</sup>

REASONS FOR		REASONS AGAINST
1. As one of the chief contributors to the formation of the League of Nations, the United States is morally bound to accept the obligations and responsibilities of a mandatory power.		1. The United States has prior and nearer foreign obligations and ample responsibilities with domestic problems growing out of the war.

<sup>67</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, p 38

<sup>68</sup> Gidney wrongly claims that General Harbord borrowed this format from Captain Hornbeck's proposal. See. James B. Gidney, **A Mandate for Armenia**, (Oberlin: The Kent State Uni. Pres, 1967), p. 187

<p>2. The insurance of world peace at the world's cross-ways, the focus of war infection since the beginning of history. Better millions for a mandate than billions for future wars.</p>		<p>2. This region has been a battleground of militarism and imperialism for centuries. There is every likelihood that ambitious nations will still maneuver for its control. It would weaken our position relative to Monroe Doctrine and probably eventually involve us with a reconstituted Russia. The taking of a mandate in this region would bring the United States into the politics of the Old World, contrary to our traditional policy of keeping free of affairs in the eastern hemisphere.</p>
<p>3. The Near East presents the greatest humanitarian opportunity of the age, -a duty for which the United States is better fitted than any other,- as witness Cuba, Porto Rico, Philippines, Hawaii, Panama and our altruistic policy of developing peoples rather than material resources alone.</p>		<p>3. Humanitarianism should begin at home. There are a sufficient number of difficult situations which call for our action within the well recognized spheres of American influence.</p>
<p>4. America is practically the unanimous choice and fervent hope of all the peoples involved.</p>		<p>4. The United States has in no way contributed to and is not responsible for the conditions, political, social or economic, that prevail in this region. It will be entirely consistent to decline the invitation.</p>

<p>5. America is already spending millions to save starving peoples in Turkey and Transcaucasia and could do this with much efficiency if in control. Whoever becomes mandatory for these regions we shall be still expected finance their Relief, and will probably eventually furnish the capital for material development.</p>	<p>5. American philanthropy and charity are world-wide. Such policy would commit us to a policy of meddling or draw upon our philanthropy to the point of exhaustion.</p>
<p>6. America is the only hope of the Armenians. They consider but one other nation, Great Britain, which they fear would sacrifice their interests to Moslem public opinion as long as she controls hundreds of millions of that faith. Others fear Britain's imperialistic policy and her habit of staying where she hoists her flag.</p> <p>For a mandatory America is not only the first choice of all the peoples of the Near East, but of each of the great powers, after itself.</p> <p>American power is adequate; its record clean; its motive above suspicion.</p>	<p>6. Other powers, particularly Great Britain and Russia, have shown continued interest in the welfare of Armenia. Great Britain is fitted by experience and government, has great resources in money and trained personnel, and though she might not be as sympathetic to Armenian aspirations, her rule would guarantee security and justice.</p> <p>The United States is not capable of sustaining a continuity of foreign. One Congress cannot bind another. Even treaties can be mollified by cutting off appropriations. Non-partisanship is difficult to attain in our government.</p>

<p>7. The mandatory would be self-supporting after an initial period of not to exceed five years. The building of railroads would offer opportunities to our capital. There would be great trade advantages not only in the mandatory region, but in the proximity to Russia, Roumania, etc. America would clean this hotbed of disease and filth as she has in Cuba and Panama.</p>		<p>7. Our country would be put to great expense, involving probably an increase of the army and navy. Large numbers of Americans would serve in a country of loathsome and dangerous diseases. It is questionable if railroads could for many years pay interest on investments in their very difficult construction. Capital for railways would not go there except on government guarantee.</p> <p>The effort and money spent would get us more trade in nearer lands than we could hope for in Russia and Roumania.</p> <p>Proximity and competition would increase the possibility of our becoming involved in conflict with the policies and ambitions of states which now our friend would be made our rivals.</p>
<p>8. Intervention would be a liberal education for our people in world politics; give outlet to a last amount of spirit and energy and would furnish a shining example.</p>		<p>8. Our spirit and energy can find scope the Atlantic which rolls between us and probable foes, our reputation for fair dealing might be impaired. Efficient supervision of a mandate at such distance would be difficult or impossible. We do not need or wish further education in world politics.</p>
<p>9. It would definitely stop further massacres of Armenians and other Christians; give justice to the Turks, Kurds, Greeks and other peoples.</p>		<p>9. Peace and justice would be equally assured under any other of the Great Powers.</p>

10. It would increase the strength and prestige of the United States abroad and inspire interest at home in the regeneration of the near East.		10. It would weaken and dissipate our strength which should be reserved for future responsibilities on the American continents and in our Far Eastern dependency. Our line of communication to Constantinople would be at the mercy of other naval powers, and especially of Great Britain, with Gibraltar and Malta, etc., on the route.
11. America has strong sentimental interests in the region; our missions and colleges.		11. These institutions have been respected even by the Turks throughout the war and the massacres; and sympathy and respect would be shown by any other mandatory.
12. If the United States does not take responsibility in this region, it is likely that international jealousies will result in a continuance of the unspeakable misrule of the Turk.		12. The Peace Conference has definitely informed the Turkish government that it may expect to go under a mandate. It is not conceivable that the League of Nations would permit further uncontrolled rule by that thoroughly discredited government.
13. "And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?"		13. The first duty of America is to its own people and its nearer neighbors. Our country would be involved in this adventure for at least a generation, and in counting the cost Congress must be prepared to advance some such sums, less such amount as the Turkish and Transcaucasian revenues could afford, for the first five years, as follows:

	FIRST YEAR	
	General government...	\$100,000,000
	Communications, railroads, etc...	20,000,000
	Relief, repatriation, education, etc....	50,000,000
	Army and Navy .....	88,500,000
	Sanitation, etc	17,000,000
	TOTAL	\$275,500,000
	SECOND YEAR	
	General government...	\$75,000,000
	Communications, railroads, etc...	20,000,000
	Relief, repatriation, education, etc....	13,000,000
	Army and Navy .....	59,000,000
	Sanitation, etc	7,264,000
	TOTAL	\$174,264,000
	THIRD YEAR	
	General government...	50,000,000
	Communications, railroads, etc...	20,000,000
	Relief, repatriation, education, etc....	4,500,000
	Army and Navy .....	44,250,000
	Sanitation, etc	5,000,000
	TOTAL	\$123,750,000
	FOURTH YEAR	
	General government...	25,000,000
	Communications, railroads, etc...	20,000,000
	Relief, repatriation, education, etc....	4,500,000
	Army and Navy .....	44,250,000
	Sanitation, etc	3,000,000
	TOTAL	96,750,000
	FIFTH YEAR	
	General government...	15,000,000
	Communications, railroads, etc...	20,000,000
	Relief, repatriation, education, etc....	4,500,000
	Army and Navy .....	44,250,000
	Sanitation, etc	2,000,000
	TOTAL	85,750,000

	Total First Year	\$ 275,000,000
	Total Second Year	174,264,000
	Total Third Year	123,750,000
	Total Fourth Year	96,750,000
	Total Fifth Year	85,750,000
	GRAND TOTAL	\$ 756,014,000
14. Here is a man's job that the world says can be better done by America than by any other. America can afford the money; she has the men; no duty to her own people would suffer; her traditional policy of isolation did not keep her from successful participation in the Great War. Shall it be said that our country lacks the courage to take up new and difficult duties? <sup>69</sup>		

Except for the seventh, all fourteen reasons for mandate that Harbord listed were based on humanitarian and sentimental grounds. However, all of the thirteen reasons against the mandate were based on the concrete interests of the U.S. Particularly, the forecasted economic cost of the mandate alone, which was given in detail in the thirteenth reason, was high enough to disturb the U.S. Congress and public. If we add the deployment of American troops to a very distant land for an unspecified period to this situation, we could say that the report created an anti-mandate effect.

Nevertheless, Harbord, after giving the reasons, concluded his report by expressing a pro-mandate attitude in a paragraph written in highly emotional sentiments. In his opinion, the American efforts in education, the aid activities in the area and the administration's attitude during the war had increased the confidence and belief of the local populace in the U.S. He wrote that as the decision about the mandate was being made, this matter should be considered. A negative answer would destroy the entire image that the U.S. had been trying to create with the efforts so far: "If we refuse to assume it, for

<sup>69</sup> HARBORD, **op.cit.**, pp. 39-43

no matter what reasons satisfactory to ourselves, we shall be considered by many millions of people as having left unfinished the task for which we entered the war, and as having betrayed their hopes.”<sup>70</sup>

## **10. THE EFFECTS OF THE REPORT**

### **Preliminary Effects**

As we have stated in the second chapter of this study, since the commissioning day of the Harbord Mission, the U.S. administration and public opinion awaited the mission's findings and conclusions with great interest. The first reports of the investigation that Harbord sent through Bristol did increase curiosity and interest and also give encouragement to the arguments about a mandate.

The statement by Harbord that the Turks were not preparing an attack, and that the news concerning the assaults and massacres against the Armenians and other Christians was not true put the already depressed Armenian lobby in a troubled situation. Additionally, he reported that the Armenian problem would not be solved by the greater Armenia that was going to be established, and if the U.S. were to assume a mandate, it would be a mistake to limit it to Armenia, a statement which strengthened the claims of the various groups opposing the Wilson administration. In short, the preliminary reports of the Harbord mission, which had been set up as a result of the efforts of Morgenthau and the pro-Armenian politicians, were great blow to the dream of Armenia and and Wilson's policy in the Middle East.

The sending of the preliminary reports did not end with the submission of the final report on October 25, 1919 to Frank L. Polk, the president of the American Peace Delegation in Paris. Polk, after meeting with Harbord and reviewing the report, sent a summary of the conclusions to the State Department the same day. The interesting thing was that the summary, which was given under seven points, was totally contrary to the approach stated by the Harbord mission.

In priority, as analyzed above, none of the fourteen humanitarian and sentimental reasons for a mandate that Harbord put for the U.S. to assume a mandate was present. But, about what Russia would do, which did not

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<sup>70</sup> **Ibid**, p. 43



appear in the report, Polk brought forth that in the fifth point of the summary: “Fifth as to US mandate: Armenian question depends on, What will be done in Turkey and What is Russia going to do? Cannot be settled in Armenia itself.” In the remaining 6 points, concrete findings and conclusions are presented:

1. A mandatory administration without İstanbul will certainly not survive.
2. The occupation of İzmir, Greek atrocities in the area and foreign propaganda destabilizes Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal Paşa is already keeping the central part under his control.
3. The refugees are returning to the homes steadily. The situation of the Turks is as bad as that of the Armenians. There is a great need for almost everything. In the areas outside the Turkish control, law and order cannot be maintained. Without İstanbul and Anatolia the mandate over Armenia can not succeed.
4. The three Caucasian republics born out of the collapse of the Tzarist Russia are corrupt, inefficient and bankrupt. They do not have the chance to survive by themselves alone.
5. Even though Syria and Mesopotamia prefer an American mandate, they have already been partitioned by France and England.
6. Should the US undertake the mandatory administration, it should not act before all foreign, political economic, military etc. interventions have been concluded.<sup>71</sup>

Polk’s summary not only remained within the State Department, but also went on to different offices and authorities of the U.S. administration, including Wilson himself.<sup>72</sup> As far as can be understood, the prominent figures of the U.S. administration preferred to settle for the summary rather than the report itself.

After Polk had gone over the report and its appendices with his assistants, in a letter dated October 31, 1919, he told the Secretary of State that he had found the report important and successful: “General Harbord has presented a remarkable report on Armenian situation, strongly urge that you

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<sup>71</sup> From Frank L. Polk to State Department, 25 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.02102/18**

<sup>72</sup> “In his telegram dated October 26th, Mr. Polk transmits summary of views of the Harbord Mission given by General Harbord arguing that the same power should have mandate over Constantinople, Anatolia, Armenia and all Trans-Caucasia.” From Robert Lansing to President Wilson, 12 November 1919, **PWW**, vol. 64, (Princeton: Princeton Uni., 1991), p. 27

give him all the time you can when he arrives and if the President is well enough, arrange an interview as I feel sure you will be impressed.”<sup>73</sup>

The investigative trip of the Harbord mission was followed closely by the British government. Since there was cooperation with the American Peace Delegation in many fields, on a daily basis, they were aware of all the reports and news that arrived in Paris. It could be said that in some cases they even found out about the developments before the U.S. administration: “Many thanks for your letter of October 14th and the paraphrase of the most interesting report from General Harbord which I am treating strictly confidentially.”<sup>74</sup>

For the British diplomats, another point as important as the assumption of the mandate in the Ottoman Empire by the U.S. was the timing of the Peace Treaty that was going to be signed with the Ottoman Empire. Despite all the pressure by the various interest groups, especially that by the Armenians, the British were of the opinion that the Ottoman Peace Treaty was not urgent and that it could be signed after the decision about the future status of Europe, which they deemed more important. In their opinion the findings of the Harbord Mission verified that attitude: “I [head of British delegation] think the [Harbord] report goes to confirm what we already thought, that there is no imminent danger of bloodshed or warfare in Turkey or in the Caucasus so far as the Turks are concerned, at any rate for the present and probably not until the Conference begins to deal with the Turkish peace.”<sup>75</sup>

Another group was closely interested in the Harbord report was definitely the Armenian lobbyists. Even though the efforts of Aharonian and Boghos Nubar, the co-chairmen of the Armenian Delegation, to learn the contents of the report were fruitless, they were relieved by the assurance given by the American diplomats that the report was not negative.<sup>76</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> From Frank L. Polk to Secretary of State, 31 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.02102/19**

<sup>74</sup> From British Delegation to Mr. William M. Buckler, 17 October 1919, **HMMA, 184.02102/2**

<sup>75</sup> **Ibid**

<sup>76</sup> HOVANNESIAN, **op.cit.**, p. 355

speculation of the press, which declared even before the mission had started its investigations that what they were going to write was very important, created even more public interest.<sup>77</sup>

According to the news that appeared in the newspapers, there was a disagreement and split between the military and civilian members of the mission.<sup>78</sup> However, as this study has shown, this information was incorrect. Except for Mears, all members of the mission were of the opinion that an American mandate was necessary. Despite some differences in thought and understanding, there had been no strong disagreement. Since no one gave any information about the report through an official statement, the press continued its imaginary news for a while. That the results of the King-Crane commission had not been revealed obviously had an effect in this situation.

When Harbord and some members of the mission arrived in the U.S. on November 11, 1919, contrary to their expectations, they were unable to meet with Wilson. Wilson got ill and had a partial paralysis on September 29, 1919 during his country wide campaign to get public support for the ratification of Versailles Treaty and the establishment of the League of Nations. No one was allowed to see him anymore. So, Harbord had to leave the report at the White House on November 12. It is unlikely that Wilson, who needed the help and supervision of his wife even for looking at the content of short notes and letters sent to him,<sup>79</sup> read the report and its appendices of 1,063 pages, excluding the maps. Furthermore, since he had already made up his mind about a mandate in Armenia, his reading of the report was not expected to make any changes. Considering our subject, the important thing was that

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<sup>77</sup> "His [Harbord's] report on the situation, which is expected late in September will bear much weight not only with the American but with all the other Allied and Associated Governments." Armenia is Left Unprotected as great Onslaught Prepares", **New York Times**, 9 August 1919

<sup>78</sup> HOVANNESIAN, **op.cit.**, p. 354

<sup>79</sup> "For seven and one-half months the president lay almost helpless in the White House. (.) For weeks and months, leaders of administration could approach the ailing man only through his wife, who took it upon herself to decide what specific written communications she would pass into her husband. The president did not meet the cabinet during this time, and his sickness grew suspicious of everyone."  
Robert H. Ferrell, **American Diplomacy: A History**, (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 1975), p. 495

President Wilson did not put the report in the legal process but kept it waiting. Despite intensive expectations and curiosity Wilson sent the report to the Senate on April 3, 1920, at a time when the *New York Times* newspaper wrote: "several months after it ceased to have any practical value." Therefore, while a large portion of the U.S. administration lacked the information about the content of the report for a long time, and had to do with the preliminary reports of the mission, Congress, which was the primary decision-maker of the issue, settled with the rumors.<sup>80</sup>

### **The Disapproval of the Versailles Peace Treaty**

Within the period of the commissioning of the Harbord mission and the submission of its final report many great changes in the domestic U.S. policy took place. The American public opinion, which had rather unwillingly participated in World War I, had the temporary joy with the conclusion of the Great War. However, starting from the early months of 1919, and effects of the ideals of the Monroe Doctrine, "the magnificent isolation" began to be felt once again. The opposition, under the leadership of Henry Cabot Lodge, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, was against a peace treaty that would bind the U.S. in any condition.

Although Wilson knew that there was a great domestic opposition to his greatest ideal of establishing a League of Nations, which would secure global peace and order under the active leadership of the U.S. He believed that he could achieve it by himself. However, this individually based attitude that excluded everybody caused him to lose the supporters within his own party. He had personally attended the Paris Peace Conference despite all the advice offered and opposition expressed. Having excluded all his closest friends and advisors during the conference, he had tried to make all of the decisions by himself. As a result, making successive mistakes, he not only transgressed all his Fourteen Points but also strengthened the ranks of the opposition. Siding with Britain on the Irish problem, he offended the Irish Americans. In the Fiume problem, with his harsh and discrediting scolding, he hurt the feelings of the Italian Americans. With his severe attitude towards Germany and the approval of the peace treaty prepared by France and

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<sup>80</sup> GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, p. 225

Britain, he lost the German Americans. Despite the intensive objections by the American General Staff, his deployment of troops to Russia as a result of the British influence, and no home deployment of the troops despite the end of the war caused him to lose esteem within the U.S. army and public opinion.<sup>81</sup>

Despite all these, Wilson, conviction that he would win the struggle, submitted the Versailles Peace Treaty to the Senate for approval on July 10, 1919. He met with an unexpected resistance in the Senate. During the open discussion that started on July 31, and continue for six weeks, he realized that the Senate would definitely not ratify the Treaty or the Agreement of the League of Nations, which was at the beginning part of the treaty.

The only way out was to drive the Senate into a corner by securing the support of the American public opinion. Despite his old age and serious health problems Wilson started his national wide campaign across the country on September 3, 1919. He covered 8,000 miles in two days, and addressed people in thirty-two large and eight small meeting. Just as the opposition in the Senate began to worry, Wilson physically collapsed on September 25, 1919. He had a partial paralysis on 29 September. This incident in a way marked the end of his political career. Although he recovered partially in time, he never regained his full health.

The debates in the U.S. Senate resulted in the victory of the opposition. Every effort towards the approval of the Versailles Peace Treaty ended up in failure between October 2 and November 6, 1919. At the voting on November 19, 1919, the majority for the approval of the treaty was not secured and the meeting was adjourned. As a result of the efforts of the partially recovered president, the second meeting did not make a difference either. In the second vote on March 19, 1920, the Senate again refused to approve the Versailles Peace Treaty. Consequently, Wilson's dream of establishing a League of Nations under the leadership of the U.S. failed.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> There are a lot of detailed publications in this subject. For a summary that gives significant details see Robert H. Ferrell, **Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917-1921**, (New York; Harper&Row Pub, 1985), pp. 135-167

<sup>82</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 167-177

### **The Rejection of the Proposal Concerning a Mandate over Armenia**

With the rejection of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the period of returning to the Monroe doctrine started in the U.S. This development particularly caused great panic among the Armenian lobby. It became even more obvious that the U.S., which did not approve the charter of the League of Nations, would not assume any responsibility outside the American continent. It was during this confusion that Wilson sent the Harbord report to the Senate. The disclosure to the public of the content of the report that had been printed by the Senate had different reactions within the Armenian lobby. According to Morgenthau, even though he was disturbed by some findings, Harbord wanted to create “a wave of idealism” about the draft of mandate over Armenia and İstanbul. However, the forerunners of the Armenian lobby, Gerard and Cardashian, were greatly disturbed by the report.<sup>83</sup>

As soon as Harbord's report was disclosed to the public, it became the basis of the discussions for a mandate over Armenia. In May 1920, when the Senate began to discuss the mandate, almost all the speakers felt the need to quote Harbord's report.<sup>84</sup>

While the Senate and the public were discussing the findings of Harbord's report, some new developments were taking place in Europe. The further strengthening of the National Movement in Anatolia under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Paşa, and the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia forced Britain, France and Italy to include the peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire on the agenda.

The first step was the de facto recognition of Armenia on January 15, 1920. The second step was started in the London Conference which started to gather on February 12, 1920. Since the U.S. had not initiated any concrete steps in establishing the mandates in Anatolia, it was decided to remove İstanbul and the Turkish Straits from the probable mandates. On March 12, 1920, the U.S. was requested to participate in the discussions about a

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<sup>83</sup> GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, p. 190

<sup>84</sup> **Ibid**, p. 189

Thomas A. Bryson, **Woodrow Wilson, The Senate, Public Opinion and the Armenian Mandate Question, 1919-1920**, (Athens: University of Georgia, Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, 1965), p. 93

mandate over Armenia. The new Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby, declared that they would not accept the proposal. The third step was initiated at the San Remo Conference, which started in April 1920. Nobody wanted to assume a mandate over Armenia. Upon the cold attitude of neutral countries such as Norway and Denmark to the subject, and the rejection of the proposal of mandate by the League of Nations, which was being established, everybody again turned to the U.S. On April 27, 1920, the San Remo Conference officially asked the U.S. to assume a mandate over Armenia, and Wilson to mediate personally for the drawing of the borders between Turkey and Armenia. The project of “Armenia from sea to sea” was left aside and a smaller Armenia project was to be launched.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, despite the evasion of the U.S. administration, the subject of a mandate over Armenia was again on the agenda. However, the way it came was enough to disturb the Senate and the public opinion. While the European powers set aside the economically valuable territories for themselves and tried hard to keep the American companies away from the oil fields, they offered the poor unwanted Armenia to the U.S.

On May 17, 1920, Secretary of State, Colby, disclosed that Wilson gladly accepted to mediate the discussions on the drawing of the border between Turkey and Armenia. Nevertheless, they did not refer to the subject of the Armenian mandate. Wilson himself would personally initiate this subject. On May 24, 1920, Wilson submitted the proposal by the San Remo Conference about the Armenian mandate to the Senate floor. He requested permission from the Senate to assume the Armenian mandate.<sup>86</sup>

This maneuver by Wilson perplexed everybody. It was obvious that the Senate, which had not approved the Versailles Peace Treaty, would stand against the Armenian mandate. Furthermore, the general atmosphere of all the discussions that had been held since the disclosure of Harbord’s report was somewhat verified it. Then, why did President Wilson insist on submitting the Armenian mandate to the Senate? Presumably there were three probable

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<sup>85</sup> BRYSON, **op.cit.**, pp. 118-124

<sup>86</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 144-147  
GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp. 222-225

reasons. In the first place, Wilson thought that the American public opinion had a great interest in the Armenian problem and wanted to do something. According to his assessment, the Senate would get in a difficult situation in the public eye if it refused the proposal. He was sure this would give him a great advantage that he could use in the upcoming presidential elections. The second reason was related to the president's strong and sincere attachment to the Armenian cause. He wanted to do something for the Armenians as a result of his sensitivity in the religious matters, his idealist nature, and the influence of Armenian propaganda on him. The third reason was that if the Senate accepted the Armenian mandate, it would indirectly be accepting the League of Nations. So, the United States would join the League of Nations from the back door and President Wilson's dream would have been realized.<sup>87</sup>

In its meeting of 27 May 1920, The Senate Foreign Affairs Committee accepted Senator Lodge's proposal for the rejection of the Armenian Mandate with a great majority (eleven for with four against). Now, there was no chance of approval for the Armenian mandate. Nevertheless, since the proposal was not withdrawn from the Senate floor, discussions continued in the Senate. In order to support his thesis, Lodge proposed the printing of the Moseley's appendix. The proposal was accepted and the appendix was printed.<sup>88</sup>

Lodge's intention was to bring forth the sensitivity of the Senate and the public opinion against the deployment of American troops abroad. In fact, with the termination of World War I, it had become urgent to bring home the American troops. Two millions American troops were waiting in Europe to be demobilized and returned to civilian life. With the extension of the waiting period, indiscipline, disobedience and some other problems began to appear in the army. By the end of 1919, about a year after the end of the war, although most of the troops had been brought home, a number of units had

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<sup>87</sup> BRYSON, **op.cit.**, pp. 148-150, 154-157, 183  
Thomas A. Bailey, **Woodrow Wilson and the Peacemakers**, (New York; The Macmillan Co, 1947), p. 296

<sup>88</sup> BRYSON, **op.cit.**, pp. 164-166



been left behind with the assignment of the occupation of Germany and they would remain there until 1923. Moreover, the outbreak of an epidemic of Spanish flu started in September 1918 among the troops waiting to be demobilized killing approximately 25 000 troops. It was a great shock for all of the American public.<sup>89</sup>

The troops that had been demobilized before followed the discussions about the mandate closely and voiced their opposition clearly. The reason behind this was that in the case of an American mandate over Armenia, there would be the need for experienced troops. The war veterans' reluctance to go to a new war in a country which they did not know put pressure on the Senators.

The Russian intervention was also another great source of disturbance. Hundreds of letters and telegrams had poured to the U.S. administration for days. The Senate never forgave Wilson for making such a decision without first consulting the Senate. Republican Senator Irvine L. Lenroot voiced the feelings of the opposition in the following words:

I do not believe American mothers and fathers are willing to send their boys to keep the peace with the unspeakable Turk through all the years to come. Our boys are now in Russia, kept there in violation of the Constitution. The American people insist that they be withdrawn. I have had hundred of letters upon the subject all without exception demanding the return of our boys. Think you the American people will be any more willing to send their boys to Turkey? Is Turkey a menace to the peace of America? Is it our business to preserve law and order there? How generous our European associates are!<sup>90</sup>

The senators used Harbord's report and General Moseley's appendix extensively in their evaluations for the deployment of the American troops in Armenia. Even Harbord's optimistic estimate of 59,000 troops at the outset was high enough to displease the Senate. Considering the reaction of the public opinion, which found the 14,108 troops sent to Russia more than necessary, the most optimistic estimate was disturbing. Furthermore, when Harbord had made the calculations, he had presumed that no territory would

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<sup>89</sup> Most of the American units were at the brink of mutiny. The rebellions of the soldiers in Germany and East European Countries worried the American General Staff. FERRELL, **op.cit.**, pp.178-189

<sup>90</sup> BRYSON, **Ibid**, pp. 88, 190

be taken away from the Ottoman Empire and that the mandate would be established over the whole territory of the Ottoman Empire. However, the proposal being discussed on the Senate floor demanded that some territory be carved out for Armenia. In this case, there would be the need for more troops for a longer period.

The recent news arriving from the area was worrisome. The Bolsheviks had been advancing to the southern Caucasus rapidly. Turkish troops had dealt a heavy blow to the French in Maraş. Harbord's report made some deductions that clearly praised the strength of the National Movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colleagues. It was obvious how the Turks, who had experienced the occupation of İzmir, would react to the Americans who would occupy their country on behalf of the Armenians. Therefore, most of the senators thought that a war with the Turks would be inevitable. The memorandum declared by the Association for the Protection of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia, and the Resolutions of the Congress of Sivas, which were submitted as the exhibits of the Harbord's report, indicated clearly that the Turks would fight to the end for their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Senator Frank B. Kellogg and Secretary of State Colby moved the military problem a step further. The envisioned Armenian state would be created by carving out territories from the Ottoman Empire and Russia. As a result, it would not be a difficult prophecy that the Russians and the Turks would cooperate against the Armenians. American troops would have to fight against this alliance. Such a danger was too big to face.<sup>91</sup>

The second point that the Senate emphasized was economic interests. The findings of the Harbord's report clearly indicated that the mandate would bring nothing but high expenses. The Great Powers had set aside for themselves the oil fields and other economically valuable areas which the

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<sup>91</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 1919-201

The English also expected that an intervention on behalf of the Armenians would cause a major war. Minister of War Churchill expressed his concerns to Lloyd George in the following words: *"With military resources which the Cabinet have cut to the most weak and slender portions, we are leading the Allies in an attempt to enforce a peace on Turkey which would require great and powerful armies and long, costly operations and occupations."* GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, p.216

U.S. business circles would have liked to have had. From the economic point of view, Armenia had nothing to offer but trouble. However, the United States had employed the “Open Door” strategy so far. In other words: Political isolationism and economic venture. And by assuming the Armenian mandate, the U.S. would face the reaction of Russia and Turkey and therefore would lose the markets in these countries. The railways and other communication lines that would be built with at high costs would be for the benefit of Britain rather than the U.S. Harbord’s report had already stated that, from the economic point of view, an Armenian state would not survive, and if the investment intended for Armenia were made in Mexico, it would have been more profitable.<sup>92</sup>

The third point that came forward in the discussions held in the Senate was that the Armenians themselves were not clean-handed and that they also had committed massacres against the Turkish and Muslim population. In the U.S., this was the first time that this point had been expressed. In the Senate, which had so far been fed with information provided by the Armenians and the missionaries, and exposed to intensive propaganda, there were discussions that the Armenian claims did not fully represent the truth. Basing his speech on the Harbord report, Senator James A. Reed stated that the Armenians were a barbaric nation and always fought their neighbors:

...it is a case of eastern barbarism on both sides, each of them responding to the hate of centuries, each of them pursuing the same methods and tactics. Over this cesspool of criminality, of cruelty, of villainy, of race hatred the United States is asked to assume control, and to do it because the countries that have, speaking broadly, stolen the lands of these people all over the world decline to take control because it is expensive.<sup>93</sup>

Most of the senators had already stopped supporting the Armenians because of their atrocities. What the British intelligence officer, Colonel Thomas E. Lawrence, had said in November 1919 to the American Peace Delegation did not escape the attention of the senators: “Armenians have a passion for martyrdom, which they find they can best satisfy by quarreling

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<sup>92</sup> BRYSON, **op.cit.**, pp.-207, 228-234

<sup>93</sup> GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, p.232

with their neighbors. No one at the present moment particularly wants to massacre them, but they can be relied on to provoke trouble for themselves in the near future.”<sup>94</sup>

It should not be disregarded that the reports which had been sent by many American officials in Turkey with Admiral Bristol in the leading role also had an effect on the decision of the U.S. administration. Consequently, many senators began to realize the background of the Armenian propaganda more clearly. The denial by the Harbord’s report of the many attacks and massacres against the Armenians was by itself enough to raise suspicions.<sup>95</sup>

Consequently, after many discussions, which to a great extent reached the public opinion, the Lodge proposal, which rejected the Armenian mandate, was accepted on June 1, 1920 with fifty-two in favor, twenty-three against and twenty-one abstention votes. Thus, finally, the U.S., which the Armenian lobby counted on very much, officially declared that they would not take part in the project of creating a homeland for the Armenians.<sup>96</sup>

As seen above, the Harbord report had a great role in the result gained. In order to prove that their theses was correct, those who were against the mandate made use of the report to a great extent. The fact that the report had been prepared by a distinguished military mission, which had been assigned by President Wilson, made it even more valuable. For the first time, the propaganda by the Armenian lobby was investigated with a critical eye. The discussions, which mainly focused on the concrete, international interests of the U.S., dealt a heavy blow to the Armenian cause. Had there not been the Harbord report, the proposal concerning the Armenian mandate again might have been rejected, but, it is obvious that it would not have been with such a great majority. Everybody who read the report without any prejudice arrived at the same conviction: Whatever its area might be, an

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<sup>94</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 211-212

<sup>95</sup> **Ibid**, pp. 211-213  
GIDNEY, **op.cit.**, pp.200-203

<sup>96</sup> For a study that analyzes the discussions of mandate in the Senate from the Armenian point of view see. Richard H. Hovannisian, **The Republic of Armenia**, vol. 4, (Berkeley: Uni. of California Press, 1995), pp. 12-24

Armenian state cannot be established and survive without the active involvement of a great power.<sup>97</sup>

Even though the rejection of the proposal of an Armenian mandate weakened the Armenian lobby, the efforts towards establishing a free Armenia continued. When the Armenian leaders, who were expecting a miracle, understood that the mandate would not be realized, they began to call for aid in early 1920. A lot of imaginary projects by various Armenian groups caused intense arguments. Dispatching arms and financial support, gathering the volunteers living in the U.S. and Europe, sending military experts for the training of the Armenian army, keeping the critical points under control with the support of a small American contingent, and borrowing money from the international markets with the American guarantee were some of the projects. However, none of these projects was realized. As the pro-Armenian circles lost time with these arguments, the American administration and public opinion grew tired of the excessive demands and propaganda made by the Armenians. Domestic and continental U.S. problems drew more interest.<sup>98</sup>

According to Harbord mission member Mears, what had happened to the Armenians was the natural outcome of the irresponsible Armenian propaganda: "The Armenian tragedy in Turkey is the inevitable outcome of uncontrolled propaganda. Stimulated into a sense of growing independence and of false security because of the extensive publicity in foreign countries and the successful appeals for charity, these people were led to believe that

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<sup>97</sup> BRYSON, **op.cit.**, pp. 172, 186, 192, 270

Journalist Bailey evaluates the rejection of the Armenian mandate in the following words: "Sentiment throughout the country seems to have been strongly if not overwhelmingly opposed to shouldering this strange burden. It is true that the Armenians wanted us; that we had missionary interests in Armenia; that it was to our advantage to stabilize the near Eastern situation and prevent another world war; and that we had a moral obligation to help others less favored than ourselves. But, on the other hand, the Mandate would cost hundreds of millions of dollars (at a time when taxes were high), involve tens of thousands of boys (at a time when they were homesick) and drag us into the quarrels of the powers (at a time when we were in the mood to stay out.) .... We wished the Armenians well but we wished them well at a distance." BAILEY, **op.cit.**, p. 295

<sup>98</sup> HOVANNESIAN, **op.cit.**, pp. 10, 26-28

Selahi R. Sonyel, **Turkey's Struggle for Liberation and the Armenians**, (Ankara: Center for Strategic Research, 2001), pp. 45-46

time had come when they would be partitioned off entirely from their oppressive ruler, the Ottoman Government.” The project of establishing a mandate over Armenia by the U.S. had been shattered by the Harbord report: “As far as America is concerned, the proposal became a phantom following the report of the Harbord Mission.”<sup>99</sup>

### **The Influence of Harbord Mission on the National Liberation Movement**

During its investigation in Anatolia, Harbord mission found the opportunity to get to know the National Liberation Movement, which was then getting organized in Anatolia and its leaders. Particularly, the meeting that was held between Harbord and Mustafa Kemal Paşa in Sivas on September 20, 1919 had a great significance. What the mission members had seen in various parts of Anatolia and what Mustafa Kemal Paşa had told them had a great influence on him. This influence is clear in the report the mission wrote. The significant point here is the submission to the attention of the American administration and public opinion of important declarations of the National Liberation Movement by including them into the exhibits of the Harbord report. Thus, for the first time, it became possible to know the Turkish National Liberation Struggle at first hand, beyond the Armenian propaganda and the distorted information provided by the Great Powers.<sup>100</sup>

In order to share his experiences with the greater part of the American public opinion, Harbord wrote a number of serial articles in the “*The World’s Work*”, which was a popular magazine across the country. The article titled “Mustapha Kemal Pasha and His Party” is particularly very important for this

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<sup>99</sup> Eliot Grinnell Mears, **Modern Turkey**, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), pp. 522-523, 526

Some of the contemporary Armenian researchers are of the same opinion: “The Armenians were victimized by both the behavior of the Great Powers and their own illusions, unrealistic expectations, and inexperience in understanding Great Power behavior. The Allies made vague promises and engaged in eloquent denunciations of Ottoman treatment of the Armenians, which led the Armenians to believe that simply because they were a small Christian nation persecuted by a Moslem empire, the major Western democratic Christian powers could not resist committing their human and material resources to fulfill the national aspirations of the Armenian people, which were so transcendentally and obviously just.” Vernon Aspaturian, “Armenia in the World Arena 1914-1921”, **Armenian Review**, vol. 46, no. 1-4, Spring-Winter 1993, p. 131

<sup>100</sup> SUGAR, **op.cit.**, pp. 6-9

study because, through the writings of an indisputably respectable person, for the first time the American public opinion had the opportunity to find out what was happening in Turkey and about Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colleagues. Harbord's mostly positive and sometimes praising remarks were quite astonishing for the American public opinion, which had received Armenian propaganda for many years: Harbord wrote:

Mustapha Kemal Pasha, an officer of high reputation in the Turkish Army who had commanded an army corps with distinction and great gallantry at the Dardanelles and Gallipoli..... The interview was extremely interesting and I am obliged to say that I came away with an impression of the sincere patriotism of Mustapha Kemal Pasha is no cheap political adventurer. He is a military leader of proven skill, and many millions of Moslems are unquestionably interested in the preservation of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>101</sup>

It is unknown if Mustafa Kemal Paşa received a copy of it. During the research conducted for this study, no news was found about it in any local newspaper in Turkey. Likewise, there is no mention of it in the personal memoirs of Turkish leaders about the arrival of the report in Turkey. Therefore, Harbord Report did not have a direct influence upon Turkey or on Turkish public opinion.

The journey of Harbord mission in Turkey and its meeting with Mustafa Kemal Paşa, on the other hand had very important effects in Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Paşa and his colleagues made use of this meeting to a significant degree. Primarily, this it was interpreted as though the National Liberation Movement had been recognized and was found justifiable by the Americans, and therefore was extensively used for propaganda purposes throughout the country. The telegram that Mustafa Kemal Paşa sent on September 22, 1919 to Osman and Ferid Beys in Kastamonu is a good example in this respect. Similar telegrams and messages were sent to other cities as well:

The American investigative mission, headed by General Harbord and attended by a team composed of two generals and about fifteen officers, came to Sivas to meet us. Following the meeting, he promptly informed his superiors in İstanbul that our National Struggle was legitimate and required; that the central government was weak and illegitimate and finally for the Americans there was

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<sup>101</sup> James G. Harbord, "Mustapha Kemal Pasha and His Party", **The World's Work**, vol. XL, no. pp. 181-188  
SUGAR, **op.cit.**, p.4

nothing else but to accept all our goals and strength and our desire to remain independent<sup>102</sup>

Employing similar statements, Mustafa Kemal Paşa, in a letter of December 8, 1919 to Fahrettin Bey, the commander of the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps, that the report General Harbord had written was favorable to the National Movement:

In the long meeting with the American investigative mission in Sivas, it was found out that the general himself and all the Americans in Eastern Anatolia are favoring us and according to the reliable information received recently, Harbord had written the report in our favor. But, it was also acknowledged that since the American public opinion, which had been misinformed by the Armenian propaganda for such a long time that they would not easily get rid of its influence.<sup>103</sup>

However, respecting Harbord's demand that the meeting content should be kept confidential, Mustafa Kemal Paşa avoided making a direct statement to the Turkish public. For example, he did not give an answer to the question raised by Velit Bey, the Chief of the Press, to his telegram of October 13, 1919 asking what the discussion with General Harbord had been based. Likewise, he advised those he had confided in about the subject that they should behave in a reserved way about it.<sup>104</sup>

In a letter he wrote to Talat Paşa on February 29, 1920, Mustafa Kemal Paşa giving information about the results of his meeting with Harbord, he also touched on another point. It was stated that not only Harbord but all the foreign representatives had been contacted in a careful manner to be won over to their side and no concession had been made:

The French and Italians always, The English sometimes sent highly authorized senior officials to Sivas to come to an agreement with the National Forces. We never considered compromise in the issues of borders and independence. Therefore, they preferred to make use of time with the hope that they could make us compromise in the end. We had far more sincere meetings with the

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<sup>102</sup> Mazhar Müfit Kansu, **Erzurum'dan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk'le Beraber (With Atatürk from Erzurum till his Death)**, vol.1, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1966), p. 313

<sup>103</sup> **Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri**, vol.5, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2001), p. 346

<sup>104</sup> KANSU, **op.cit.**, p. 313  
Mazhar Müfit Kansu, **Erzurum'dan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk'le Beraber**, vol.1, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1966), pp. 409-412



Americans. General Harbord personally held very long discussions in Sivas. And finally he decided to act on our side..... The nation that worked against us in the Armenian problem most was that of the USA. The explanation that I had given to General Harbord made great changes in him and finally he had to approve me.<sup>105</sup>

The second reason Mustafa Kemal Paşa kept talking about his meeting with Harbord was to get the prominent figures and intellectuals of Turkish society who wanted an American mandate to join the National Movement in an active way. In addition to Harbord's behavior of accepting the National Movement as an equal partner and looking at their activities positively, the trips carried out in the area indicated that a definite decision about the American mandate would not be made in the near future. Those who contacted the members of the mission found out that contrary to the propaganda, the U.S. was not very willing to assume a mandate, and that the Americans were placing too much emphasis on Armenia's future. The American delay in taking steps about the mandate after the departure of the mission verified the opinions. The pro-American organizations were stopped their activities. Most of the pro-mandate intellectuals left İstanbul and joined the National Movement in Anatolia. Halide Edip, in her memoirs summarizes the developments in the following words: "However the whole thing died away very soon, and Turkey grew accustomed to the knowledge that she must henceforth expect no help save from herself. a truth which was brought most fully home to her by the occupation of Smyrna." <sup>106</sup>

As a result, not only did the investigative trip of Harbord mission and its reports cause the Turkish National Movement to be known better by the American administration and public, but also created positive effects in Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Paşa, by making use of his meeting with Harbord wisely, not only caused the movement to be known at home and abroad as legal and justified but also encouraged the pro-mandate intellectuals quit their ideas and join the National Movement.

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<sup>105</sup> **Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri**, vol. 6, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2001), pp. 409-409, 411

<sup>106</sup> Halide Edip, **Turkey Faces West: A Turkish View of Recent Changes and Their Origin**, (New Haven: Yale Uni. Press, 1930), p. 175

## 11. CONCLUSION

Harbord mission was the most important foreign policy application adopted by the United States in relation to Turkey and the surrounding countries in the aftermath of World War I. Contrary to assumptions, its sole purpose was not to investigate whether the United States should assume an Armenian mandate or not. As was clearly shown in our study, although the official name of the delegation was American Military Mission to Armenia, its actual purpose was to examine the Ottoman Empire and the neighboring countries within the context of U.S. interests. And this is what the Harbord mission did. Not only the final report and the appendices, but also the documents the mission picked up in the course of the investigation confirm this point. This was the most comprehensive study conducted about the distinctive features of the region. Thus, among the archive documents of the Harbord mission it is possible to find a large amount of data ranging from political structure to transportation infrastructure.

Conflicting thoughts and interests played important roles in the assignment of the Harbord mission. Until then, the activities of the Armenian lobby had been given the priority. On the other hand, it can be observed that, from the assignment of the Mission to the writing of the report, a group, led by Herbert Hoover and Admiral Bristol, who defended the view that favored an approach envisioning the interests of the U.S. parallel with the realities of the region, was very effective. The reports written by the Harbord mission helped those who shared these views gain strength and influence within the administration. For the first time, the U.S. administration and the public opinion faced the realities related to Turkey. A structural change in view of the U.S. towards the region became apparent.

The relations between the U.S. and Turkey continued to improve even though there were occasional hitches. Although the U.S. did not officially participate in the Lausanne Treaty and acted only as an observer, on August 6, 1923, it signed a separate agreement with Turkey and sought to normalize relations back to normal. However, the approval of this agreement was made a part of the domestic political struggle. The Senate declined to approve this agreement on January 18, 1927, after a long debate. Even though this

adverse incident affected the official side of the relations between the two countries, they continued to improve in other areas.

The reports of the Harbord mission caused a fundamental change in the approach to the Armenian problem in the U.S. For the first time, the propaganda made by the Armenian lobby was scrutinized with a critical point of view. Many American officials in Turkey, with Bristol in the leading role, had begun to criticize the Armenian-biased attitude in reports, messages and newspaper articles. However, the real change came with the Harbord mission. Of course, the reports of a military mission composed of distinguished members who had been assigned by President Wilson himself and approved by the Armenian lobby would be more influential on the U.S. administration and public opinion.

It is an interesting point that the mission members did not criticize the prevalent incorrect attitude although they had acquired knowledge and impressions about the reality as a result of their own observations in the region. The members, none of whom was a historian, continued to present the alleged Armenian propaganda as a historical fact. However, they saw a tremendous discrepancy between the realities in the region and the prevalent knowledge and convictions in the West. Yet they were never able to adopt an approach towards a radical rejection of the biased allegations. Moreover, they did not sufficiently include the findings of important reports submitted to them in their final reports. The reports of Niles-Sutherland and Lt. Dunn are good examples of this fact. Consequently, in view of the research on the Armenian problem, both what the members wrote and what they did not write are important. The archive documents of the Harbord mission are thus important. It is rather surprising that no Turkish researcher has ever made use of these documents. It is considered highly valuable that Turkish researches begin studies on these documents in different aspects in order to attain detailed information about the period.

The Harbord mission encountered a country that was undergoing through a great transformation. They witnessed the effects of this transformation at different levels. Primarily, they saw the real structure of the National Struggle Movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Paşa. Contrary to the false claims, the National Movement was not a rebellion

against the authority, but a movement trying to restore the authority that had been impaired. Moreover, the ones who had upset the region's security and order were the occupying powers, with Britain in the leading role. The British attempt to found a "Kurdistan," which was revealed by the Major Noel incident; the occupation of İzmir; and the massacres committed by Greeks were all examples of irresponsible acts of the Great Powers which the members of the mission themselves witnessed. In spite of all these interventions, the National Movement was gradually gaining power and it was surprisingly successful in establishing law and order. When the members of the delegation saw the anarchy in the Southern Caucasus, they were able to comprehend in a better way the importance and success of the National Movement. The written reports and Harbord's articles which were printed in the journal of *The World's Work* provided recognition of Mustafa Kemal Paşa and the Turkish National Movement by the U.S. administration and public opinion.

In conclusion, the Harbord mission, also with the influence of the Armenian problem, came to the foreground at a period when the United States was questioning its foreign policy related to Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. It made important contributions in the rejection of the proposal for the Armenian Mandate and introduction of the realities of Turkey. It played a role in the re-establishment of Turkish-American relations on more realistic and firm ground. Today, it remains effective due to the fact that it contains archive documents for those who wish to research on various aspects of the history of the region.

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17. *Renaissance* (Constantinople), September 4, 1919
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22. *İrade-i Milliye* 17 Eylül 1335 (September 17,1919)
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