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For the lesser peoples: Woodrow Wilson, national self-determination and the Ottoman Empire

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For the Lesser Peoples:

Woodrow Wilson, National Self-Determination and the Ottoman Empire.

By Tim Flaherty
For My Family
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Tim Flaherty

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Preface

This dissertation is an examination of Woodrow Wilson's policy of self-determination and how it was applied to the Ottoman Empire. It is my aim to explore the development of this principle in Wilson's writings during the American involvement in World War One, its use at the Paris Peace Conference, and its subsequent application to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The underlying question of this dissertation will be whether or not national self-determination, as developed by Wilson and his colleagues during the War years, was fully applied to the post-war territorial settlement in the Ottoman Empire. If it was not applied, or only partially so, what were the reasons and considerations that led to its non or partial application? This question is especially important as national self-determination, in the form of the Fourteen Points, was an important basis for the discussion of peace before and after the end of hostilities in November 1918.

The introduction of this essay will study the development of Wilson's national self-determination during the War years. The concept of national self-determination was first developed in the eighteenth century. Wilson was not the first proponent of the concept. He was, however, one of the first exponents of the principle who combined moral belief with political power. Wilson's views on the subject, especially during the war years, were influenced by a number of sources. Prominent among these sources were the leaders of nationalistic movements hoping for American support in the continuation of their cause. During late 1917, Wilson was also heavily influenced by the Inquiry, a group of 'experts' who Wilson had appointed to provide him with the background detail and recommendations he felt were necessary to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace at the end of the War. Their recommendations were the basis for the Fourteen Points address, which will be

2 Heater, pp.1-2.
covered in Chapter One. By the start of the Paris Conference in early 1919, Wilson had a clear idea of what he felt national self-determination was, and how it should be applied in the territorial settlement. 4

Chapter Two will examine the formation of the mandate system. Wilson’s concept of national self-determination was severely tested at Paris by what he termed ‘European’ power politics. The victorious Allies had secretly partitioned the Ottoman Empire in a series of treaties during the War.5 Their desire for colonies clashed with Wilson’s concept of national self-determination, the supposed basis for peace. The situation was complicated by the fact that the United States had not declared war upon the Ottoman Empire and, therefore, did not technically have a voice in its dismemberment. Wilson, however, was determined to be involved in the Ottoman peace process. The resulting compromise between colonialism and self-determination resulted in the establishment of the mandate system. This system was not what Wilson and many subject nations had desired in proclaiming national self-determination. Given the weak American claims of involvement in the Ottoman settlement, and fact that the majority of mandate territory had previously been in the Ottoman Empire, Wilson at least attempted to protect the subject nationalities from rampant European colonialism. It is questionable as to whether or not he succeeded.6

In the final chapters, this essay will analyse in more detail the role of Wilson in the deliberations that led to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the ambiguous position that the United States took towards accepting a mandate for Constantinople and Armenia will be examined. The uncertainty of the American position on this subject, emphasised by the domestic debate over the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations, made it increasingly easier for the European powers to divide the Ottoman Empire upon lines which they found

4 Heater, pp.38, 40.
5 See Appendix.
acceptable. This was especially so after Wilson’s final departure from France in June 1919.7

For the sake of convenience, this essay will end in late August 1919, when the King-Crane Commission, which was sent to the Ottoman Empire to investigate the desires of the local populations as to the allocation of mandates, reported its findings to Wilson. The territorial settlement with the Ottoman Empire, however, had not been completed by this time. The treaty of peace with Turkey would not be signed until August 1920, and a final settlement in the former Ottoman Empire would not truly be achieved until the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923. To put this work in context, therefore, a postscript has been attached to explain the complicated events that eventually led to the settlement of territory in the former Ottoman Empire.

The major primary source for this essay is the monumental series edited by Arthur S Link, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson.8 The title of this essay, 'For the Lesser People', has been taken from a letter to Wilson from Rabbi Stephen Wise contained in this series.9 The Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series have also been used in the later chapters. The majority of this dissertation will be based upon these primary sources. For the Introduction and the Postscript, however, the essay also draws upon a number of secondary sources, notably Derek Heater’s book. In the Introduction, Heater’s work has been used to explain how the concept of national self-determination developed. In the Postscript, secondary sources have been used as a means of summarising the political settlement in the former Ottoman Empire after the period that this essay will cover.

The Ottoman Empire was selected as the focus of my essay for a number of reasons. The foremost reason was that there has not been a great deal of academic study of the specific relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the United States during and immediately following the Wilson Administration. Laurence Evan’s and

8 It should be noted that many of Wilson’s opinions have been expressed through the medium of letters by other people.
Roger Trask’s works are notable exceptions. There also do not seem to be any works relating specifically to Wilson’s national self-determination and how it was applied to the Ottoman Empire. A degree of originality is required in completing this essay, so the lack of secondary sources makes this slightly obscure topic more understandable.

The Ottoman Empire is also not the most obvious example of the application of national self-determination following the Great War. That position is held by a number of European countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and even Yugoslavia. Why then was the Ottoman Empire selected? It was a convoluted process, with the topic seeming to evolve as more research was completed. The author’s interest in the Ottoman Empire, and the Middle East in general, certainly played a role. With the amount of territory and peoples involved in the dismemberment of the Empire, complicated by the ambiguous position of the United States and the role of the Arab armies in helping defeat the Ottoman forces, it is an interesting area of study. The opportunity to examine Woodrow Wilson, a fascinating man by any standard, was an added incentive. The selection of this topic was, therefore, more a process of evolution than of careful planning.

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Introduction:

The first and most obvious question to pose at the start of this work is what is national self-determination? The phrase itself, as used by Wilson, did not exist before 1914. ‘Self-government’ and the idea of the ‘nation’ were used instead. Derek Heater believes that the concept had its roots in the writings of Burke and Rousseau in the eighteenth century, following the absorption of Poland into Russia, Prussia, and Austria, and Corsica into France. The principle itself is a belief that a people should have the right and opportunity to determine their own government. This in itself poses a number of questions. As E H Carr argued, nationality and self-determination do not necessarily collide. If ‘a people’ is defined by nationality, then what is a nation? Should a nation be based purely upon ethnic lines? What of the role of religion, economics and geography? Should strategic considerations be taken into account? What about the slightly ambiguous position of minorities within a state? It is fair to say that these questions are still debatable, even in the contemporary world. In the following chapters, these questions will be addressed within a Wilsonian framework. It will suffice to state for now that for Wilson, a nation was based upon ethnic lines. As Heater puts it, nationality for Wilson was a ‘...mater of consciousness and thought, rather than a matter of institutional or physical attributes’. 1 It is notable, however, that some of the questions which have just been posed did vex Wilson and members of the Inquiry at various times between 1917 and 1919. 2

It is important to note at the outset that national self-determination does not necessarily equate with nationalism. The achievement of national self-determination does not always sublimate the nationalist urge. National consensus and self-government can exist without the other. National self-determination is the concept which propounds their interdependence. For the principle to be established in theory and in practice, however, several developments must occur. The idea of a people has

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1 Heater, pp.1-2, 3, 24, 26, 111.
to be embraced; the concept of popular sovereignty has to be adopted; and the techniques of mobilising the popular will and giving it expression have to be derived.³

In May 1916, Wilson stated that ‘we believe these fundamental things. First, that every people has a right to chose the sovereignty under which they shall live.’⁴ This idea, national self-determination, had been the subject of widespread discussion at the start of the World War.⁵ It had related mainly to the European territories of the German and Austrian-Hungarian Empires, but also incorporated, to a lesser degree, the Arab-populated territories of the Ottoman Empires. Wilson was not, in fact, the first to espouse the concept. The French under Aristide Briand spoke of the ‘liberation of the population subjected to the bloody tyranny of the Turks.’⁶ By 1915, Asquith, Grey and Churchill were commending the value of ethnography. In April 1916, a British Foreign Office document entitled the ‘Suggested Basis for a Territorial Settlement in Europe’ claimed that nationality was a key criterion for the post-war territorial adjustments. The use of nationality would specifically avoid the mistakes of Vienna in 1815. For the peace to last, the document argued that the peace ‘...should give full scope to national aspirations as far as practicable. The principle of nationality should therefore be one of the governing factors in the territorial arrangements after the war.’⁷

Wilson, therefore, was not the first prominent political or philosophical figure to develop and actively promote national self-determination as a concept and as a solution to the European politics of the preceding centuries. He was, however, the most ardent advocate of self-determination during the latter half of the First World War, at a time when the concept was gaining popular support as a means of preventing future war. His exposition of the concept in the Fourteen Points and the Four Principles, which will be examined in the next chapter, was the first comprehensive

³ Heater, pp.3-4, 27.
⁴ Ibid., (heater) p.29.
⁵ Ibid. (heater)
⁶ Ibid., (heater) p.29.
⁷ Ibid., (heater) p.30.; See also Harry Augustus Garfield to Woodrow Wilson, 30.10.17, in Link (ed.), Vol.44., p.476.
formulation of the doctrine in terms of practical application to individual nationalities. To examine how the Fourteen Points became accepted as a basis for peace by November 1918, we must examine the development of Wilson’s thoughts on national self-determination during American involvement in World War One.  

Soon after Wilson announced the entry of the United States into World War One, he was besieged by letters applauding his stance on self-determination. Stephen Wise, a Jewish Rabbi, wrote to Wilson saying that ‘...all men know how deeply you are concerned with the hope of freedom for the lesser peoples, how real is your passion for freedom for all nations.’ Already Wilson was being hailed as the leader of a crusade for national self-determination. This is not to say that Wilson was entirely, or clearly, understood. John Whitehouse, a Liberal Member for Parliament and former parliamentary private secretary to David Lloyd George, recorded in a memorandum of a meeting with the President that his terms were viewed in Austria as meaning the forced dismemberment of that Empire, with ‘blocks’ of territories being handed over to other countries. Whitehouse recorded Wilson’s feelings by writing that this ‘...was not what he stood for. He had distinguished most carefully between rulers and their peoples. It was the peoples who should decide the form of government they would have. Forcibly to transfer people from one ruler to another, without their assent, was not a policy with which he had sympathy.’ This point was succinctly put to the American people the next day when Wilson addressed them in ringing tones. The United States was fighting the ‘...grim and terrible war for democracy and human rights.’ Wilson ended the speech by reaffirming that the war was a battle ‘for what we believe and wish to be the rights of mankind and for the future peace and security of the world.’

The ability of the United States to advocate national self-determination was premised on it not being bound to European treaty obligations which portioned the

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8 Heater, pp.40, 4345.


Ottoman Empire to the various Allied powers. In a series of discussions with Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, in April 1917, Wilson and House discussed the wisdom of the United States maintaining aloof from these treaty obligations. Both the Americans and the British felt that an unfettered United States might have a valuable influence over any power trying to gain territories out of the treaties once the essential objects of the war had been accomplished. The United States would act as a buffer against greed and improper distribution of territory.\(^\text{12}\)

Wilson’s writing on national self-determination at this stage were still confined to a series of general statements, with little in the way of specific examples as to how it was to be applied. In his statement to the new Provisional Government of Russia, Wilson said that ‘We are fighting for the liberty, the self-government, and the und dictated development of all peoples, and every feature of the settlement that concludes this war must be conceived and executed for that purpose.’\(^\text{13}\) Later in the same address, Wilson stated that ‘No people must be forced under a sovereignty under which it does not wish to live. No territory must change hands except for the purpose of securing those who inhabit it a fair chance of life and liberty.’\(^\text{14}\) Although these words were stirring at a time when the need for a psychological boost by the Allies and their peoples was paramount, Wilson still seemed to have little idea about how to define or implement national self-determination. In fact, it was not until late in 1917 that specific examples were mentioned by Wilson in dealing with the issue. A detailed programme regarding national self-determinations role in the peace process was not publicly formulated until the Fourteen Points of early January1918. Even this would come in the wake of detailed pronouncements on the subject by Lenin and Lloyd George.\(^\text{15}\)


\(^{13}\) Woodrow Wilson to the Provisional Government of Russia, 22.5.17., in Link (ed.), 42, pp.366-7.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p.367.

The writings of Wilson during 1917 give the impression that Wilson was involved in a propaganda struggle to maintain the initiative with regard to self-determination. The initiative was lost at various times during the year to the Soviets, Germans, the Allies and independent groups such as the Zionists. It was as if Wilson was constantly in crisis-control, trying to formulate American policy on self-determination in response to statements and demands made by these interested parties. His Flag Day Address in June was an attempt to counter German moves to use self-determination to their benefit. The German aim was to 'deceive all those who throughout the world stand for the rights of peoples and the self-government of nations; for they see what immense strength the forces of justice and of liberalism are gathering out of this war.' He criticised the German government for regarding nations as '...serviceable organisations which they could by force or intrigue bend or corrupt to their own purpose.' Wilson then claimed that the people of Europe and the Middle East who Germany had tried to unite under their rule did not wish for this to eventuate. Instead, '...they ardently desired to direct their own affairs, [and] would be satisfied only by undisputed independence.' Wilson concluded in dramatic fashion, stating that '...this is a People's War, a war for freedom and justice and self-government amongst all the nations of the world, a war to make the world safe for the peoples who live upon it and have made it their own, the German people themselves included...'

The entire speech was an attempt to counter German moves to use self-determination to their advantage and to inspire the Allies and oppressed peoples under Central Power rule with the hope of and belief in the application of national self-determination.

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16 In a Memorandum dated 13.7.17., Allen Barlit Pond of the War Committee of the Union League Club of Chicago had suggested to Wilson that a propaganda campaign, based upon arguments '..to show why a permanent peace cannot be founded on permanent injustice arising from denial of rights to individual nations or groups of nations when such rights are capable of rational demarcation.' was necessary. Allen Barlit Pond to Wilson, 13.7.17., in Link (ed.), 43, p.169.

17 Woodrow Wilson, Flag Day Address, 14.6.17., in Link (ed.), 42, p.503.

18 Ibid., p.500.

19 Ibid., p.501.

20 Ibid., pp.503-4.
The process of reacting to someone else’s initiative regarding self-determination can also be seen in Wilson’s reply to the Pope’s Appeal for Peace to the belligerent governments in August 1917.\textsuperscript{21} The Pope asked that the spirit of ‘equity and justice’ directed to the examination of territorial and political questions, and that these questions be examined in a ‘conciliatory spirit’.\textsuperscript{22} Once again Wilson was thrown on the defensive, forced to speak in general terms so as to gain broad appeal. In notes for reply to the Pope’s message, Wilson wrote that peace could ‘...only rest upon the equal rights of peoples, great and small.’\textsuperscript{23} This idea was expanded upon in the actual reply. Wilson argued that the American people believed ‘...that peace should rest upon the rights of people, not the rights of governments, the rights of people great or small, weak or powerful, -their equal right to freedom and security and self-government...’\textsuperscript{24} Self-determination was the vindication of the sovereignty of those who were weak, as well as those who were strong.\textsuperscript{25}

Despite the seeming loss of initiative, Wilson was constantly able to turn the situation to his advantage. In a letter from William Sharp, the American Ambassador to France, to Wilson following the reply to the Pope’s appeal, Sharp noted that the common accord in Paris was that the views that Wilson had expressed were thoroughly representative of those held by the Allied Powers. Sharp wrote that the views contained in the reply were especially appreciated at that time as ‘...forecasting the nature of conditions upon which a satisfactory and permanent peace can only come.’\textsuperscript{26} This response to Wilson’s words was seemingly universal. Sir Horace Plunkett, an Anglo-Irish statesman and former Member of Parliament, wrote to House stating what ‘...a marvellous effect this one individual is having upon the life of the hundred million people who have chosen him as their leader, and how small all the political machinery looks in the national decisions compared with this one man’s

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Wilson to Lansing, 27.8.17., in Link (ed.), 44, p.59.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} William Graves Sharp to Wilson, 31.8.17., in Link (ed.), 44, p.103.
Lloyd George wrote to Wilson in early September 1917, saying that the statements that Wilson had made had ‘...given to the bruised and battered peoples of Europe fresh courage to endure and fresh hope that with all their sufferings they are helping to bring into being a world in which freedom and democracy will be secure, and in which free nations will live together in unity and peace.’ The psychological value of Wilson’s messages to the Allies was immense, even if the specifics of national self-determination were unclear at this stage.

The concept of national self-determination was slowly solidifying in Wilson’s mind. The role of the nineteenth century conferences was prominent in this process. The jealousies and irritations that these conferences had caused by the deliberate transfer of peoples from one sovereignty to another were to be avoided. Much of the present conflict had been built on the ‘...universal indifference to the interests or the fate of the weak, dependent and subject races, and the subordination of their rights to the ambitions of the greater powers.’ House noted in his diary that Wilson had laid down the principle that no nation should acquire territory without the consent of the governed.

In the latter half of 1917, Wilson began to move towards a firmer position with regards to the application of national self-determination. This process would eventually lead to the Fourteen Points, which will be discussed in the next chapter. In a letter from Baron Ludovic Moncheur, the head of the Belgium Mission to the United States in June 1917, to Baron Charles de Broqueville, the Belgium Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Moncheur noted that Wilson believed that the people of the Dual Monarchy wished to be emancipated, and should be granted a liberal autonomy within the bounds of a confederation based upon the Dual Monarchy. The most specific

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27 Sir Horace Plunkett to House, 1.6.17., in Link (ed.), 42, p.543.
28 David Lloyd George to Wilson, 3.9.17., in Link (ed.), 44, p.130.
30 Harry Augustus Garfield to Wilson, with Enclosure by Frederic C. Howe, 30.10.17., in Link (ed.), 44, p.476.
'...we do not wish in any way to impair or rearrange the Austro-Hungarian Empire...we do not propose or desire to dictate to them in any way. We only desire that their affairs are left in their own hands, in all matters, great or small.' \(^3^3\) Wilson then added that ‘...we shall hope to secure for the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula and for the people of the Turkish Empire the right and opportunity to make their own lives safe, their own fortunes secure against oppression or injustice and from the dictation of foreign courts or parties.' \(^3^4\)

As already mentioned, the speeches of Lloyd George and Lenin overtook Wilson's sentiments. A general acknowledgement of national self-determination was now not sufficient. A more specific detailing of the American position was needed. The result was the Fourteen Points, the most comprehensive statement regarding national self-determination that Wilson made.


\(^3^4\) Ibid.
Chapter One: The Fourteen Points and the Four Principles

The process that would lead to the Fourteen Points, and later the Four Principles, did not begin with the pronouncements by Lenin and Lloyd George. Although they were the immediate reason for the Fourteen Points, Wilson had formed a group in late September 1917 to begin the preparatory work needed for the peace settlement. This group became known as the Inquiry. The Fourteen Points were largely based upon their recommendations to Wilson for the post-war settlement.¹

In a detailed memorandum entitled ‘Confidential Memorandum on Preparatory work for the Peace Conference’, Wilson instructed House that he wanted a group of experts formed to give him opinions on the history, commerce and international law issues relating to countries involved in the peace settlement. In terms of history, he wanted to know how various countries had developed along political, commercial, industrial and military lines. With regard to international law, he wanted opinions about countries’ positions in peace and war, about the possibility of internationalising waterways, and the extent of territorial waters. He also wanted consideration given to international guarantees and their enforcement. The experts were to prepare a 10000-15000 word paper on their area of expertise for House, who would then give the necessary information to Wilson.²

The memorandum also included an Enclosure by Secretary of State Lansing, in which he made a number of queries relating to national self-determination. He asked to what degree the United States should be involved in the determination of European boundaries? Should the United States be involved in the redistribution of colonial territories? Should the basis of the territorial redistribution be race, language, religion or previous political affiliation? Where two or more countries had political claims to a particular territory, what should be the basis of that settlement? If it were determined that the preponderance of a particular nationality in the population is controlling prima facie, how far should conquest or enforced colonisation affect such a basis? Finally, Lansing asked whether colonial possessions should be guaranteed to the power holding

them without a limitation as to the character of the government, commercial freedom, and economic opportunity given to other nations.³

As can be seen from Wilson’s demands and Lansing’s questions, the Wilson Administration was determined to have a complete grasp of the available facts before committing itself to a peace settlement. This determination can also be seen in the reply of Sidney Mezes, the original head of the Inquiry, to Wilson. In a memorandum entitled ‘A Preliminary Brief Outline of the Subjects to be dealt with in the Inquiry’, Mezes wrote that in each case of a ‘Suppressed, Oppressed and Backward People’, the Inquiry would investigate the:

1. Past and Present: History, Geography, (Races, Maps); Government and Politics, Social Status, Economics (business, agriculture), strategy (chiefly to judge unfounded boundary claims.)

2. Serious proposals for the Future: By whom made (nations, parties, leaders) and why; light thrown on each by data in 1.), especially as to whether it would tend to establish a suitable geographic and business unit (which needed access to the sea and markets) and tend, by constitution or laws (granting independence, autonomy, or civil and cultural rights) to insure sufficient freedom, security, and where feasible, unity.⁴

By late December 1917, the Inquiry was reporting to Wilson with various recommendations regarding war aims and peace terms.⁵ Wilson was particularly concerned about the bartering of territories and peoples between the powers.⁶ House recorded, for example, that Wilson had stated that ‘...Turkey must not be partitioned among the belligerents, but must become autonomous in its several parts according to racial lines.’⁷ This is not to say that Wilson had any sympathy or empathy with the Ottoman Empire, or perhaps more accurately, with its Turkish rulers. Sir William Wiseman, the British Ambassador to the United States, reported to Sir Eric Drummond, the future Secretary General of the League of Nations, that Wilson had

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³ Ibid., pp.218-9.
⁵ Memorandum by Mezes, David Hunter Miller, Walter Lippmann, 22.12.17., in Link (ed.), 45, 463.
⁶ See Footnote 1-4, Chapter Two.
‘...no sympathy or liking for the Turks.’

Wilson’s views on Turkey were aptly surmised by Monchuer, when he recorded that Wilson felt that Turkey was ‘...a veritable hornet’s nest, which keeps Europe always in alarm. It is necessary to find a remedy there, but the solution of the problem has not yet been found.’ The preliminaries for peace were overtaken by the addresses of Trotsky and Lloyd George in late December 1917, and early January 1918. Self-determination had become a basis for peace negotiations between the Russians and the Germans at Brest Litovsk in late 1917. Lenin and Trotsky had come to support national self-determination in Central and Eastern Europe as the first step to what he believed was the imminent proletarian revolution. It had also served to undermine the Tsarist regime.

Trotsky’s address called into question the sincerity of the Allied powers regarding national self-determination. While noting that the powers from both sides had declared themselves ready to renounce any new conquests made during the war, ‘...old acts of violence of the strong over the weak are rendered sacred by historical prescription.’ The fate of Alsace Lorraine, Translyvania, Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one hand, and Ireland, Egypt, India and Indochina on the other hand, were not discussed by the belligerent powers. As Trotsky then went on to say, ‘Such a program is profoundly inconsistent and represents a project of an unprincipled compromise between the pretensions of Imperialism and the opposition of the labouring Democracy.’

Trotsky continued this attack on the sincerity of the Allies in questioning what constituted the peace program of the Allies. Trotsky asked that if the Allies demanded self-determination for Alsace Lorraine, Galicia, Posnonia, Bohemia and the Southern Slav provinces, were they in turn willing to grant self-determination to the peoples of Ireland, Egypt, India, Madagascar and Indochina. As Trotsky stated, ‘...it is clear that to demand self-determination for the peoples that are comprised within the borders of

9 Monchuer to de Broqueville, 14.8.17., in Link (ed.), p.469.
10 Heater, pp.33-4, 35, 36.
12 Ibid.
enemy states and to refuse self-determination to the peoples of their own state or of their own colonies would mean the defence of the most naked, the most cynical imperialism.'

Peace would have to be based upon an ‘...entire and complete recognition of the principle of self-determination for all peoples and in all states...’ Trotsky ended his address to the Allies by stating that their ‘...attitude towards the principle of national self-determination, is not less suspicious and hostile than that of the governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary.’

This attack upon the credibility of the Allies had to be dealt with carefully. Although wishing to defend the Allied position, Wilson also needed to encourage the Russians, so as to keep them in the war. Trotsky's address did, however, come under heavy criticism from Lansing. Lansing wrote to Wilson two days later, detailing his own criticisms. They related mainly to the emphasis by Trotsky relating to the superiority of class over nationality. Perhaps more interesting is the divergence between Lansing's views on national self-determination and those of Wilson. Lansing argued that if a region lay between two nations who were sovereign states, then the people of that region should have the ultimate right of decision over which state they were incorporated into. No mention was made by Lansing of the possibility that the region might wish to form its own sovereign state. Lansing then went on to state that to allow a people already under the sovereignty of a nation to have the right to establish a sovereign state by the expression of popular will would be utterly destructive of the political fabric of society. It would lead to constant change and turmoil. The claims that Trotsky made regarding Ireland, India and others, were untenable in Lansing's opinion. They were integral parts of recognised powers, and their devolution would be detrimental to the concept of sovereign states in international relations. Lansing finished by stating that 'However justified may be the principle of local self-government, the necessities of preserving an orderly world

13 Ibid., pp.412-3.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p.413.
16 Heater, p.36. Heater feels that keeping the Russians in the war was the chief raison d'être of the Fourteen Points. ; See also Lansing to Wilson, 10.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, p.564.
require that there should be a national authority with sovereign rights to defend and control the communities within the national boundaries.17

Lansing’s arguments are interesting, as they diverge from those of Wilson’s. In particular, Wilson’s belief that a people could form a sovereign nation from under the sovereignty of another nation, such as Arabia seceding from the Ottoman Empire, differed from the opinions of Lansing. As Heater notes in his book, Wilson was quite aware that national self-determination would have to be tempered by pragmatic considerations at stages. The complete divergence of Wilson’s and Lansing’s views, however, is an excellent example of why Wilson came to rely heavily upon Colonel House in his foreign policy, rather than his Secretary of State.18

Lloyd George’s war aims were proclaimed on 5 January, 1918. He boldly stated that ‘We feel that government with the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war.’19 Lloyd George even offered national self-determination to the ‘natives’ of the German colonies, an unfavourable proposition in the eyes of one of Wilson’s correspondents.20 Later in the speech, Lloyd George stated three conditions for which the British were fighting for a just and lasting peace. The second of those conditions was that ‘...a territorial settlement must be secured on the right of self-determination or the consent of the governed.’21 Although this speech agreed in general terms with Wilson’s concept of national self-determination, the need for an American statement of their position, preferably based on specific examples, became even more pressing.

The Fourteen Points were largely based upon a memorandum by Mezes-Miller-Lippmann, of the Inquiry, which Wilson received on 4 January 1918.22 The Inquiry intended that their recommendations be used as a statement of peace terms, designed

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17 Lansing to Wilson, 2.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, pp.428-9.
18 Heater, pp.50, 211.
19 Balfour to Wilson, 5.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, p.488.
20 Frank William Tansigg to Wilson, 3.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, p.441. The exact sentence was ‘The principle of political self-determination, or popular vote, is obviously not to be applied to Hotentots and South Sea Islanders.’
21 Balfour to Wilson, 5.1.18., in Link (ed.0, 45, p.489.
22 The Inquiry Memorandum, 4.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, p.46
to ‘...cause the maximum disunity in the enemy and the maximum unity among our associates.’ The Inquiry looked at various contentious regions in detail, but for the purposes of this essay we shall focus on the section relating to the Ottoman Empire. The memorandum stated that ‘It is necessary to free the subject races of the Turkish Empire from oppression and misrule.’ At the very least, this implied autonomy for Armenia, and the protection of Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia by the civilised nations. The Straits at Constantinople were to be internationalised, and Turkey was to be treated justly. Turkey was to be freed from its economic and political bondage to Germany, with the cancellation of her war debts to Germany. With this development, and without the power to misgovern alien races, Turkey would be free to concentrate on the needs of her own population.

The memorandum was used by Wilson and House the next day to draft the Fourteen Points speech. As House noted, the major change from the Inquiry draft regarding the Ottoman Empire was the dropping of the specific mention of the individual regions of the Ottoman Empire. House recorded that after the framing of the speech, Wilson changed his mind on this matter, deciding that he wanted to be more specific and mention the regions by name. House claimed that he persuaded Wilson from adopting this course of action, arguing that what they had said was sufficient. The text was left in its non-specific form for the speech. House declared to Wilson that he felt the document was ‘...a declaration of human liberty and a declaration of the terms which should be written into the peace conference.’

The final version of the Fourteen Points was given in a speech to a joint session of Congress on the 8th January, 1918. Wilson called his Fourteen Points a

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23 Ibid., p.468.
24 Ibid., p.471.
26 Diary of House, 9.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, p.550. The entry relates the events of Saturday, 4th January 1918.
27 Ibid., p.553. ; See also Wilson’s draft of the 14 Points, written on the Inquiry Memorandum, 5.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, pp.476-85.
28 Ibid., p.557.
...programme of the world's peace.' For this essay, the most relevant points were numbers five and twelve. Point Five read 'A Free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined. The principle of national self-determination had been established. No peoples could be dealt with as if they were the chattels of a great power.

In Point Twelve, Wilson stated that '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.' The Ottoman Empire was therefore to be dismembered, with each nationality given an opportunity for autonomous development. Whether this autonomous development equated with national self-determination, or what role the Allied powers would take in that development, was not elaborated upon. The phrasing of 'autonomous development' is certainly less emphatic than national self-determination. This statement was, however, more forthright regarding the Ottoman Empire than either Trotsky or Lloyd George’s addresses had been.

Despite the specific examples given by Wilson, the Fourteen Points were not a whole-hearted exposition of the principle of national self-determination. There was no general pronouncement plainly stating adherence to the principle. This flaw was to be corrected by Wilson’s Four Principles speech of early February 1918. Wilson obviously found by mid-January 1918 that his Fourteen Points were being

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29 An Address to a Joint Session of Congress by Wilson, 8.1.18., in Link (ed.), 45, p.534.
30 Ibid., p.537.
31 Ibid., p.538.
32 Heater, pp.43, 44.
33 Heater, p.43.
misconstrued. In a letter to Ray Howard Wilson, he defended the American position by arguing that the United States

‘...is offering...that she will in no case be the aggressor against either the political independence or the territorial integrity of any other state or nation, at the same time that she is proposing and insisting upon similar pledges from all nations of the world who have its peace at heart and are willing to associate themselves for the maintenance of that peace. The very strength of her appeal in this direction comes from the fact that she is willingly to bind herself and give pledges of the utmost solemnity for her own good faith and disinterestedness. If this is understood, there could be no question of fear or suspicion.’

The Fourteen Points address had been answered by both the German and Austrian governments. Both governments were ambiguous or non-committal to the Wilson’s proposals. The German reply insisted on the maintenance of its colonial territories as a basis for peace, while the Austrians omitted to reply to this point. Regarding the Ottoman Empire, Germany stated that it would support Turkey in that matter, while the Austrians stated that they could not subscribe to the violation of the sovereign rights of Turkey. Wilson’s reply was the Four Principles, where he answered and criticised the Central Powers’ answers to his previous address, and fully defined his concept of national self-determination. He criticised Goerg Hertling, the German Chancellor, in particular, noting that Hertling wanted public diplomacy confined to generalities. Wilson found this ridiculous, as the questions of territory and sovereignty that had to be discussed and settled could not be done in a general manner.

Wilson then proceeded to attack the German government for believing that it could ignore self-determination. Wilson said that ‘People are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference or an understanding between rivals and antagonists. National aspirations must be respected; peoples may now only be dominated and governed by their own consent. “Self-determination” is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will

34 Wilson to Ray Howard Wilson, 16.1.18., in Link (ed.), 46, p.5.
35 Czernin and Hertling Addresses, 3.2.18., in Link (ed.), 46, pp.223-4.
36 An Address to a Joint Session of Congress by Wilson, 11.2.18., in Link (ed.), 46, p.319.
enceforth ignore at their peril." Later, Wilson also noted that "This war had its roots in the disregard of the rights of small nations and of nationalities which lacked the union and the force to make good their claim to determine their own allegiances and their forms of political life."  

These powerful statements served as preambles to the Four Principles. They were as follows:

First, that each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring peace that will be permanent;

Second, that peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power; but that

Third, every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the Interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival states; and

Fourth, that all well defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world.  

National self-determination had been defined, once and for all. Justice was to be the basis for every settlement. Wilson had renounced the old European power politics by stating that peoples and provinces were not chattels of the great powers. It was the interests and desires of the populations of these regions that was paramount in the territorial settlement. National aspirations were to be recognised so as to benefit not only those national movements, but the peace of Europe and the world. Everyone was to benefit from national self-determination. Wilson concluded his speech by reaffirming the American position in the war. The true spirit of American people was "...that men everywhere may know that our passion for justice and for self-government is no mere passion of words but a passion which, once set out in action, must be

37 Ibid., p.321.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., pp.322-3.
satisfied. The power of the United States is a menace to no nation or people. It will never be used in aggression or for the aggrandisement of any selfish interest of our own. It springs out of freedom and is for the service of freedom.\textsuperscript{40}

Wilson had defined what he meant by national self-determination. The views that he had elaborated in the Fourteen Points and the Four Principles were hailed as a basis for a just peace. Thomas Masaryk wrote to Wilson, praising Wilson for bringing to the world the ‘...principles in which American citizens have been bred.’\textsuperscript{41} A Mrs Catt, writing to Wilson about the suffragette cause, noted that ‘...you declared an unforgettable formula upon which your great Republic awaits a victory - the right of peoples to self-determination and a durable peace for generations to come.’\textsuperscript{42} There were some criticisms. Creel wrote to Wilson detailing a letter from Norman Angell, in which Angell argued that ‘self-determination of peoples’ implied the dissolution of the international order, making international co-operation impossible.\textsuperscript{43}

Despite outlining his position in two speeches, Wilson spent a great deal of time in 1918 reiterating and explaining his position on national self-determination and its implications. In an address at Mount Vernon in July, Wilson argued that the ends that the United States and the associated Allies were fighting for were based on the ‘...free acceptance of a settlement by the people immediately concerned,’\textsuperscript{44} In reply to questions about the German desire to enslave the Slavs, the Baltic, and the Turkish Empire, Wilson said ‘In such a programme our ideals, the ideals of justice and humanity and liberty, the principle of free self-determination of nations upon which all the modern world insists can play no part.’\textsuperscript{45}

In particular, Wilson spent a considerable amount of time explaining his position on the territorial settlement to his Associated Allies. In late October, House

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., pp.323-4.

\textsuperscript{41} Thomas Garrigue Masaryk to Wilson, 5.8.18., in Link (ed.), 49, p.185.

\textsuperscript{42} Joseph Patrick Tumulty to Wilson, with Enclosure from Mrs Catt, c.16.5.18., in Link (ed.), 48, p.25.

\textsuperscript{43} Creel to Wilson, 15.7.18., in Link (ed.), 48, pp.618-9.

\textsuperscript{44} An Address at Mount Vernon by Wilson, 4.7.18., in Link (ed.), 48, p.516.

\textsuperscript{45} An Address by Wilson, 6.4.18., in Link (ed.), 47, p.269.
sent the Cobb-Lippmann memorandum, written by members of the Inquiry, to Wilson from Paris. In this telegram, two members of the Inquiry had attempted to elaborate upon the Fourteen Points so as to make the American position clearer to the French. The telegram actually seemed to retreat from the position of the Fourteen Points. Point Five, relating to the adjustment of colonial claims, worried the French as they thought that this meant a reopening of all colonial questions, as Trotsky had suggested. As the telegram argued, however, this was not the case. The Point was only to apply to those colonial claims created by the war. 46 Regarding Point Twelve relating to the Ottoman Empire, the French had had similar difficulties with the definition of ‘autonomous’, especially as they had been promised control of Syria. The telegram, therefore, made some preliminary recommendations about the eventual territorial settlement, especially regarding the role of mandates in the post-war Ottoman Empire. 47 As we shall now examine, the creation of the mandate system at Paris would be essential for the eventual implementation of national self-determination in the Ottoman Empire.

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46 Three Telegrams from House to Wilson, 29.10.1918., in Link (ed.), 50, p.497.

47 Ibid., p.503.
Chapter Two: The Mandate System.

The principle of self-determination which Wilson had been proclaiming during American involvement in World War One clashed with European Imperialism. During 1917, Wilson had learnt of the secret agreements between the Allied powers over the partitioning of the territories and colonies of the Central powers. Most notable amongst these were the agreements dismembering the Ottoman Empire and reapportioning its territories among the Allies.\(^1\) In August 1917, the American Ambassador to France, William Graves Sharp, had written to Lansing detailing a conversation that he had had with the French Foreign Minister, Paul Cambon. Cambon had informed Sharp of the interests of France, Russia and Great Britain in Asia Minor. Russia had been promised Armenia, France was to be given Syria, and Great Britain was to control the Valley of the Euphrates. Italy was also very insistent about obtaining territory in the eastern Mediterranean.\(^2\)

This mirrored an earlier conversation that Wilson and Balfour had had detailing the division of spoils that the Allies envisioned after the war. Balfour told Wilson that Italy had been ‘promised pretty much what she demanded.’\(^3\) He had spoken with regret about these agreements, calling the whole process ‘dividing up the bearskin before the bear was killed.’\(^4\) Wilson, in replying to Cambon, had said that it would be exceedingly difficult to reconcile the American people or the opinion of the world to a peace settlement that was in favour of various powers rather than the inhabitants of the regions in question.\(^5\) As Wilson surmised, ‘The sentiment of the world in which we all share is aggressively democratic and we all wish to go out and meet it more than halfway.’\(^6\)

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1. See Appendix.
3. House’s Diary, 28.4.17., in Link (ed.), 42, p.156.
4. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
Wilson came to the Paris Peace Conference, therefore, aware that he would face resistance in implementing national self-determination from the Allied powers who stood to gain from a territorial settlement based upon the war time agreements. Wilson had made his position on self-determination very clear when he had approved a draft of a covenant for a League of Nations in July 1918. Article Twenty of that draft had read,

"The Contracting Powers unite in several guarantees to each other of their territorial integrity and political independence, subject however, to such territorial modifications, if any, as may become necessary in the future by reasons of change in racial conditions and aspirations, pursuant to the principle of self-determination and as shall also be regarded by three-fourths of the Delegates as necessary and proper for the welfare of the peoples concerned; recognising also that all territorial changes involve equitable compensation and that the peace of the world is superior in importance and interest to questions of boundary."

This draft article was modified in September 1918, with more emphasis being placed upon the agreement of the peoples involved in territorial adjustments. The point was clear. Wilson viewed the complete and full implementation of self-determination as a prerequisite for a just and long-lasting peace settlement.

The question was, therefore, how to reconcile European colonialism and national self-determination. This was especially important in regard to the Ottoman Empire as the Allied powers viewed the Empire’s territories as the spoils of war. The British asked the Americans to clarify their demands for peace in mid September. House at first reiterated the American position as set out in the Four Principles speech. In the Cobb-Lippmann memorandum, formulated by members of the Inquiry, mention was made to the French of a possible mandate system. In regard to the interests of the populations of the German colonies, the memorandum stated that ‘It would seem that the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as a trustee for the natives and for the interests of the society of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted

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7 House to Wilson, 16.7.18., in Link (ed.), 48, p.636.
9 Benedict Cowell to Wilson, 17.9.18., in Link (ed.), 50, p.47.
10 House to Wilson, 29.20.18., in Link (ed.), 50, p.497.
are a matter of international concern and may be legitimately be the subject of international inquiry and that the peace conference may, therefore, write a code of colonial conduct binding upon colonial powers.\footnote{Three Telegrams from House to Wilson, 29.10.1918., in Link (ed.), 50, p.497.}

This uncertainty about the implementation of national self-determination was seen in the programme of questions to be discussed at the peace conference, which House sent to Wilson in mid-November. The first major heading was the 'Settlement of the War'. In the second section of this heading, territorial questions were to be discussed. Such questions involved the '...restitution of territories and territories neutralised for the purpose of protection.'\footnote{House to Wilson, 15.11.18., in Link (ed.), 53, p.92.} In a note under this heading, the question was posed as to what this last phrase meant. Did it refer to protectorates, or neutral states?\footnote{Ibid.} In a letter of the same day, House outlined the American position on plebiscites to Lansing.\footnote{House to Lansing, 15.11.18., in Link (ed.), 53, p.91.} Entering the peace conference, therefore, there was considerable confusion among the Americans and the Allies as to how self-determination was to be applied in the territorial settlement. As Wilson argued to members of the B'nai B'rith Jewish organisation in late November, 'It is one thing to give a people its right of self-determination, but is another to enter into its internal affairs and get satisfactory guarantees of the use it will make of its independence and its power, because that, in a way, involves a kind of supervision which is hateful to the people concerned and difficult to those who undertake it.'\footnote{Wilson to members of B'nai B'rith, 28.11.18., in Link (ed.), 53, p.239.}

The result of discussions at Paris was the mandate system. The development of this system can be seen in the drafts of a covenant for the League of Nations. It is out of these drafts that article twenty two, which established the mandate system, would come. In the first draft, the League of Nations was to be the '...residuary trustee with sovereign right of ultimate disposal or of continued administration...'\footnote{A Draft of a Covenant, 8.1.1919., in Link (ed.), 53, p.685.} This sovereignty was to be based upon certain fundamental principles, those principles being that '...there shall in no case be any annexation of any of these territories by any
state either within the League or outside of it, and that in the future government of these peoples and territories the rule of self-determination, or the consent of the governed to their form of government, shall be fairly and reasonably applied, and all policies of administration or economic development be based primarily upon the well-considered interests of the peoples themselves.  

Even if national self-determination was not to be implemented completely, the interests of the indigenous populations were still to be paramount over the interests of the mandatory. Whether or not the League could enforce the mandates in such a manner that mandatories did not abuse their position in the individual states was yet to be seen. Given the desire of France, Italy and Greece to obtain colonial possessions from the war in the Ottoman Empire, the possibility of such abuse was very real.

This draft was developed in subsequent re-workings of the appendix to the covenant of the League of Nations. David Miller, of the Inquiry, produced the final copy of these drafts. In his draft, which related to the colonies of the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire, the well-being and development of the peoples of these territories were to form a sacred trust, and the performance of this trust was to be guaranteed in the constitution of the League. The draft went on to say that "The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as mandatories on behalf of the League."  

The nature of the mandates differed according to a number of factors. Those factors included the stage of development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic situation and 'other circumstances.' Having stated this, the draft then detailed a threefold classification of mandates. The 'A' mandates

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17 Ibid.
19 David Hunter Miller, 3.2.19., in Link (ed.), 54, p.449.
20 Ibid.
affected only the Ottoman Empire. These forms of mandates were described by the memorandum as ‘Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire [which] had reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory power 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 power.’ National self-determination was therefore not to be directly implemented. Instead, those territories and peoples desiring self-determination would be ‘ushered’ into the world as sovereign states. While they developed the necessary administrative capabilities, they would be placed under the guidance of a mandatory power, who would assist their development towards independence.

The mandate system, and the classifications of the Ottoman Empire into the ‘A’ category, posed some interesting questions. To what extent was the mandate system in the Ottoman Empire merely national self-determination deferred? The Fourteen Points had promised secure sovereignty for the Turkish portions of the Empire, but only ‘autonomous development’ for the non-Turkish portions. While the mandates allowed for this development, at least in theory, it was a great deal less than the promise of self-determination. The attitude of the individual mandatories would be crucial for the successful implementation of the mandates. As both the Allied powers and the indigenous populations obviously came to view the mandates as window-dressing for colonialism, the second of Wilson’s Four Principles, that peoples and provinces were not to be bartered from sovereignty to sovereignty, was severely compromised.

Did national self-determination differ in American eyes in its application to the Ottoman Empire than it did to European nationalities? Certainly the concept seems to

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21 Ibid.; Heater, p.91.
22 Heater, p.91.
have been easier to apply to Europe. The idea denying of Poland or Czechoslovakia their freedom was expressly against the aims of the Wilson Administration. As their status as independent countries did not conflict with the territorial plans of the Allied Powers, and as independence in these countries was a fait accompli by the end of the war, they obtained national self-determination with the blessing of the Allied and Associated Powers. Where the principle of national self-determination and imperialism did coincide, however, the mandate system was imposed. While this seems cynical, there is little doubt that Wilson did believe that this was the most practical manner in which to achieve self-determination in the Ottoman Empire. It seemingly mitigated the colonial ambitions of the powers, while providing for the continued progress of the mandate countries toward the goal of self-determination. It was also consistent with his belief that national self-determination would have to be applied pragmatically. A healthy dose of cynicism and the continued presence of the United States in the settlement after June 1919, however, might have produced more constructive results for the peoples of the Ottoman Empire.

The specific nature of the ‘A’ mandates was undecided by the end of the Paris Peace Conference in late June 1919. This was because of the uncertainty of the American role in accepting a mandate, a dilemma that will be discussed in the next chapter. Some attempts were made to define these mandates. Professor Westermann, of the Inquiry, drafted some general clauses for the Ottoman mandates in April 1919. All authority in the mandates was to be subject to the League of Nations. The mandate was to last for no longer than twenty-five years, and was revocable by the League. It was the duty of the mandatory power to prepare the people of the territory for self-government, which was to be essentially popular in form. The economic, political and civil rights of all citizens regardless of their religious beliefs, was heavily emphasised throughout the memorandum.

House later made a proposal regarding the ‘A’ mandates to the commissioners debating the Ottoman Treaty in Paris. It was a more detailed version of the general

24 Allen Barlit Pond (War Committee of the Union League Club of Chicago) to Wilson, 13.7.17., in Link (ed.), 43, p.169. ; Thomas Masaryk to Wilson, 5.8.18., in Link (ed.), 49, p.185. ; Heater, p.50.
auses prepared by Westermann. The development of an organic law, the establishment of an efficient administration able to independently govern the country, and the accordance of freedom of conscience and religious worship were all emphasised. There were to be restraints upon the economic exploitation of the territory by the mandatory. The mandatory was to report to the League annually, so that the League might supervise the progress of the territory. \(^{26}\) This possible structure of the ‘A’ mandates was disputed by Clemenceau, who stated that any discussion of the form of mandates for the Ottoman Empire was futile as no settlement had been reached with that Empire. He also disputed whether the mandate system had been recognised for use in the territories of the former Ottoman Empire, as no decision had been reached regarding the abandonment of Turkish sovereignty over Turkey. This position was refuted by Wilson and Lansing. They argued that Article Twenty Two conclusively showed that portions of the Turkish Empire were to be placed under mandatory Powers. They urged the continued consideration of the form of the ‘A’ mandate, accusing Clemenceau of delaying the whole procedure. \(^{27}\) By the end of August 1919, no decision had yet been reached over the ‘A’ mandates. To fully comprehend how this eventuated, especially as the ‘B’ and ‘C’ mandates had been allotted during the first half of 1919, we must examine the negotiations relating to the settlement of the Ottoman Empire. \(^{28}\)


\(^{27}\) Lansing to Polk, 29.8.19., in Link (ed.), 62, pp.579-80.

Chapter Three: The Settlement of Turkey and Armenia

Despite the fact that the United States was never at war with the Ottoman Empire, the subject of the territorial settlement in the Ottoman Empire was discussed in the Wilson Administration as early as May 1917. Lansing wrote to Wilson, detailing the findings of Henry Garfield Alsberg, a New York lawyer who had just returned from Turkey. Lansing wrote that ‘...to the Turks the preservation of Constantinople was the all-important thing, that he [Alsberg] believed that they would give up Palestine, Syria, and Armenia in order to hold Constantinople, even though it was under a practical protectorate like Egypt.'¹ The Allied war aims relating to the Ottoman Empire were conveyed to the Americans in the same month by Balfour. In a speech by Balfour to the Imperial War Cabinet delivered in March 1917, a copy of which was given to Wilson in May, Balfour had stated that the ‘...practical destruction of the Turkish Empire is undoubtedly one of the objects which we desire to obtain.'² If the Allies were successful, Balfour argued, then Turkey would be deprived of Arabia and the Valley of the Euphrates and Tigris. She would lose Constantinople, Syria, Armenia, and the southern parts of Asia Minor would be annexed or fall under the control of the Entente Powers.³

The American policy regarding the Ottoman Empire had not developed in any depth during the first half of 1917. House noted in his diary in April that it had been agreed between Balfour and Wilson that Constantinople and the Straits would have to be internationalised. The Americans were also now aware of the variety of secret agreements between the Allied powers which partitioned the territories of the Ottoman Empire between the powers. As House detailed, the agreements gave Russia a sphere of influence in Armenia and north Anatolia. The British were to receive Mesopotamia

² Balfour to Wilson, 18.5.17., in Link (ed.), 42, p.332.
³ Ibid.
nd Palestine. Italy was to have a sphere of influence in southern Anatolia, while the French were also to have a sphere of influence in Anatolia, and were to receive Syria.4

American policy towards the Ottoman Empire during 1917 and 1918 was influenced by the fact that the United States was not at war with the Ottoman Empire. Wilson entertained thoughts of declaring war, or of the Ottoman Empire declaring an early peace. They were discarded, however, as it was felt that if the Ottoman Empire was to declare peace, it would make the dismemberment and reorganisation of its territories along the lines of national self-determination very difficult.5 The powers were unwilling to interfere with the territorial sovereignty of a nation state. While this seemed a pragmatic approach to the implementation of self-determination, it is worth noting that the major objections of the Allies were based on self-interest. If they defeated the Ottoman Empire unconditionally, then they could manage the territorial settlement to their benefit, as proposed in the secret treaties.6

By late 1918, with the formulation of the Fourteen Points, a more definite position had been reached by Wilson and his administration regarding the settlement of the Ottoman Empire. For the purposes of this chapter, we will only look at the settlement of Turkey, Armenia and the Straits question. The remaining portions of the Empire will be dealt with in the next chapter. In the Cobb-Lippmann memorandum of late October 1918, the following explanations were made to the French of the Fourteen Points as they related to the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish portions of the Empire were to be assured a secure sovereignty, with the other nationalities being assured an ‘...undoubted security of life and an unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.’7 The Straits and Constantinople were to be internationalised, although they would remain in nominal Turkish control. The

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5 Wilson to Lansing, 28.11.17., in Link (ed.), 45, p.149.

6 Ibid.

7 Three Telegrams from House to Wilson, with Enclosure, 29.10.18., in Link (ed.), 53, p.503.
memorandum suggested that the control of this important mandate would be placed in the hands of one mandatory power or a number of powers.\(^8\)

The Cobb-Lippmann memorandum recommended that Anatolia be reserved for the Turks. The Greek areas of Asia Minor were to be placed under a special international control, with Greece as the mandatory. Armenia was to be given a port on the Mediterranean, with a power to protect the new state. The memorandum also felt that a general code of guarantees binding upon all mandatories in Asia Minor should be written into the peace treaty. They thought that these guarantees should provide provisions for minorities and the open door.\(^9\)

A much less detailed plan for discussions about the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was put forward by the French. They agreed that the complete reorganisation of the Empire by intervention in her internal regime was 'worthy of consideration.'\(^10\) They felt that discussion of the fate of these nationalities was better left to the conference, so that any peace preliminaries would not be seen as pledging the Allies to the maintenance of the Empire. The French felt that it would be better that the fate of the Ottoman Empire was determined without the encumbrance of negotiations with that Empire.\(^11\) The French attitude is interesting. The American position, as stated in the Cobb-Lippmann memorandum, implied that national self-determination was to be applied to the Ottoman Empire, even if in the slightly diluted form of the mandate system. The French, however, were ambiguous about self-determination's application and the role of nationalities within the empire. The principle's application would certainly have interfered with their intentions to obtain territories in the Ottoman Empire. It is highly questionable, therefore, as to whether the French were sincere in their belief in national self-determination, notwithstanding the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918 which promised self-determination to the Arabs.\(^12\)

\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Polk to Wilson, with Enclosures, 2.12.18., in Link (ed.), 53, p.294.
\(^11\) Ibid.
\(^12\) Hankey's notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, 13.2.19., in Link (ed.), 55, pp.141-2.
The specific manner of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was formulated at Paris. The result was the mandate system. Having agreed to this compromise between national self-determination and colonialism, it left the major problem of allocating the individual mandates to the Allied Powers. The American position was complicated by its lack of official position in regard to these discussions as it had not been at war with the Ottoman Empire. Wilson was determined, however, to be involved in the allotment of mandates. As the Acting Secretary of State, conveyed to the French Chargé to the United States, Chambrun, ‘...the United States is deeply interested in the determination of all questions relating to the permanent settlement of Turkish affairs.’ Perhaps the major victory for the mandate system, or so Wilson felt, was that the assumption of sovereignty over the territories of the Empire by the League of Nations gave Wilson a voice in their appropriation as a signatory of the League Covenant. Given the allotment of mandates along the lines of the secret treaties in the months following Wilson’s departure from Paris, and the failure of the United States to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and therefore the League Covenant, the assumption of sovereignty by the League was a phyrric victory. National self-determination was not enshrined in the mandate system, at least not in reality. The Allied powers would continue to treat the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire as a division of spoils, with the desires of the local populations largely ignored.

This ‘voice’ in the territorial settlement can be seen in the memorandum for the Council of Four, drafted by Wilson, entitled the ‘Future Administration of Certain Portions of the Turkish Empire under the Mandatory System.’ This memorandum was written as instructions for what would become the King-Crane Commission. It

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14 Gelfand, pp.226-7.; Evans, pp.105-6.; Benedict Cowell to Wilson, 17.9.18., in Link (ed.), 50, p.47.
does, however, set out the basis of the mandate system in the Ottoman Empire, as agreed to by the Council of Four. Certain areas of the Turkish Empire, especially Palestine, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Cilicia and parts of Asia Minor were to be separated from Turkey per se. The development of the peoples in these areas was to be placed under the guidance of governments who were to act as mandatories for the League of Nations. The need for this separation was based upon the alleged historical mis-government by the Turks of these subject peoples.16

The remainder of the memorandum reiterates the basis of the mandate system. The peoples of the Ottoman Empire, who were ‘...not yet able to stand by themselves’, would be governed on behalf of the League by a mandatory power.17 This was thought to be the best method of advancing these nations towards autonomy. As the communities of the Ottoman Empire had ‘reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations’ could be provisionally recognised, the wishes of these communities was a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory powers.18 The importance of this memorandum lies not so much in its definition of the mandate system, but the fact that the other members of the Council of Four recognised and accepted an American role in the settlement of the Ottoman Empire.

The acceptance of an American role in the settlement of the Ottoman Empire was temporary, as was the implied acceptance of national self-determination as a basis for peace. This was made clear by the actions of the Allied powers both during and after Wilson’s involvement in the settlement process. Italy and Greece made it obvious by their landing of troops in Asia Minor and Anatolia that they regarded self-determination as secondary to the securing of territories. Although less overt, the French also showed their contempt for the principle by their insistence upon obtaining Syria, regardless of the dislike of the Arab population towards them. The American influence in the settlement, especially Wilson’s insistence of the application of national self-determination through the mandates, was fleeting.

16 Ibid., pp.27-3.
17 Ibid., p.272.
18 Ibid., pp.273-4.
In achieving an actual territorial settlement for the Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire, Wilson relied heavily upon a memorandum co-authored by Henry King, the President of Oberlin (Ohio) College, and Richard Crane, a Chicago businessman, who would later head the King-Crane Commission which would travel to the Ottoman Empire to assess the desires of the indigenous population towards the allocation of the mandates to the individual mandates. They warned against any specific exploitation of the territorial settlement of the Ottoman Empire. Any such settlement would lead to moral condemnation from around the world.\(^{19}\) The memorandum then argued that it was clear that the Ottoman Empire must cease to exist. The repeated massacres of the Armenians and the Syrians had proved the Turkish incapacity for good government. The strategic position of Constantinople and the Straits demanded that they be taken out of the hands of the Turks. The Sultan should be removed from Constantinople. The memorandum was also sceptical about the benefits of maintaining a unified Asia Minor. In their opinion, the Muslim races of Asia Minor did not constitute a truly unified national group. King and Crane also felt that the role of the Greeks and Armenians within the Empire, and the long relations between the Empire and Greece, France, Italy and Great Britain should be recognised. These recommendations would change substantially following their investigations in the Ottoman Empire later in 1919.\(^{20}\)

The memorandum then went on to say; 'But if the principles of national unity and of self-determination are to be applied at all to the Turkish people, at least a large central portion of Asia Minor, sufficient to provide for the bulk of Turks under a single mandate, and with adequate outlets to the sea, should be left to them. For the present, such a province should be under a mandatory power, in order to secure to the Turks themselves that good government which they have so notoriously lacked. “The wishes of these communities,” moreover, as the Covenant of the League of Nations says, “must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.”\(^{21}\)

\(^{19}\) A Memorandum by Henry Churchill King and Charles Richard Crane, c.1.5.19., in Link (ed.), 58, pp.322-3.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., pp.324-5.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p.325.
The recommendations made by the memorandum regarding Asia Minor, if a single mandate was rejected, were as following:

An American mandate for an International state at Constantinople;
A mandate for Anatolia, under supervision to be determined, providing for the bulk of the Turkish people;
An autonomous Greek region within Anatolia, including Smyrna, but not cutting off Turkish access to the Sea;
An American mandate for Armenia and the rest of the northern portion of Turkey, including Adana, to give access to the Mediterranean Sea.22

The role of the United States in the territorial settlement was most obvious in regard to the formation of an Armenian state. The demands of the Armenians had been related to Wilson in late 1918 by the American Ambassador to Italy. Those demands were the ‘...territorial liberty, complete elimination of Turkish sovereignty, recognition by the Allies of Armenian State, unification of Russia and Turkish Armenia into one free state, the solution of Persian-Armenian provinces left to the Allies, along with the geographical limitation of territory.'23 Wilson had considerable empathy with the Armenian cause. In a reply to Pope Benedict XV, Wilson argued that the Allies should secure the ‘...protection of right and the complete deliverance from unjust subjection’ of the Armenians.24 Wilson’s empathy for Armenia stemmed from his belief in the sentimental ties between the United States and Armenia. The United States had ‘...permanent interests of long standing, ..where a good deal of money had been spent by Americans for the relief of the Armenian people.'25

Wilson constantly urged the American people to accept a mandate for Armenia based upon the ties between the two countries. In February 1919, when the idea of an American mandate for Armenia had just been mooted, Wilson remarked to the

22 Ibid., p.326.
23 Ambassador to Italy (Page) to Secretary of State, 13.11.18., in FRUS - The Paris Peace Conference, Vol.II, p.271. The demands of the Armenian delegation regarding the formation of an Armenian state were originally made to the Pope.
Democratic Committee that ‘...I am not without hope that the people of the United States would find it acceptable to go in and be the trustees of the interests of the Armenian people....and give the industrious and earnest people of Armenia time to develop a country which is naturally rich with possibilities.’ At a press conference just prior to his departure from Paris, Wilson replied to a question regarding the possibility of American mandates by saying that ‘As to a mandate for Armenia, I am inclined to think that our people would consider it favourably, for they have always shown much interest in Armenia.’

Wilson’s belief in American empathy for the Armenians was based upon the humanitarian relief and aid which had been provided to Armenia in the previous forty years. This relief had been forthcoming due to the continued massacres and oppression of the Armenians by the Ottoman Government. The continued oppression of the Christian Armenians by the Muslim Turks was the basis for Wilson’s statement that the American people had a ‘lack of sympathy’ for the Turks.

Wilson’s empathy with the Armenians induced him to tentatively accept a mandate for Armenia. Both Clemenceau and Lloyd George expressed their desire for the United States to accept this mandate, along with one for Constantinople and the Straits. This was due to the perception that the United States was viewed as being a disinterested party in the Near East, when compared to the territorial possessions and ambitions of the Allied powers in the region. Wilson only tentatively accepted these mandates, as he felt that he could not commit the United States to such an undertaking without the assent of the Senate. In Wilson’s eyes, however, American involvement in Armenia was preferable to that of the French or Italians, the other

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26 Remarks to the Democratic Committee by Wilson, 28.2.19., in Link (ed.), 55, p.322.
29 House to Wilson, 7.3.19., in Link (ed.), 55, p.459.
choices as mandatories, as Wilson felt that neither of these two countries were particularly trustworthy. 30  

The acceptance of an American mandate for Armenia never came to fruition. As the United States never ratified the Treaty of Versailles, and therefore never entered the League of Nations, it was not in a position to accept the mandate. Given the uncertainty over the American position towards the mandates in late June 1919, discussion of the whole Turkish question was postponed until the American position could be ascertained. 31  By August, Wilson wrote to Lansing stating that he felt that it was unwise at that stage to assume a mandate for Armenia, or to replace British troops in Armenia with American troops. 32  At the same time, Wilson was increasingly worried about the aggressive Turkish forces that were attacking the Armenian state. These fears were confirmed in late August 1919, when Charles Warren Fowle, the Foreign Secretary of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, wrote to Tumulty detailing a letter that had been sent to Dodge recounting the destruction of the Armenian forces by the Turks and the Tartars. 33  Two days later, the King-Crane Commission recommended a separate Armenian state, under the protection of a mandatory power. As will be detailed in the postscript, however, the Armenian state would cease to exist in the following year as it was divided between Turkish and Russian armies. It had been absorbed into the new Turkish and Russian states.  

If the acceptance of a mandate for Armenia was based upon sentiment, then Wilson viewed the American acceptance of a mandate for Constantinople and the Straits as imperative for a successful territorial settlement of the Ottoman Empire. As Wilson stated to the Democratic Committee, ‘...the idea...is to delimit the territory

30 James Viscount Bryce to Lansing, 15.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, p.401. ; For Wilson’s official acceptance of the mandates, see Hankey’s and Mantoux’s Notes for the Council of Four, 14.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, p.147.  
around Constantinople to include the Straits and set up a mandate for that territory that will make those Straits open to the nations of the world without any conditions and make Constantinople truly international - an internationalised free city and a free port. And America is the only nation in the world that can undertake that mandate and have the rest of the world believe that it is undertaken in good faith, that we do not mean to stay there and set up our own sovereignty. So that it would be a very serious matter for the confidence of the world in this treaty if the United States did not accept a mandate for Constantinople.\(^\text{34}\)

As already mentioned, both Clemenceau and Lloyd George expressed their desire that the United States accept a mandate for Constantinople and the Straits.\(^\text{35}\) This mandate would be separate from the Turkish state that would be formed in Anatolia and Asia Minor. As with Armenia, Wilson accepted an American mandate for Constantinople on the understanding that he would require Senate approval for such an American commitment.\(^\text{36}\) Wilson later argued in his speech to the Democratic Committee that the United States was the only country that could take a mandate at Constantinople and administer it unselfishly. The United States did not have the interests in the area that the other European nations did. An American mandate would remove Constantinople from European politics. Wilson even argued that once Constantinople was separated from the Turkish Empire, it would be of little consequence.\(^\text{37}\) Constantinople was to be like the Panama Canal. The American

\(^{34}\) Remarks to the Democratic Committee by Wilson, 28.2.19., in Link (ed.), 55, p.322.

\(^{35}\) House to Wilson, 7.3.19., in Link (ed.), 55, p.459.


presence was there merely to keep the Dardanelles open and the allow a free sea route to the Black Sea.\textsuperscript{38}

The mandate for Constantinople was a delicate subject. This was not just because of the territorial ambitions of the colonial powers. The Fourteen Points had created an expectation in the implementation of self-determination for the Turkish people. The American Commissioner at Constantinople, Heck, wrote to the American Ambassador to France, Sharp, in early 1919, regarding the attitude of the Turkish population of that city. He said, ‘As publicly expressed, their chief hope is in the application of the President’s principles of nationality and self-determination, as they feel that other Allied Powers are likely to be more severe than the United States.’\textsuperscript{39} As can be seen from the compromise regarding national self-determination in the form of the mandate system, the desire of the population of the Ottoman Empire for self-determination was countered by European colonialism. The fears of the Turkish population at Constantinople were well-founded. As American influence over the Ottoman settlement waned, so did the importance of a settlement based upon Wilson’s principle. Despite the obvious support for self-determination within the empire, it was colonialism that would be the basis for the settlement.

Twice in May 1919, Wilson was notified of the feelings of the Turkish population regarding the mandate system. They viewed mandates as a cover for imperialism. A memorandum received by Wilson regarding the assumption of Greek control over Smyrna stated that the Turks were awaiting the execution of Wilson’s principles. The memorandum went on to state that ‘...the Turks who have entrusted in the principles of Wilson had also placed their trust in the people of the United States....Smyrna can be given as a present to a foreign country only after the death of the Turks there.’\textsuperscript{40} Later in the month, Wilson received a message from the President of the National Unity League of the Ottoman Empire, Ahmed Riza, which declared


\textsuperscript{40} John Charles Frémont to Cary Travers Grayson, 18.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, pp.252-3.
that ‘According to the principles which you solemnly proclaimed in your different messages, the parts of which regarding Turkey were very clearly defined, the Ottoman people were convinced that its future destinies were assured by the application of these principles. The recent decision, however, of the allied powers regarding the Smyrna provinces, of which 83 per cent of the population is essentially Turkish, proves that the aspirations and desires, of which the Turkish territories were always the object, are on the point of being put into execution under the forms of mandates conceded to the different powers without taking into consideration the right of existence of the Ottoman nation.’

Mantoux’s notes of the Council of Four show that at the time that Wilson received the above information about the desires of the Turkish population, he stated that ‘All we owe the Turkish population is the right to live and the guarantee of a good administration.’ No mention was made regarding the desire of the Turkish population not to be placed under a mandate, or the carving up of Asia Minor and Anatolia between the Allied powers. The unhappiness of the Turkish population regarding the mandate system was reiterated to Wilson by a letter from William Shepherd Benson. In that letter, Benson recounted the findings of Rear-Admiral Bristol, at Constantinople, and Captain J. H. Dayton, the commander of the American battleship ‘Arizona’, which was stationed near Smyrna, in Turkey. Bristol said that he had been called upon by ‘Turks of all classes’. They had stated that if a mandate for Smyrna was to be granted, then Greece was the last country that they would chose. Despite this, Greece would to be granted the mandate, with Greek troops having already occupied Smyrna. The letter goes on to say that ‘It now becomes possible for any one to say that we have joined with European countries in the partition of Turkey. The Turks argue that they had agreed to an Armistice on the basis of Point 12 of the Fourteen Points, and that they had been deceived. I believe that we should not

42 Mantoux’s notes of the Council of Four, 13.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, p.100.
be drawn into any of the affairs of this part of the world. However, if we must become a mandatory, we should stand out for the whole of Turkey.  

By May 1919, therefore, Wilson had received a sufficient body of credible information regarding the aspirations of the Turkish people. At Paris, however, there was continued debate over how Turkey was to be dismembered within the mandate framework, and who was to receive what territorial portions. Wilson was able to propose the following territorial settlement to the Council of Four in the same month. A mandate was to be established over Constantinople. Greece was to annex the region of Asia Minor around Smyrna; Turkish territory was to have three distinct divisions. There was to be a Greek mandate in the vilayet of Aidin, near Smyrna; an Italian mandate over southern Anatolia; and a French mandate over northern and central Anatolia. Turkey was in need of the mandate system as it was no longer able to protect the interests of the populations under its sovereignty and is not now in a position to develop the natural resources of the country. Despite the pleas of the Turkish population that Wilson had been made aware of, Turkey was to be divided between a number of countries, none of whom the local population trusted.

Why did Wilson take this position? The proposed settlement did not seem to take into account any of the information regarding the desires of the local population which Wilson had received. Certainly the proposed settlement was not based upon national self-determination. Wilson was obviously influenced by the recommendations of King and Crane, preferring to base this settlement upon their memorandum rather than the primary evidence that he was receiving from Turkey. It was only later evidence, such as from the Indian delegation introduced to Wilson by Lloyd George in May, that Wilson would insist upon the implementation of self-determination in Turkey in the form of a single mandate for Anatolia.

The territorial settlement was complicated soon after Wilson’s proposal due to the delegation of Muslim Indians. They urged the Allied powers not to dismember

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44 Ibid.
45 Hankey’s and Mantoux’s notes for the Council of Four, 14.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, p.137.
46 Ibid., p.147.
Turkey, and to allow the Sultan to remain at Constantinople as the titular head of the Muslim religion. In their opinion, the process of granting mandates to colonial powers was causing widespread agitation within the Muslim world. The delegation feared that should it continue, there would be a renewal of religious wars between Christians and Muslims.\(^{48}\)

The delegation had a considerable effect upon both the British and the Americans. Lloyd George, who introduced the delegation to Wilson, stated in the Council of Four that he was now in favour of keeping the Khalifate at Constantinople, so as to stop agitation in the Muslim world.\(^{49}\)William Westermann, of the Inquiry, noted that Wilson had told him in a interview that the delegation had ‘...also brought up the President’s declaration of Jan. 8, 1918 (Art. XII of the Fourteen Points) which guaranteed the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire within the Turkish portions thereof, and cited an additional speech of Mr Lloyd George in which the same promise was made.’\(^{50}\)

The danger of breaking-up the Turkish Empire had also been emphasised to the American delegation by Edwin Montagu, the British Secretary of State for India. He emphasised that the Turkish people would only accept as a mandatory a country of undoubted integrity and disinterestedness. Montagu felt that the United States was the logical choice.\(^{51}\) The combination of this advice caused Wilson, and Lloyd George, to change their position with regards to the implementation of the mandate system in Turkey proper. This change in thinking can be seen in an appendix to a Council of Four meeting, written by Balfour.\(^{52}\) In the appendix, he argues against the proposed division of Turkey into a series of mandates. In his opinion, this would cause a great

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\(^{49}\)Hankey’s notes of the Council of Four, 17.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, p.225.

\(^{50}\) Diary of the Peace Conference of William Linn Westermann, 22.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, pp.374-5.


\(^{52}\)Hankey’s notes of the Council of Four, 17.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, p.209.
deal of controversy among the Muslim population, as the Turkish population wished to stay unified. As Balfour put it, ‘... if the Anatolian Turks say that they desire to remain a single people under a single sovereignty, to what principle are we going to make appeal when we refuse to grant their request?’.53

Balfour then went on to note that the Treaty of London had promised certain rights to the Italians in Asia Minor. This needed to be considered in the final settlement. With that in mind, Balfour argued that a single mandate for Turkey, with perhaps some economic concessions for Italy, was necessary. The single state would ‘... maintain something resembling an independent Turkish Government, ruling over a homogenous Turkish population...’.54

Wilson’s reversal of position was argued in a Council of Four meeting on the 21 May, 1919.55 In reply to an address by Lloyd George, in which he argued for a single American mandate over Anatolia, Wilson stated that he too would agree to a single mandate over Anatolia. The powers did not have the right to divide a homogeneous population. Wilson also agreed to allow the Sultan to remain in Constantinople, and for the Sultan to receive advice from other mandatories.56 Wilson was unsure about the advisability of the United States accepting the mandate. He felt that if the same power had a mandate in Armenia and Constantinople then it would be very difficult for the Turks to cause trouble.57

Wilson later reiterated the American position about assuming a mandate in Asia Minor or Anatolia. America had no material interests in the region, like the humanitarian interests that it had in Armenia. Constantinople was a special case given its importance to the world. Wilson restated that there should be a single mandate over Anatolia, with the Sultan to be left in Constantinople. Instead of the United States being given the mandate, Wilson argued that some arrangement be made

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., pp.210, 212.
56 Ibid., pp.328, 330.
57 Ibid., pp.330, 339.
between the Allies for providing advice to the Sultan. In his interview with Westermann the next day, Wilson was still in favour of this settlement of Turkey. The secret treaties were still to be fought, with this new settlement providing the best means of realising national self-determination.

By June 1919, Wilson's position regarding Turkey had changed again. He felt that a mandate for Turkey would be a mistake, although 'some Power ought to have a firm hand.' Constantinople was to be left as a neutral strip for the moment, with the Sultan and his government being forced to move out of the city. The Turks were to be removed from Constantinople, and out of Europe. As can be seen from the preceding paragraphs, this was a substantial change in the way Wilson viewed the Turkish settlement. The reasons for this change are slightly unclear. Westermann had written in his journal that Wilson had received a letter from an Indian Muslim stating that the Muslim population was not as agitated regarding the position of the Sultan at Constantinople as had earlier been thought. Whether or not this had an effect upon Wilson is uncertain. What does seem to have affected his opinion of the Turks in general was the submission to the Council of Four by the Ottoman peace delegation in June. The delegation, while admitting full responsibility for the Turkish role in the War, argued against the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. They divided the problems of the Empire into three parts; Thrace, Asia Minor and the Arab portions of the Empire. Thrace, especially western Thrace, was almost entirely Turkish. It was, however, in Bulgarian hands. The delegation proposed the extension of the Turkish border to incorporate this Turkish population. The delegation argued that Asia Minor had to remain in the hands of the Turkish. Russian Armenia could be established as a separate country, and Turkish Armenians could be settled in this new country. All

58 Ibid., p.335.

60 Hankey's and Mantoux's notes for the Council of Four, 25.6.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.156.
61 Ibid., pp.156-7.
minorities in Asia Minor were to be assured just and equitable treatment. The Arab portions of the Empire were to receive large administrative autonomy, but would remain under the sovereignty of the Sultan. The delegation finished their submission by saying that 'The peoples of the Ottoman Empire will not accept the division of their territories, nor the establishment of a system of mandates. All are attached to the Ottoman government, and the latter receives protests from everywhere in favour of the unity and independence of the Empire.'

Lloyd George condemned the proposals as 'good jokes', while Wilson said he had never seen anything 'more stupid'. The proposals were rejected. A final settlement, however, had still not been reached. The position of the Italians and the Greeks, both of whom were insisting on large tracts of territory in Asia Minor and Anatolia, was a complicating factor. The Italians and the Greeks had landed troops in Asia Minor to strengthen their position. This caused consternation in the Council of Four. Wilson made the point that they were not involved in the partition of the Ottoman Empire. The territories of the Empire were not to be distributed among the powers like they were property. They were to be administered for the good of the peoples, according to the system of mandates. The later apportioning of the mandates for the stated benefit of the Allied powers made it obvious that Wilson's sentiments were not shared by the other members of the Council of Four, with the possible exception of the British.

A settlement had not been reached by the time that the Treaty of Versailles was signed on the 28 June. Wilson left for the United States the next day. It was agreed to postpone the final settlement until the United States could declare its position regarding the acceptance of mandates for Constantinople and Armenia, and until the King-Crane Commission reported its findings from its investigations in the Ottoman Empire.

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64 Ibid.
The King-Crane Commission had originally been conceived of as an international commission. The French, and then the British commissioners, however, withdrew their participation, leaving it as a purely American commission. This meant that its effectiveness in influencing the Allied governments was limited. The reluctance of the British towards the Commission revolved around the Zionist question, which will be discussed in the next chapter. As Balfour argued in a memorandum, Britain had promoted both self-determination and the Zionist cause. Neither could now be jettisoned. He felt, however, that the commission would find that the Arab population was against any relative increase in the Jewish population in Palestine.\textsuperscript{66} The French objections to the commission were based upon the knowledge that the Arab population of Syria were heavily anti-French, and that this would compromise their chances of obtaining a mandate for Syria.\textsuperscript{67}

The Commission’s area of investigation was established in a memorandum by Wilson, to which the other Allies agreed.\textsuperscript{68} They were to visit the Ottoman Empire so as to acquaint the powers ‘…as intimately as possible with the sentiments of the people of these regions with regard to the future administration of their affairs. You are requested, accordingly, to visit these regions to acquaint yourselves as fully as possible with the state of opinion there with regard to these matters, with the social, racial, and economic conditions, a knowledge of which might serve to guide the judgement of the Conference, and to form as definite an opinion as the circumstances and the time at your disposal will permit, of the divisions of territory and assignment of mandates which will be most likely to promote the order, peace, and development of those peoples and countries.’\textsuperscript{69}

These instructions were clarified later in the month by Wilson. The Commission was not to be bound by pre-Conference or any other agreements. No parts of the territorial settlement were closed, or had been compromised by

\textsuperscript{66} Memorandum by Balfour, 13.3.19., in Link (ed.), 56, p.203.

\textsuperscript{67} Memorandum by Westermann, c.17.4.19., in Link (ed.), 57, pp.443-4.

\textsuperscript{68} See footnote 18.

\textsuperscript{69} A Memorandum by Wilson, 25.3.19., in Link (ed.), 56, p.275.
understandings at the Conference. The other clarifications by Wilson related to the Arab portions of the Empire, and will be dealt with in the next chapter.

From June 1919, the Commission began sending its findings to Wilson. There was widespread distress regarding the taking of Smyrna by the Greeks. There was, however, a deep belief in the United States’ declaration of the Fourteen Points, and the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918 regarding the ‘...right of people to self-determination.’

The final report of the King-Crane Commission came in late August 1919. The Commission found the situation in Turkey so serious that they felt the need to return to France to report immediately. They found that many of the actions being implemented or contemplated by the Allies were not in harmony with the human facts as they found them. Their most interesting finding was that ‘Outside of Armenia and Constantinople the former Turkish state must be kept for the Moslem world or there will be no peace there nor in any other part of the world. The flouting of the doctrine of no annexations will horrify millions of people, whose only trust now is in America and in you.’ The Commission felt that only an American mandate would be received with any joy.

The commission went on to recommend the following for Turkey:

A separate Armenian state under mandate, in a limited area for its own sake;
A Separate international state at Constantinople under a League of Nations mandate;
A mandatory for a continuing Turkish state according to their own desire;
No independent territory be set aside for the Greeks;
An appointment of a commission on precise boundaries;
A general, but composite mandate for non-Arabic speaking portions of the Turkish Empire;

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70 Memorandum by King, c.22.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, pp.373-4.
71 King and Crane to Wilson, 10.6.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.44.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
That the United States take the mandate for all of this, if that was possible.\textsuperscript{75}

The recommendations were therefore justified on the basis of the populations desire for national self-determination in the form of a single Turkish state. Any annexations by the European powers would be in violation of this principle.

As will be discussed in the Postscript, none of these recommendations regarding the Turkish and Armenian portions of the Empire were realised. By August, support for the League of Nations was failing in the United States. This meant that, as with Armenia, there would be no American presence in Turkey. Unlike the Arab portions of the Empire, the lack of an American presence would not be to the benefit of the Allied powers.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.608.

\textsuperscript{76} See the Postscript.
Chapter Four: Settlement of the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire.

The settlement of the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire had received a considerable amount of attention during the period of American involvement in World War One. This was primarily due to the question of Zionism and Palestine. As early as May 1917, Mr Louis Brandeis, leader of the Zionist movement, had met with Wilson to explain the general Zionist policy. Wilson was sympathetic. He thought that a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine would meet some of the difficulties that the Jewish race was facing at the time, especially in Poland. At that stage, Wilson felt that the Jewish homeland should be under British protection.¹

Later in 1917, Balfour wrote to Wiseman noting that Germany was trying to court the Zionist movement. Balfour favoured a declaration of sympathy for Zionist aims, and wished for Wilson’s views on his draft copy. The draft, which would become the Balfour Declaration, read as follows:

His Majesty’s Government view with favour [the] establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jewish race and will use their best endeavours to facilitate achievement of this object; it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by Jews, who are fully contented with their existing nationality and citizenship.²

Wilson concurred with this draft, thus linking the United States with the Zionist movement, a point which would have some significance at the Paris Peace Conference.³ The agreement between Britain and the United States regarding the Zionist cause, at least in private circles, was emphasised in the notes of a meeting between House and Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for War from April 1918. The conversation had covered the subject of creating international constitutions for regions

¹ Memorandum by Jacob Judah Aaron de Haas, 6.5.17., in Link (ed.), 42, pp.234-5.
² Balfour to Wiseman, 6.10.17., in Link (ed.), 44, p.324.
such as Albania and Palestine. House and Milner felt that this would be ‘easy’ in the case of Palestine, as Britain and the United States had practically agreed upon treating Palestine as the future ‘...home of the Jewish race.’\(^4\) There would be few difficulties as the Palestine was too poor to be coveted by the other powers.\(^5\)

The Balfour Declaration raised the hopes of the Zionist movement. It also increased demand for a similar declaration by Wilson. Lansing wrote to Wilson in December 1917, informing him of these requests. Lansing was cautious in his advice. He argued that

‘...we should go very slowly in announcing a policy for three reasons. First, we are not at war with Turkey and, therefore, should avoid any appearance of favouring taking territory from that Empire by force. Second, the Jews are by no means a unit in their desire to re-establish their race as an independent people; to favour one or the other faction would seem to be unwise. Third, many Christian sects and individuals would undoubtedly resent turning the Holy Land over to the absolute control of the race credited with the death of Christ.’\(^6\)

Lansing reiterated his point early the next year, when he said that ‘This government has never accepted Mr Balfour’s pronouncement with reference to the future of Palestine and has expressly refrained from accrediting consular agents to that territory, in which action the British Government has entirely acquiesced.’\(^7\) The American position regarding Zionist aspirations in Palestine differed substantially from that of the British, at least at an official level.

Wilson was constantly being informed of developments in Palestine or in the Zionist cause by the British and the Zionists. In February 1918, the British sent a telegram to the Department of State detailing the policy that the British were taking in their new position in Palestine.\(^8\) Among the nine points that the British laid down as

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\(^5\) Ibid.


\(^7\) Lansing to Wilson, 28.2.18., in Link (ed.), 46, p.493.

\(^8\) The British Embassy to the Department of State, 12.2.18., in Link (ed.), 46, p.333.; The British had occupied Palestine in late 1917. See John Pimlott, (ed.), *Atlas of Warfare*, Hong Kong, 1988, pp.244-5.
the basis for rule in Palestine was that Zionism was to be maintained upon the ‘right lines’, taking care to ensure that the safety of Christian and Muslim Holy Places would not to be prejudiced. In August 1918, Wilson had a meeting with Rabbi Stephen Wise, in which Wise reiterated the Zionist desire to ‘...establish a publicly recognised, legally secured homeland in Palestine for the Jewish people.’ Wilson replied that he was more than satisfied with the progress of Zionism since the Balfour Declaration.

In November 1918, Wilson reminded a mainly Jewish audience that one of the most difficult problems to be faced at the peace table would be to secure the ‘...proper guarantees for the just treatment of the Jewish people.’ As he went on to say, ‘It is one thing to give a people its right of self-determination, but it is another to enter into its internal affairs and get satisfactory guarantees of the use it will make of its independence and its power, because that, in a way, involves a kind of superstition which is hateful to the people concerned and difficult to those who undertake it.’ It could also be noted that to seek guarantees about the use and nature of a nation’s newfound independence contradicts the very essence of national self-determination.

This concerted campaign by the Zionists to win Wilson to their cause continued into 1919. In replying to Lord Rothschild, Wilson stated that ‘You are right in thinking that I have very much at heart the interests of the Jewish people and am greatly interested in the development of the plans for Palestine. I hope with all my heart that they can be given satisfactory form and permanency.’ Later in January, Chaim Weizman wrote to Wilson, telling him that the Jewish organisations were in favour of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, and that Britain was the favoured trustee for this new state. In February, Edith Benham noted in her diary that Wilson was very interested in the Zionists. He was unsure whether all Jews would wish to go

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9 British Embassy to Department of State, 12.2.18., in Link (ed.), 46, p.333.
11 Ibid.
12 Remarks by Wilson to Members of the B’nai B’rith, 28.1.18., in Link (ed.), 53, p.239.
to Palestine, but he felt sure that the new country would give the Jewish race a nationality that they had lacked for centuries.\textsuperscript{16}

Wilson's favourable view of the Zionist cause calls into question his principle of national self-determination. As will become obvious in the discussion regarding the King-Crane Commission, men such as Balfour became increasingly worried about how the native Arab population of Palestine would react to the large-scale Jewish immigration which was a natural corollary of Zionism.\textsuperscript{17} The hostility towards Jewish immigration was an issue which the King-Crane Commission emphasised in one of its reports.\textsuperscript{18} The question is why Wilson supported the dubious claims of one 'nationality' to an area over the legitimate claims of the native population. Was there a double-standard involved regarding the mainly European Zionists' claims to a territory over those of an Arab population? This point is especially interesting as the mandate system implied in its implementation to the Ottoman Empire that the Arabs were some how less worthy of full self-determination, at least at this stage. The perceived political maturity of the Zionists obviously influenced Wilson to accept their claims to Palestine over those of the Arabs.

In March 1919, Wise sent a letter, with enclosure, detailing the Zionist claims to Palestine. On behalf of the American Jewish Congress, Julian Mack, Louis Marshall and Wise requested that the Peace Conference recognise the historic claims of the Jewish people in regard to Palestine. They requested that the sovereign possession of Palestine be vested in the League of Nations, and that the Great Britain be made the trustee or mandatory for the League.\textsuperscript{19} Under this mandate, Palestine would be placed under such political, administrative and economic conditions as would secure a Jewish National Home, and ultimately an autonomous commonwealth. Nothing would be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities. There would be no discrimination among inhabitants with regard to citizenship and

\textsuperscript{16} Diary of Edith Benham, 1.2.19., in Link (ed.), 54, pp.432-3.
\textsuperscript{17} Memorandum by Balfour, 23.3.19., in Link (ed.), 56, p.203.;
\textsuperscript{18} King and Crane to Wilson, 20.6.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.44.; Crane to Wilson, with Enclosure, 10.7.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.443.
\textsuperscript{19} Wise to Wilson, 2.3.19., in Link (ed.), 55, p.381.
civil rights on the grounds of religion or race.\textsuperscript{20} The enclosure then restated the Balfour Declaration, noting that Italy and France had both declared their approval of this declaration. It also noted that Wilson had expressed his sympathies for the Zionist cause, as had Japan, Greece, Serbia and China.\textsuperscript{21}

The same day that Wilson received this statement of the Zionist aims, a news report noted that Wilson had given his approval to the plans of the Zionist leaders.\textsuperscript{22} The report stated that Wilson said that ‘As for your representations touching Palestine, I have before expressed my personal approval of the declaration of the British Government regarding the aspirations and historic claims of the Jewish people in regard to Palestine. I am, moreover, persuaded that the allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our own Government and people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth.’\textsuperscript{23} The delegation, headed by Wise, stated to the press that Wilson was ‘as always, sympathetic with the incontestable principle of the right of the Jewish people everywhere to equality of status.’\textsuperscript{24}

This again raises interesting questions regarding Wilson’s self-determination. If the news report was true, then Wilson had promised the government of Palestine to the Zionists without hearing or considering the claims of the native Arab population. The claims of the Zionists to Palestine were tenuous at best. Their entire claim to the country was based upon their ancestors having inhabited parts of Palestine nearly two thousand years previously, and the guilt in the minds of some Europeans regarding the persecution of the Jews in Europe in the ensuing centuries. If national self-determination was to be implemented as completely as possible, then Arab claims would have had to have been considered before Wilson had committed himself to the Zionist cause. The report also severely compromised the position that Wilson had taken towards the non-Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire in the Fourteen Points. If we are to believe the claims of the many letters to Wilson stating that he was the hope

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p.382.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p.383.
\textsuperscript{22} A News Report, 2.3.19., in Link (ed.), 55, p.386.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
to oppressed peoples throughout the world, then why was Wilson seemingly indulging in the practice of giving the territory of one people to another with weaker claims. Surely this smacked of the style of European diplomacy that Wilson claimed to abhor so vehemently. This surely cannot be argued away upon grounds of pragmatism.

The arguments against Wilson’s new position were immediate. On the 4th of March, Morris Jastrow Jr, Professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Pennsylvania and an eminent orientalist, wrote to Wilson arguing that although he was sympathetic to Jewish colonisation in Palestine, he, and many others, felt that it was a mistake to set-up a Jewish state. He argued, with some foresight, that the introduction of the political factor of Zionism into Palestine was ‘...bound to work mischief.’ He urged Wilson to implement self-determination in Palestine as he would anywhere else. The decision of Wilson to support the Zionists was also noted with concern by the diplomatic staff at the American Diplomatic Agency in Cairo. They noted that the reports circulating in Egypt, that Wilson had agreed to support the foundation of a Jewish Commonwealth, went further than the Balfour Declaration, and were being interpreted as such in the Near East. The Agency members were unsure whether Wilson had made this commitment, but requested clarification as it heavily affected the Palestinian and Syrian question. The reports were causing considerable bitterness against Zionism, with increasing demands by the Arab population that Palestine be included in a Syrian state.

There seems to have been some confusion, despite Wilson’s pronouncements of March, of his position regarding Zionism. Twice in May, Felix Frankfurter, a member of the Wilson Administration, wrote to Wilson, asking for his approval of the Balfour Declaration and sponsorship of the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish National Home. In the second letter, Frankfurter tried to reinforce the wisdom of incorporating the Balfour Declaration in the peace treaty. Wilson, perhaps

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26 Ibid.
27 Lansing to Wilson, with enclosure, 13.4.19., in Link (ed.), 57, p.326.
28 Felix Frankfurter to Wilson, 8.5.19., in Link (ed.), 58, p.555; Felix Frankfurter to Wilson, 14.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, p.150.
recognising the wisdom of Jastrow’s arguments, or not wishing to pre-empt the findings of the King-Crane Commission, would not be drawn upon the subject. In August 1919, he wrote to Tumulty, stating that he was not going to make a public statement regarding Zionism. He recognised the delicate and dangerous situation throughout the world in regard to Jews, and would not comment on the issue at that time.29 Perhaps, as a third option to those given above regarding Wilson’s ‘cooling’ on the Zionist issue were the arguments made for national self-determination by the Arabs under Emir Faisal, son of Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca and Medina and King of the Hedjaz, which we shall now examine in detail.

There does not seem to have been much discussion regarding the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of Palestine, during the American involvement in World War One. The first major reference to these territories in Wilson’s papers appears in early 1919.30 This perhaps shows that for Wilson, the application of national self-determination in the Ottoman Empire was of lesser significance than its application, for example, in Poland or Czechoslovakia. It may, however, be a reflection of how the lack of long-standing relations between the United States and these regions meant that Wilson paid less attention to them than he did with European issues.

The major issue regarding the Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire, given that Palestine has been dealt with as a separate case, was the settlement relating to Syria. How large was this new country to be? Should it include Lebanon? Would it be co-joined with the newly formed Kingdom of the Hedjaz? Perhaps the most important question regarding Syria came to be the role that the French would play in that country. Early in 1919, House noted in his diary that Lloyd George was particularly worried about the situation in Syria. He believed that the Arabs, who wanted self-determination, and the French, who wished for some form of control in the area as had been set out in the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, would clash.31

30 House’s Diary, 18.1.19., in Link (ed.), 57, p.466.
31 House’s Diary, 18.1.19., in Link (ed.), 57, p.466. ; For details of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see the Appendix.
suggested that the United States assume the mandate for Syria, so as avoid such a clash. The mandate for Constantinople could be given to France so as to appease their interests in the area. Wilson did not like this idea, feeling that French intrigue could be better watched in Syria.  

The position of the Arab population in the Ottoman Empire was argued before the Council of Ten by Emir Faisal, on the 6th February 1919. Faisal asked for the independence of all Arabic speaking peoples in Asia from the Alexandretta-Diarbekir line south. He based this claim upon a number of points. The most notable of these points were that the inhabitants of this region spoke one language, Arabic. The region's inhabitants were of one stock, Semitic. The region formed a social and economic unit, which was being strengthened by the improvements in means of communication. Perhaps most importantly, at least for the British who had fought the bulk of the war in the Near East, the Arab Army had played an important role in the area’s liberation. The Arabs asked that their territory not be divided upon the lines of any wartime treaties made by the Allies.

Faisal stated that his father had not entered into the war in an attempt to create his own empire. He had risen up '...to free all the Arabic provinces from their Turkish masters. He did not wish to extend the boundaries of the Hedjaz Kingdom a single inch.' His ideal was that of all Arab patriots, an Arab state. As Faisal pointed out to the Council, this decision was of vital importance as the region in question was placed in a strategic position between Europe and Asia.

The Arab delegation told the Council that they viewed Syria as the most difficult question in contemplating a territorial settlement for the Arabs. As Faisal argued 'Syria claimed her unity and her independence, and the rest of the Arabic liberated areas wished Syria to take her natural place in the future confederation of

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32 Ibid.
33 Hankey's notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, 6.2.19., in Link (ed.), 54, pp.505-6. The cities mentioned form a line through eastern Turkey.
34 Ibid., pp.506-7.
liberated Arabic speaking Asia, the object of all Arab hopes and fears. Faisal did recognise, however, that there would be difficulties with Lebanon and Palestine. Despite conflicting opinions regarding the wisdom of French involvement in Lebanon, he was willing to admit the independence of Lebanon, provided that it maintained some form of economic union with Syria, in the interest of mutual development. Allied help would be needed for economic development to take place, but this help would be sacrificed if it meant that any power would limit the independence of the Arab people so as to further that power’s material interests in the region.

Faisal suggested that Palestine, given its universal character, should be left to one side for the mutual consideration of all interested parties. With this exception, he asked that the independence of the Arabs be recognised by the Conference. The Arabs had fought to vindicate their right to self-government, and desired the opportunity, based upon the principle of self-determination, to address their needs to the League of Nations.

The Arab position caused new debate at Paris as to the final territorial settlement for the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire. The day after Faisal’s address, Wilson received a letter from Howard Sweetser Bliss, the President of the Syrian Protestant College of Beirut, informing him how completely the people of Syria were depending upon Wilson’s Twelfth Point and the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918. As Bliss stated, ‘They crave a fair opportunity to express their own political aspirations and they claim that this craving is justified by the above mentioned documents.’ Bliss recommended to Wilson that an international commission be sent to the region so as to give the Arabs an opportunity to plead their cause. If a mandate was to be established in Syria, Bliss believed that the United States or Britain should be the mandatory as they were trusted by the Syrians. He argued that French guardianship should be ruled out for Syria for three reasons. It was feared that Syrians would emulate France’s less desirable qualities. The Syrians did

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., p.508.
39 Howard Sweetser Bliss to Wilson, 7.2.19., in Link (ed.), 54, p.551.
not consider the French to be good administrators. Thirdly, it was the belief of many Syrians that the French would exploit the country for her own material and political advantage. France was not to be trusted.\textsuperscript{40}

Bliss repeated these observations to the Council of Ten on the 13\textsuperscript{th} February 1919. Bliss reiterated his plea that an international commission be sent to Syria to ascertain the political wishes and aspirations of the Arab population. He felt that this was necessary as the wishes of the people were not being heard on account of the censorship of the interim military government. Bliss also repeated that his position was based upon Point twelve of the Fourteen Points, and the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918. For clarity, he repeated the Declaration to the Council, saying:

The aim which France and Great Britain have in view in waging in the East the war let loose upon the world by German ambition is to ensure the complete and final emancipation of all those peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and to establish national Governments and Administration which shall derive their authority from the initiative and free will of the peoples themselves. To realise this, France and Great Britain are in agreement to encourage and assist the Establishment of Native Governments in Syria and Mesopotamia, now liberated by the Allies, as also in those territories for whose liberation they are striving and to recognise those Governments immediately they are effectively established. Far from wishing to impose on the peoples of these regions this or that institution they have no other care than to assure, by their support and practical aid, the normal working of such governments and administrations as the peoples shall themselves have adopted: to guarantee impartial and even justice for all, to facilitate the economic development of the country by arousing and encouraging local initiative, to foster the spread of education, to put an end to those factions too long exploited by Turkish policy -such is the part which the two Allied governments have set for themselves to play in liberated territories.\textsuperscript{41}

Bliss argued that the mandate for Syria should be placed under the League of Nations. The people of Syria would work with the mandatory, whether that mandatory be American, French or British. Bliss feared that if the opportunity for expressing their position was not granted to the people of Syria, the outcome would be ‘...discontent, sullenness, resentment and even bloodshed.’\textsuperscript{42} This statement

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., pp.551-2.

\textsuperscript{41} Hankey's notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, 13.2.19., in Link (ed.), 55, pp.141-2.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p.144. The reference to the Syrian Arabs co-operating with the French is certainly questionable given the amount of material, including letters by Bliss, detailing the distrust of the Syrian Arabs of the French.
reinforced a letter that Wilson had received from Faisal some days earlier, stating that if the French occupied Syria, Damascus in particular, then this would be a breach of the agreement between the Allies and his people. The result would be war with France. The only way to settle the issue, in Faisal’s opinion, was a commission to explore the desires of the people of Syria in regard to their future government.\(^{43}\)

France and Britain, despite the arguments of Faisal and Bliss, continued to disagree over the territorial settlement based upon the secret wartime treaties. This attitude was hardly in keeping with Wilson’s national self-determination, a point which he made in a Council of Four towards the end of March. He stated to the meeting that ‘If the position of Syria is to be discussed only upon the basis of previous understandings between France, Great Britain and Italy, then of course I have nothing to do with it …. It is only upon the understanding that the whole problem is on the peace table without reference to old understandings, and with the clear purpose of not forcing mandates upon any of the peoples concerned, without consulting their desires, that I can be of any assistance.’\(^{44}\) The proper implementation of the mandate system was still uppermost in the mind of Wilson at this time, at least in regard to the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire. As has been argued in previous chapters, whether this implementation of the mandate system equated with national self-determination is certainly questionable.

The desire of France, in particular, to base a settlement in the Ottoman Empire upon the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 can be seen in the debate in the Council of Four on the same day as Wilson’s statement of the last paragraph. Clemenceau and Pichon were adamant that the French position in Syria be upheld. They argued that the whole Syrian region be treated as a unit, and that the mandate for that unit should go to France. Lloyd George pointed out that the British were bound by certain undertakings with the Arabs, the McMahon-Hussein letters, which guaranteed that Syria west of Damascus should be purely Arab and British recognition and support for

\(^{43}\) Tasker H. Bliss to Wilson, with Enclosure, 8.2.19., in Link (ed.), 55, p.4.

\(^{44}\) Hankey’s notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, 20.3.19., in Link (ed.), 56, p.104.
the independence of the Arabs within these territories. The French countered by saying that they were not bound by such an agreement. 45

Wilson once again inserted the principle of national self-determination back into the discussions. The United States was indifferent to the claims of the French and British. One of the fundamental principles that the United States had been based upon was the consent of the governed. What was important to the Wilson, therefore, was whether the French and British were acceptable to the Arabs in Syria and Mesopotamia. As the matter had been brought before the conference, Wilson felt that he was in a position to comment on proceedings. He felt that it would be best to discover the desires of the populations of these regions before a decision was reached. As Wilson recalled, the carefully conceived mandate system, with the graduation of mandates according to degrees of civilisation, was based upon the desires of the people over whom the mandate was to be exercised. 46

With the Conference at an obvious impasse regarding Syria, the formation of an international commission, as suggested by Bliss and Faisal, was again mooted. On this occasion it was accepted. Its scope was extended to cover the entire Ottoman Empire. It was left to Wilson to draft a terms of reference, which were accepted by the Council of Four on 25 March 1919. 47 The general philosophy behind this memorandum by Wilson has been set-out in the previous chapter, as have the terms of reference. The Commission was to acquaint themselves as ‘...intimately as possible with the sentiments of the people of these regions with regard to the future administration of their affairs. You are requested, accordingly, to visit these regions to acquaint yourselves as fully as possible with the state of opinion there with regard to these matters, with the social, racial, and economic conditions, a knowledge of which might serve to guide the judgement of the Conference, and to form as definite an opinion as the circumstances and the time at your disposal will permit, of the divisions

45 Hankey’s notes of a Meeting of the Council of Four, 13.2.19., in Link (ed.), 55, pp.104-5, 107-8, 111. ; For further evidence of Anglo-France debate over Syria, see Hankey’s and Mantoux’s notes for the Council of Four, 21.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, pp.330-1, 333.

46 Ibid., p.113.

47 See footnote 18, Chapter Three.
of territory and assignment of mandates which will be most likely to promote the order, peace, and development of those peoples and countries.\textsuperscript{48}

The announcement of this commission delighted Faisal. He wrote to Wilson, thanking him for giving the Syrian people a ‘...means of expressing their own purposes and ideals for their national future, ...has been won for them by the new principles whose first defender you are. Otherwise it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for our people, so long under the yoke of a barbarous militarism, to have made their voices heard above the cries of success raised by the victors of this terrible war.’\textsuperscript{49} Wilson was once again hailed as the champion of the oppressed peoples, despite his compromise with European colonialism in the form of the mandate system.

The Allied powers’ fears about the international commission were analysed by William Westermann, of the Inquiry, when the Americans ‘accidentally’ obtained a memorandum detailing the French Governments’ attitude to the Commission.\textsuperscript{50} Both the French and the British feared that the results of such a commission would view their positions in Syria and Mesopotamia unfavourably. The two Allied powers, in the opinion of Westermann, still wished the Near East to be settled upon the basis of the Sykes-Picot agreement. Westermann concluded that the commission would be a waste of time. All the information needed for a settlement was in Paris. Delay only added to the difficulty of the settlement. The Near East was the ‘...great loot of war’.\textsuperscript{51} Its settlement, in Westermann’s opinion, must take place in Paris.\textsuperscript{52}

In May, Wilson received telegrams from both Faisal and King Hussein, stating that if the commission did not come to Syria immediately, there would be bloodshed between the Arabs and the French.\textsuperscript{53} At the same time as Wilson was receiving this information, Henry King and Richard Crane gave Wilson preliminary

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50] Evans, p.143. It seems a possibility that the French document was planted so that the Americans would obtain it, and possibly be misled by it.
\item[51] Memorandum by Westermann, c.17.4.19., in Link (ed.), 57, pp.444.
\item[52] Ibid., 443-4.
\item[53] Lansing to Wilson, with Enclosure, 1.5.19., in Link (ed.), 58, p.318.; Mantoux’s Notes of the Council of Four, in Link (ed.), 59, p.636.
\end{footnotes}
recommendations for the mandates in the Ottoman Empire. In view of a number of considerations, which were set-out in the last chapter, the pair recommended ‘for the Arabic-speaking portions of empire:

1) A British Mandate for Mesopotamia, based on British fitness and the general desires of the peoples involved.

2) The British acting as Agent for an international mandate in Palestine to guard the Holy Places and the entire territory for the benefit of all the peoples interested, and not simply for the Jews.

3) For Arabia:
   a) The recognition of the independence of the Kingdom of the Hedjaz and of the title of King Hussein.
   b) The establishment of the right of all national and racial groups among the Muslims in all countries to representation upon a commission, acting under the League of Nations, for the Holy Places of Islam in Arabia.
   c) The recognition of Great Britain’s general supervision of Arabia, with the proviso that she be held strictly responsible for the maintenance of the ‘open door’ for all the members of the League of Nations. This would go far to remove the natural French and Italian jealousy of Britain’s large territorial gains in this war.

4) A French mandate for Syria liberally interpreted, and frankly based, not on the primary desires of the people, but on the international need of preserving friendly relations between France and Great Britain.

The last recommendation is interesting as it is a complete rejection of national self-determination. The mandatory for Syria was not to be decided according to the desires of the local population. Instead, its allocation was to be based upon the need to avoid friction between two European colonial powers. It poses the question, which is virtually impossible to answer, as to how committed not only Wilson was towards self-determination, but also how committed the rest of the American delegation was to the implementation of the principle. Secretary of State Lansing may well have not been the only member of the broader Wilson Administration to have doubts regarding the feasibility of implementing national self-determination upon broad lines. It should

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54 See footnote 22, Chapter Three. ; A Memorandum by Henry Churchill King and Charles Richard Crane, c.1.5.19., in Link (ed.), 58, p.325.

55 Ibid., pp.325-6.
be noted that this recommendation was later rejected by King and Crane not because of its incompatibility with self-determination, but because of the friction it would cause in Anglo-French relations as the British would be constantly placed in the middle of French-Arab conflicts.  

With the French and British stalling on naming their members on the Commission, Wilson decided to send what would become the King-Crane Commission to the Ottoman Empire without the members of the Allied countries. Before leaving, the Commissioners asked Wilson to clarify a number of points that could affect their recommendations. They were informed by Wilson that the Zionist question, no matter the desires of the Palestinian population, was virtually closed. The same answer was given regarding Mesopotamia. The question of Arabia was not closed, although it is unsure from the document whether Syria was included in the definition of Arabia. What was stated by Wilson was that the Commission was in no way bound by any pre-Conference agreements, or by any understandings that had arisen from the Peace Conference. The mandates and the mandatories had not as yet been decided.  

There seems to a contradiction in Wilson’s replies to the inquiries of King and Crane. Wilson stated that in no way were the Commissioners bound by any agreements or understandings conceived during or after the war. Yet the question of the mandate in Palestine, based upon the Balfour Declaration and the tacit accent of Wilson to Zionism, was virtually closed. The closing of the questions of mandates in Palestine and Mesopotamia also contradicts Article twenty-two of the League covenant, and, therefore, the purpose of the King-Crane Commission’s visit to the Ottoman Empire. As Wilson himself had stated, the desires of the local populations was the key to the selection of a mandatory. It was also the last remaining element of the principle of national self-determination within the mandate system. Yet as the Commission embarked for the Near East with the stated aim of discovering the desires of the local populations as to who they preferred as a mandatory, the Commissioners were told by Wilson, the espouser of self-determination, that the desires of the peoples

56 Crane to Wilson, with Enclosure, 10.7.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.444.

57 Memorandum by King, c.22.5.19., in Link (ed.), 59, pp.373-4.
of these territories were essentially irrelevant. The nature of the mandate for Palestine and Mesopotamia, and presumable the mandatory, had already been decided. Balfour had expressed the fears of both the British and the Americans regarding the possible findings of the Commission. The British, and to a lesser degree the Americans, had committed themselves to the Zionist cause and to national self-determination. The embarrassment of a possible clash between these two commitments led the United States and Britain to chose the Zionist cause over the implementation of national self-determination.58

The first report that the Commission sent to Wilson was from Jerusalem in June 1919. It noted that the established Muslim and Christian communities were opposed to Jewish immigration, and hostile to attempts to establish Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. They also noted that British and American officials in Palestine thought that Zionism would be impossible to implement without a large army.59

The next report by the Commission was sent from Beirut in July 1919. The Commission had been very impressed by the Syrian people. There was an intense desire for the unity of all Syria and Palestine and for as early independence as possible. They had encountered unexpectedly strong expressions of national feeling, and a ‘determined repulsion’ to becoming a mere colony of any power. The population was heavily against a French mandate, except for a strong Maronite Christian party in Lebanon, who stood to benefit politically and economically from a French mandate. In the opinion of the Commission, a French mandate for Syria would lead to war between the Arabs and the French, thereby putting the British in an intolerable position.60

The Commission then went on to state that the United States was the first choice of the majority of people in Syria as it was believed that the United States had no territorial ambitions in the area. They felt that a similar view was being taken in Iraq. The Commission also noted that both the British and French officials in the


59 King and Crane to Wilson, 20.6.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.44.

60 Crane to Wilson, with Enclosure, 10.7.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.443.
region agreed that the unity of the whole of Syria and Palestine was desirable, otherwise there would be constant friction between the British, French and the Arabs. Their investigations on this question had also confirmed their opinion that the implementation of Zionism would be dangerous for the stability of the region.\textsuperscript{61} This was despite the fact that Wilson had informed the two Commissioners in May that the question of Palestine was virtually closed.\textsuperscript{62}

Crane then went on to note the proposals of the newly formed Syrian National Congress. They asked for the immediate and complete political independence of a united Syria, under the leadership of Emir Faisal. Mesopotamia was also to be granted independence. They wished for it be affirmed that Article twenty-two of the League Covenant, covering mandates, which they assumed meant economic and technical assistance limited in time, did not apply to Syria. The Congress vigorously opposed the Zionist plans, and protested, in particular, against the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The Congress concluded by stating that their political rights should not be less than under the Turks.\textsuperscript{63}

Crane concluded this telegram by stating that the Commission had decided that its earlier recommendation regarding a French mandate over Syria was not feasible.\textsuperscript{64} It would not strengthen Anglo-French relations, but would have the opposite effect as the British would be constantly having to take sides during French-Arab conflicts. While not making any recommendations as yet, Crane noted that it was the general belief of the Commission that Emir Faisal was the cornerstone of any Arab settlement, and should be treated as such.\textsuperscript{65}

The final recommendations by the King-Crane Commission, albeit in a condensed form, were received by Wilson around 31 August 1919. The Commission recommended the following for the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire:

\begin{quote}
For Syria:
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} See footnote 57.
\textsuperscript{63} Crane to Wilson, with Enclosure, 10.7.19., in Link (ed.), 61, pp.443-4.
\textsuperscript{64} See footnote 55.
\textsuperscript{65} Crane to Wilson, with Enclosure, 10.7.19., in Link (ed.), 61, p.444.
First. That the administration go in accordance with desires to be a true mandatory under the League of Nations.

Second. That Syria, including Palestine and Lebanon, be kept in unity according to the desires of the great majority.

Third. That Syria be under a single mandate.

Fourth. That Emir Faisal be King of the new Syrian State.

Fifth. That the extreme Zionist program be seriously modified.

Sixth. Democratic America be asked to take the single mandate for Syria.

Seventh. That if for any reason America does not take the mandate then it be given to Great Britain.

We are recommending parallel policy for Mesopotamia, Great Britain as mandatory, in strict fulfilment of the spirit of the Anglo-French Declaration November 9th 1918.⁶⁶

Syria was not, therefore, to be divided. Palestine and Lebanon were to remain as one unit, with the plans of the Zionists being severely curtailed. The distrust of France was obvious.

By the time that the Commission returned to the United States, Wilson had suffered a stroke, and it seems doubtful whether he ever actually read the Commission’s findings. As will be explained in the Postscript, these findings were never implemented by the Allied powers. With Wilson ill, and the United States an increasingly unlikely signatory to the League of Nations Covenant, the Ottoman Empire was divided upon the lines which the Allied powers found convenient. France received Syria, with both Palestine and Lebanon becoming separate states. Zionism was encouraged, the results of which can be seen to this day.


Postscript:

To place this essay in context, an explanation of events after the King-Crane Commission’s report is necessary. As mentioned in the Preface, the territorial settlement was not as ‘neat’ as that imposed upon Germany and Austro-Hungary. By the August 1919, the only definite conclusion that had been reached regarding the territorial settlement in the former Ottoman Empire was that the mandate system would be applied. Even this was slightly dubious, with France not completely happy with the ramifications of the mandates. The physical nature of the mandates and the countries who would assume responsibility as the mandatories had not been decided.

The final territorial settlement, at least the final settlement stemming directly from the Peace Conference, came with the Conference at San Remo in April 1920, and the subsequent Treaty of Sèvres. Of August 1920. Under the Treaty, the Greeks received Smyrna, in Turkey, and eastern and western Thrace. The Italians were appeased with the rights to exploit the Heraclea Coal Fields and a sphere of economic priority in Anatolia. The Turks remained in Constantinople, while a Straits Commission, with all the major powers having two votes on the Commission, would govern the internationalised Straits. Spheres of influence were established in the new Turkish State under a self-denying agreement. Instead of offending public opinion with outright spheres of influence, the powers agreed not to interfere in set areas where European administration and assistance had been asked for by the Turkish Government. This agreement was solidified in the Tripartite Pact between Britain, France and Italy, signed in May 1920.

The great casualty at Sèvres, besides national self-determination, was the fledgling state of Armenia. With the refusal of the United States to accept a mandate for the country, it was slowly pushed to the margins. At San Remo it was decided, in the interests of defending the seaboard gains of the Allies in Anatolia and Asia Minor, that Armenia would have to fend for herself. Economic and military aid was discussed.

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1 France was particularly worried about how the mandate system would affect her the territorial possessions she had claimed under the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

2 Helmreich, pp.243, 244, 251, 254, 255-6, 292-3.
but was not forthcoming. Armenia would be divided between Turkey and Russia in the following years.\textsuperscript{3}

The Treaty of Sèvres gave France mandates in Syria and Lebanon, despite the desires of the population. Mesopotamia and Palestine were granted as mandates to Great Britain. Throughout the discussions leading to the Treaty, the desires of the local populations was ignored, despite it being the basis of the mandate system under Article twenty-two. The mandates were viewed as window-dressing, with the territories being divided upon the lines of power politics. The territorial settlement would last in the non-Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire for the next twenty years.\textsuperscript{4}

The territorial settlement at Sèvres regarding Turkey did not last as long. By 1922, Nationalist forces under Atatürk had driven the Greek and Italian forces from Asia Minor, destroying the previous territorial settlement. This was recognised by the Treaty of Lausanne in June 1923. The Straits remained open and demilitarised, but the rest of the Sèvres settlement was abrogated. Turkey had achieved her independence.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., pp.293-9, 300.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p.302, 322-3.
\textsuperscript{5} Evans, pp.376-7, 402-3.
Conclusion:

The question underlying this essay is whether or not national self-determination was applied to the territorial settlement in the Ottoman Empire? That question must be answered in the negative. For a start, the principle was ‘watered down’ in the form of the mandate system. This system was a compromise between European colonialism and self-determination. The only remaining criterion within that system that could be equated with national self-determination was the acknowledgment of the indigenous population’s right to chose the mandatory for their region. Even this prerequisite was ignored in the territorial settlement.¹

The findings and recommendations of the King-Crane Commission made it very clear that the peoples of the Ottoman Empire did not desire a settlement that would lead to their exploitation by the Allied powers. Despite this, and despite the Allies’ lip-service to self-determination, the eventual settlement was not based upon the desires of the populations affected, nor was it conceived in their best interests. Instead of obtaining self-determination, the territories were placed under mandates and treated as colonies by the Allied powers. Efforts to develop the administrative capacity for self-determination, the basis for the mandate system, was ignored in preference to the exploitation of the territories resources for the benefit of the mandatory.²

How did this happen? During the War, the Allies and the Associated powers, most notably the United States and Great Britain, had argued that the basis for a just and long-lasting peace lay in the unbiased implementation of national self-determination.³ Yet when the War was ended, and especially after the end of the American influence in the territorial settlement in June 1919, self-determination was jettisoned in favour of colonialism. The material interests of the Allied powers were placed above the opportunity of obtaining a lasting peace. Colonialism won out over

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¹ A Draft of a Covenant, 8.1.1919., in Link (ed.), 53, p.685 ; See footnote 22, Chapter Two.
² Crane to Wilson, 31.8.19., in Link (ed.), 62, pp.607-8.; See footnotes 19-21, Chapter Two.
³ Woodrow Wilson to the Provisional Government of Russia, 22.5.17., in Link (ed.), 42, pp.366-7.
national self-determination in the Ottoman Empire, although this position was reversed in Turkey by subsequent events. 4

In his Four Principles, Wilson stated that '...all well defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction'. He also stated that '...peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty'. 5 This, however, is exactly what happen in the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Why was Wilson seemingly incapable of implementing his beliefs on national self-determination? Heater notes that Wilson had no specific idea as to how national self-determination was to be applied, yet national self-determination was obtained by some European nationalities, such as the Poles and the Czechoslovakians. 6 Can we differentiate between these countries and those in the Ottoman Empire? Certainly the independence of these countries affected the Allied powers in a different manner than would those countries in the Ottoman Empire, whose territory the powers viewed as the spoils of the war. 7 If anything, self-determination for Poland and Czechoslovakia benefited the Allied powers by weakening the Central powers who they had just fought a war with. This was not the case with the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire also differed from these European countries in that much of the territory was still in the hands of the Ottoman authorities, whereas self-determination was a fait accompli in these other countries by 1919. 8

Wilson’s inability to secure self-determination in the Ottoman Empire, either through the implementation of the principle or in the proper execution of the mandate system, shows the strength of colonialism. While the Allied powers needed American support during the war and up until the peace treaty was settled with Germany, they gave their support to Wilson and his principle. Once that support was no longer critical, the powers ignored Wilson and self-determination. Instead, they imposed their own settlement upon the Ottoman Empire, basing that settlement upon their colonial

4 See Postscript.
5 An Address to a Joint Session of Congress by Wilson, 11.2.18., in Link (ed.), 46, pp.322-3.
6 Heater, p.117.
7 Benedict Cowell to Wilson, 17.9.18., in Link (ed.), 50, p.47.
8 Heater, pp.51-2, 59-60.
ambitions. Wilson, given the United States' unwillingness to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and therefore the League of Nations Covenant, was helpless to counter such a settlement.⁹

Wilson's conception of national self-determination was not unique. It evolved as Wilson reacted to demands for explanations of the American position.¹⁰ This poses the interesting question as to whether Wilson's views on national self-determination can be equated to the views of the United States on the subject? As has been argued, Secretary of State Lansing viewed the implementation of self-determination as a dangerous principle, to be applied carefully and sparingly.¹¹ King and Crane also seemed to have diverged from Wilson's view, at least in the beginning.¹² As Wilson sometimes went for weeks without consulting members of the American delegation at Paris, it can also be assumed that the delegations views on national self-determination deviated from those of Wilson. Although Wilson was seen as the champion of self-determination, both by the Allies and by the various nationalities in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, this is misleading. Wilson's views on the subject did not necessarily equate with those of other members of the United States government, or the majority of Americans.¹³

The failure of Wilson to implement self-determination was related to the lack of consensus among his Allies and his Administration. In the long term, however, the principle of national self-determination would triumph in the former Ottoman Empire, with the notable exception of the Kurds. A Turkish state, incorporating all the territory coveted by the Allied powers, would be formed as early as 1923. The influence of the British and French in the Arab portions of the empire would never be completely assured. Within thirty years of the Treaty of Sèvres, these countries would be independent. While not immediately successful, national self-determination, as

⁹Evans, p.237.
¹⁰ See footnote 16, Introduction.
¹¹ See footnote 56, Chapter Four.
¹² Ibid.
¹³ Sir Horace Plunkett to House, 1.6.17., in Link (ed.), 42, p.543. ; See footnote 12.
espoused by Wilson, had ignited a movement that would lead to the independence of the nationalities of the Ottoman Empire, and the end to colonialism within that Empire.\textsuperscript{14}

Appendix: The Secret Wartime Treaties

This appendix is based entirely upon a similar section in Paul Helmreich’s work. It is intended to give the reader a fuller knowledge of the treaties that the Allied powers based their territorial aspirations at Paris upon with regard to the Ottoman Empire. The reader should note, however, that this appendix is merely a brief summary of these treaties, not an encompassing examination.

Constantinople Agreement, March-April 1915:

The British and French Governments recognised Russia’s right to annex Constantinople and European Turkey. These claims were recognised providing that the war should be successfully concluded, and that the British and French position in the Ottoman Empire be recognised by the Russians.

Treaty of London, April 26 1915:

This treaty was between the Entente powers and Italy. Italy was to gain sovereignty over the Dodecanese Islands and, in the event of a total or partial partition of Asian Turkey, Italy was to receive the province of Adalia.

Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, July 1915-March 1916:

McMahon, the British High Commissioner to Egypt, negotiated an Arab uprising against the Turks. The British agreed to support Arab independence in an area stretching from Persia to the Mediterranean, and from the Indian Ocean to the thirty-seventh parallel. There were three ‘modifications’. They were the exclusion of territory around the Damascus and Aleppo regions, as they were not purely Arab; The guarantee of the Holy Places against external aggression by the British; and the recognition that Britain was only free to act in the areas that did not affect any of the interests of France in the region.

Sykes-Picot Agreement, May 9-16 1916:
This Agreement divided the spoils in the manner that had been envisaged in the Constantinople Agreement of 1915. The Agreement called for an international regime in Palestine; the French annexation of coastal Syria and a zone of influence in the interior; Britain would annex lower Mesopotamia and would have a similar zone of influence bordering the zone allotted to France. Both states were prepared to recognise a independent Arab state or Confederation of Arab states within their zones of influence.

**Saint Jean de Maurienne Agreement, August 18 1917:**

This Agreement gave Italy a designated area for eventual annexation in Asia Minor, and a more extensive zone of influence. It brought Italy within the scope of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, but the failure of Russia to ratify the Agreement brought its legality into question among the Allies.

**Hogarth Message, January 1918.**

This message was intended to counteract the publishing of the Constantinople Agreement and the Sykes-Picot Agreement by the Bolshevik Government of Russia. It assured the Arabs of the Entente powers commitment to Arab independence. It also stressed that the Balfour Declaration did not conflict with any previous promises to the Arab people.

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1 Helmreich, pp.5-8.
Bibliography:


