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THE REVISION OF THE TREATY OF SÈVRES: THE FIRST PHASE
(August 1920 - September 1922)

When in May 1920 the Allied leaders met at the Conference of San Remo to put the finishing touches to the draft treaty of peace with Turkey, signed at Sèvres on 10 August 1920, they were already aware that the growing power of the Turkish Nationalists in Anatolia made some revision inevitable[1]. Not, however, until their position in the area was further threatened by the defeat of their old friend and ally, Eleutherios Venizelos, in the Greek elections of 14 November 1920, and the return of a royalist majority to the Greek parliament, presaging a return to the throne of their old enimy, Constantine, did they seriously begin the long process of renegotiation and revision that was to lead ultimately to the conclusion of the Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923.

Among the Allies, the French proved most eager to use the fall of Venizelos and the return of the ex-King to the throne as excuse for bringing about a decisive shift in the direction of Allied policy in the Near East. In recent months they had become increasingly disenchanted with the proposed settlement. The Chamber of Deputies, in particular, had persistently pressed the government to cut its commitments in the Near and Middle East, abandon Cilicia, make peace with the Kemalists and concentrate all possible resources on securing effective control of Syria[2]. France's interests in the area would, it was argued, be more effectively safeguarded by seeking the friendship of a rejuvenated Turkey, than by attempting to enforce the terms of

1. This article is based mainly on British Foreign Office, Cabinet Office, Admiralty and War Office records [herinafter cited as F. O., CAB., Adm. and W. O.] in the Public Record Office, London. The text of the Treaty of Sèvres may be consulted in *Parliamentary Papers,* 1923, Cmd. 1814, xxvi. 1. An account of its making, with particular reference to the Straits clauses, is given in A. L. Macfie «The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10August 1920: the Straits Clauses», *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştirmalari Dergisi,* 4-5, 1976.

2. G. Jeanmougin, 'Les Relations Franco-Turques en 1925'; *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique,* 1970, pp. 116-7; F. O. 371/7900, Notes on attitude of H. M. G. and Allies towards Turkey since the outbreak of war 1914, compiled by Forbes Adam, 8 Oct. 1922.

a treaty which would in the end bring advantage mainly to Britain, and to her protégé, Greece. In order to secure a settlement more favourable to the Turks, however, it would be necessary to abandon, or at least extensively redraft, the Treaty of Sèvres. M. Leygues, who had recently been elected President of the Council in France, realised that it would not be easy to persuade the British to this; nor had he any desire to break with them over the issue. The opportunity to escape from this dilemma, therefore, which the Constantinist victory offered, he seized with alacrity, contacting Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, and suggesting that they meet in London to discuss recent developments.

When talks opened in the British capital on 26 November 1920, it at once became clear that the British would not accept the French contention that, in the event of Constantine returning, the Allies should wash their hands of the Greeks and set about redrafting the peace treaty in favour of the Turks. Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, pointed out that 'immense labours' had been expended on the treaty, which had only been finally settled after 'months of patient negotiation'[3]. In any case, from the British point of view, it remained preferable that the Greeks should retain possession of the European shore of the Dardanelles and the Sea Marmora. As for the argument that Constantine might in the future prove disloyal, Lloyd George pointed out: 'The geographical position of Greece rendered her easily controllable by Great Britain and France, and no King of Greece could effect anything substantial in the face of the Allies.'[4] Turkey, on the other hand, could not be 'easily controlled by the maritime Powers'[5]. Lloyd George and Curzon proposed, therefore, that, before reaching a decision, the Allies should invite M. Rhallys, the newly elected Prime Minister of Greece, to attend the conference and enquire of him what policy his Government intended to pursue, and what assurances he would give that his country would remain faithful to the alliance and continue to maintain troops in Asia Minor. If the Greek Government proved cooperative — and Lloyd George informed Leygues that he had reason to believe that it would — then the Allies could, as Curzon wrote in

3. *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* 1919-39 (London, in progress) first series [hereinafter cited as D.B.F.P.], viii, No. 95.

4. D.B.F.P., viii, No 95.

5. *Ibid.*

a note on the question, continue to '...adhere to the treaty, and make adherence to it the test of acquiescence by the Great Powers in this or that nomination to the Greek throne'[6]. If, thereafter, owing to the failure of Greece to fulfil her obligations, or to maintain her troops, the treaty were to break at any point, the Allies could then seize the opportunity afforded to make better terms with the Turks at the point concerned.

In the early stages of the conference, the French suggested a number of ways in which the Allies might deal with the situation, should Constantine return to the throne. Among these was one to the effect that they might '...decline to leave the Greeks on the northern side of the Straits, on the ground that the latter could not be safely entrusted to an enemy state'[7]. This proposal betrayed, as Curzon was quick to point out in a note on the question, the same confusion concerning the actual stipulations of the peace treaty as M. Nitti, the Italian Prime Minister, had fallen prey to at the Conference of San Remo:

> The Greeks are not at the present moment, nor if the treaty is carried out are they capable of becoming, the masters of the Straits. When the treaty has been ratified all forts and batteries in the Gallipoli Peninsula and the northern shore of the Marmora will be destroyed, the only troops will be Allied troops under the Allied Commander-in-Chief at Constantinople, and the only other force permitted will be Turkish or Greek gendarmerie under the command and therefore as regards numbers under the control of the same officer.
>
> In these circumstances it is not understood how it is possible for the Greeks, either now or in the future to become a menace to the Allied Powers or to control the entrance of the Straits. So long as there are Allied forces at Constantinople this is impossible. If, however, the Allied forces were withdrawn the treaty would then have been broken by its own authors and a new situation would arise[8].

Another French proposal was that 'the military control of the Straits might be vested in the Straits Commission and that the expenses could be found out of Turkish funds by the Financial Commission sitting at Constantinople[9]. This proposal, too, Curzon pointed out, appeared to have been made 'in forgetfulness of the terms of the Turkish Treaty'. The Straits Commission was composed of representatives of the in-

6. CAB. 24/115, C. P. 2193, *The Greek Position,* memo. by Curzon on questions arising out of the Greek elections, 27 Nov. 1920.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

terested maritime powers, and had nothing to do with the military protection and control of the Straits. It was concerned only with such measures as 'channels, harbours and anchorages, pilotage, lighterage and so on; in other words, with freedom of navigation in the narrow and technical sense of the term'[10]. Nor would he allow that the Financial Commission might become responsible for the financial affairs of the Straits Commission. He had no desire to see the two commissions merged; and he was sceptical of the ability of the Finance Commission to raise funds sufficient to pay for the Allied forces of occupation.

In the end, however, despite their differences, the Allies - Count Sforza, the Italian Foreign Minister, having joined the conference on 2 December 1920 — succeded in reaching agreement. The Greek government should be informed that if Constantine returned to the throne, the Allies would grant Greece no further financial aid[11]. At the same time, the Greek people should be warned that the return of the King would be regarded by the Allies as a hostile act. In such an event, 'a new and unfortunate situation' would arise. Thereafter, the Powers would 'reserve to themselves full liberty in dealing with the situation thus created'[12]. In reaching this decision the British bowed to French insistence that the Greek people must be warned of the consequences of their action, should they vote in favour of the return of Constantine in the impending plebiscite. The French, for their part, accepted British arguments that on no account should the Allies indicate to the Turks a willingness to abandon, or extensively redraft, the Treaty of Sèvres. They accepted that this would merely cause Mustapha Kemal, the leader of the Turkish Nationalists, to raise his price and tempt other interested parties to intervene in the affair. Nevertheless, the French made it clear that they wished at the earliest moment to make contact with Mustapha Kemal and, if possible, reach agreement with him.

Though Leygues can hardly have been aware of the fact, many British voices were raised at this time in favour of a change of policy very much along the lines he advocated. From Constantinople, Sir Horace Rumbold, the High Commisioner, pointed out that, unless the Allies were themselves prepared to undertake difficult military ope-

10. *Ibid.*

11. D.E.F.P., viii, No. 100, 6.

12. H. Nicolson, *Curzon, the Last Phase, 1919-25* (London, 1957) [hereinafter cited as Nicolson], p. 257.

rations in the interior, an accelerated pacification of Asia Minor could only be attained by 'going a long way to meet the Nationalists'[13]. E.S., Montagu, Secretary of State for India for his part, in a memorandum designed to influence opinion at a meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 November 1920, pointed out that 'the combination of Islam with Bolshevism is an increasing menace and peril to British interests', and argued that the Allies should make use of the opportunity offered by the victory of the royalists in the Greek election to remove one of the principal causes of discontent in the Moslem world[14]. When the Cabinet discussed the question on 2 December 1920, a number of ministers, including Churchill, Minister of War, Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Montagu, Secretary of State for India, and Milne, Secretary of State for the Colonies, argued that it was impossible to maintain the existing British position in the Middle East except on the basis of friendly relations with Turkey, and that the course of British policy should be changed in the direction of procuring a real peace with Turkey[15]. In the end, the Cabinet agreed to support the policy recommended by Lloyd George and Curzon. It was made clear, however, that a greater emphasis should be placed on the search for a settlement which would be acceptable to Mustapha Kemal and his followers.

In the plebiscite, held on 5 December 1920, the Greek people voted by a large majority for the return of Constantine. A few weeks later the exiled monarch landed in Greece and ascended the throne. He at once made it clear that he had no intention of breaking with the Allies or withdrawing Greek forces from Asia Minor. Nevertheless, the Allies implemented their decision to suspend financial aid; at the same time they imposed a general embargo on the supply of military and naval material[16]. Moreover, the French and the Italians publicly repudiated whatever debt they owed to their erstwhile ally[17]. In these circumstances, and in view of the evident inability of the Allies to impose their will on the Turks, Curzon was forced to admit the possibility of some modification of the peace treaty. He accordingly instruct-

13. D.B.F.P. xiii, No. 186.
14. CAB. 24/115, C.P. 2153, *The East,* memo. by Montagu, 22 Nov. 1920.
15. CAB. 23/23, C70, 20, appendix III and memo.
16. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 3.
17. Nicolson, p. 256.

ed the Foreign Office to look into the question and draw up 'the kind of alternative modifications which might form a basis of discussion'[18].

On issuing these instructions, Curzon suggested that the Foreign Office might consider a number of possible proposals, including the admission of Turkish sovereignty over Smyrna, 'in some more palpable form than a flag or a fort', provision for a Greek administration there, without providing for Greek annexation, 'near or remote', and the substitution of the Enos-Midia for the Chatalja line[19]. Curzon's apparent willingness to consider so substantial a revision of the peace treaty came as something of a shock to his Foreign Office advisers. Sir Eyre Crowe, for one, at once declared, in a minute dated 8 January 1921, that whereas he might consider some modification of the Smyrna régime acceptable, he would regret 'any change from the Chatalia to the Enos-Midia line, not merely because we should thereby hand over a solid body of Greeks to the Turk, but because I cannot but think that the reestablishment of the Turk on both shores of the Dardanelles would be far more dangerous to our interests than a division of the two shores between Greeks and Turks'[20]. Harold Nicolson went even further, arguing forcefully against any substantial revision of the peace treaty.

> Greece [he pointed out] constitutes a very positive asset in British imperial policy and so long as we have an Empire, our policy is bound to be imperial... The revision of the Treaty of Sèvres will face us with a discontented and possibly an actively recalcitrant Greece. I feel that it is imprudent to hope that we shall be compensated for this by having a contented and pacific Turkey[21].

The General Staff, on the other hand, supported by the Minister of War, saw the situation in quite another light. Concerned mainly with the military position in Mesopotamia and Persia, and ultimately as ever with the defence of India, they repeatedly warned the government of the probable consequences of its Turkish policy. The government should, they advised, prepare for

> ...a crisis which will tax the resources of even the present augmented garrison [in Mesopotamia and Persia]... Should the development of Turkish aggression, in combination with the Kurdish tribes to the north of Mosul, synchronize

18. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 6, n. 6.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, No. 7, n. 7.
21. *Ibid.*, No. 12.

> with a Russian advance from Tabriz and Enzeli in North Persia, we shall be hard put to it to maintain our position, even if the tribes in the interior of Mesopotamia keep quiet. A repetition of the Arab revolt at the same moment would be fraught with the gravest consequences[22].

In spite of these warnings, however, the Cabinet, which discussed the question at a meeting held on 20 January 1921, agreed that as far as possible the main lines of the treaty should be adhered to, more particularly those parts concerning Eastern Thrace, the Chatalja line and the Holy Places. Britain should approach her allies with a view to arranging a conference to which representatives of the Allied Powers, Greece, the Turkish government at Constantinople and the Turkish Nationalists would be invited, in order that possible modifications of the peace treaty might be discussed[23]. On 25 January 1921, in the course of a conference held in Paris, Curzon put this proposal to his allies, where, after some discussion, it was accepted[24].

In considering his strategy for the coming conference, Curzon decided, on the basis of advice proffered by Crowe and Nicolson, that the best course to follow would be to reject out of hand all Turkish claims for the revision of those sections of the treaty which concerned the settlement of Turkey in Europe and the Straits[25]. In order to persuade the Turks to accept their losses in Europe, he intended, as he explained at a meeting of ministers held on 18 February 1921, the day the conference opened, to offer them substantial concessions in Anatolia, including a favourable revision of Turkey's eastern frontier, recognition of Ottoman suzerainty at Smyrna and a modification of the various restrictions which the treaty had placed on the freedom of action of the Turkish government[26]. In order to propitiate the Greeks, who could clearly be expected to resist any attempt to loosen their hold on Asia Minor, Curzon advised that he intented to propose that a special régime be established in the occupied zone, involving the appointment of a Christian governor and a provisional assemply, the organisation of a gendarmerie under the direction of the Powers and the creation of a separate and autonomous administration[27].

22. CAB. 24/116, V.P. 2275, *The Situation in Mesopotamia,* memo. by the D.M.O., 7 Dec. 1920.
23. CAB. 23/24, 3, Cab. meeting, 20 Jan. 1921.
24. D.B.F.P., xv, No. 4.
25. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 41.
26. CAB. 23/24, 14, 21, appendix I, Conf. of Ministers, 18 Feb. 1921.
27. *Ibid.*

When the conference opened, however, it quickly became evident that neither of the parties principally concerned would consider Curzon's proposals as a possible basis for a settlement. When Lloyd George put the proposals regarding the Smyrna vilayet to M. Kalogeropoulos, President of the Council and head of the Greek delegation, he was informed that the Greek people were 'one and united' on the issue: they would neither give up the position they had won at Smyrna, nor allow their people there to be placed once again under the Turkish yoke[28]. The Constantinople and Angora delegations, for their part, made it clear that on no account would they give up Smyrna and Eastern Thrace[29]. As both parties based their claims on the principle of nationality, and as the statistics they presented were clearly unreliable, the Allies decided to accept a Turkish suggestion that the population figures of the disputed territories be investigated by an impartial commission[30]. In this way it might be possible to reach agreement, more especially if the belligerents could be persuaded to agree to abide by the findings of the enquiry in advance. Curzon, for his part, welcomed the proposal, as he believed that a comission would find in favour of the Greeks in Eastern Thrace, thus facilitating a settlement along the lines advocated by the British government.

The proposal was formally presented to the Greek and Turkish delegations on 24 February 1921. The Turks, who believed that an enquiry would find in their favour, quickly announced their acceptance. They made it clear, however, that they would not accept the corollary laid down by the Allies to the effect that 'the remaining clauses of the Treaty of Sèvres shall remain unaltered, and shall be loyally accepted both by Turkey and Greece'[31]. On 4 March 1921, however, Kalogeropoulos informed Lloyd George that his government would not accent the proposal. The National Assembly had voted unanimously to the effect that they would not agree to any revision of the Treaty of Sèvres: '... they consider that this treaty, having regard to the sacrifice sustained by the Greek nation during the war and the historic struggles of Greece for establishment as a free State, contains the minimum of the rights of the nation and assures the peace of the Near East'[32].

28. D.B.F.P., xv, No. 13.
29. *Ibid.*, No. 19.
30. *Ibid.*, No. 22.
31. *Ibid.*, appendix.
32. *Ibid.*, No. 32.

In these circumstances the Allies had little choice but to abandon their proposal. They were unwilling, however, to give up the search for a compromise settlement. The blight of war was making its effects felt, not only in the area of conflict, but also in Europe. Moreover, the Allies feared that a continuation of the conflict would push Mustapha Kemal further into the arms of the Soviets and strengthen the alliance between the forces of Bolshevism and Islam in Asia. In conjunction with Lloyd George, Curzon accordingly proposed that they should make one more attempt to reach a compromise settlement. This might be constructed on the basis of the proposals concerning the Smyrna vilayet which he had originally intended to put to the conference. In view of the intransigence of the Turkish Nationalists, however, it was evident that he would have to offer the Turks something more substantial than he had at first intended. On the basis of recommendations drawn up by a conference of experts held at the Foreign Office on 28 February 1921, therefore, he suggested that, in addition to the concessions already provisionally agreed on regarding the eastern frontiers of Turkey and the appointment of a Turkish delegate to the Straits Commision, the Allies might offer the Turks a withdrawal of Allied troops from Constantinople and the Ismid Peninsula, a reduction of the demilitarised zone to an area sufficient on the south side of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to secure free passage of the Straits, and a relaxation of the financial and military controls which the Allies had intended to impose on Turkey[33]. As far as the demilitarised zone was concerned, this meant that it would be limited to the Gallipoli Peninsula and the Marmora coast up to Rodosto, the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles from Tenedos to Karabigha, and the two peninsulas flanking the Bosphorus to a depth of twenty or twenty five kilometres[34]. As for the military controls, it meant that the Turks would be allowed to garrison Constantinople, to pass troops freely between their territories in Asia and Europe by way of the demilitarised zone of the Bosphorus, and to increase their forces to 30,000 special elements and 45,000 gendarmerie[35].

Curzon's proposals involved a greater diminution of Allied, and in particular British, control of the Straits than the War Office and

33. Adm. 116/2133, *Turkish Peace Treaty, Naval Terms and Proposals regarding Treaty of Peace with Turkey;* B.D.F.P., xv, Nos. 51 and 52.

34. *Ibid.,* No. 53, appendix 2.

35. *Ibid.*

Admiralty would have considered advisable in the light of standard desiderata on the question. Curzon was not disturbed, however, by the extent of the concessions. He had all along argued that the continued presence of the Turks in Constantinople was not compatible with effective maintenance of allied control of the Bosphorus. Neither did he place much confidence in the capacity of the Allies to exercise control over the size and distribution of the Turkish armed forces in Anatolia, nor in their determination, individually or collectively, to maintain an adequate garrison on the Straits. He saw no reason, therefore, why those sections of the treaty dealing with the Straits and the Turkish armed forces should not be redrafted to conform with the conditions which would, in all probability, prevail. As long as the Dardanelles remained demilitarised, the European shore in the hands of the Greeks, the Gallipoli Peninsula and the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles garrisoned by allied troops, it would still be possible for the Allies in time of need to send a fleet through into the Sea of Marmora, threaten Constantinople and, in certain circumstances, force the Bosphorus and enter the Black Sea. Should Greece prove recalcitrant, she could, as a power dependent for her livelihood on the sea, be coerced without undue difficulty by the British fleet.

Curzon and Lloyd George had little difficulty in persuading their allies to accept their proposals. When these were formally presented to the Turkish and Greek delegations on 12 March 1921, however, it quickly became evident that there was little likelihood of their being accepted. The Constantinople delegation declared that the maintenance of a Greek garrison in the towno f Smyrna (a concession Curzon wished to allow the Greeks) would be incompatible with the exercise of Ottoman sovereignty; and that the sovereignty of Turkey in Eastern Thrace must be 'recognised and safeguarded in a manner which the Supreme Council may decide to be the best for the assurance of peace'[36]. The Ankara delegation merely asserted that, in rejecting the allied proposal to set up a commission of enquiry, the Greeks had, in effect, admitted that their contention regarding the existence of a Greek majority in the disputed territories was without foundation[37]. Nevertheless both Turkish delegations agreed to submit the Allied proposals to their respective governments for further consideration. The

36. *Ibid.*, No. 59, appendix 2.
37. *Ibid.*, appendix 3.

Greeks, however, saw little advantage in further negotiation. They were concerned that an agreement regarding Cilicia, made between Briand, the French Prime Minister, and Bekir Sami Bey, the Nationalist Foreign Minister, during the conference, would relieve Turkish forces on the southern front for service in the west[38]. They decided, therefore, to undertake what M. Gounaris, the Greek Prime Minister, in a conversation with Lloyd George held on 10 March 1921, had referred to as the duty of completing 'the mission which she [Greece] had undertaken in accord with her allies, namely, the enforcement of the Treaty of Sèvres by means of her military forces'[39].

During the conference, the Greek and Turkish delegations each made strenuous efforts to win British support for their cause. Gounaris pointed out to Lloyd George and Curzon that a Turkish victory in Anatolia would, in effect, 'put in question the whole situation which the Treaty of Sèvres had established, especially if the natural sentry, namely, the Greek army, was withdrawn from Asia Minor'[40]. The Greek government were convinced that the main objection of Turkey to the treaty was 'not so much the concession to Greece in Asia Minor as the régime established in the zone of the Straits, and more especially the provisions for securing a free passage. This régime would be threatened by the withdrawal of its principal guardian, namely, the Greek army[41]. Bekir Sami Bey, for his part, showed an equal awareness of British interests in the area. The role which Britain expected from the Greeks could, he suggested, 'more easily and happily be played by the Turks, once the question of the Straits was settled in conformity with British interests, and consistently with the existence of the Turks who would give all necessary guarantees'[42]. In addition, the Turks would exercise the influence of the Caliphate in Britain's favour, abandon the pursuit of pan-Islamic and pan-Turanian policies, and support the formation of a confederation of Caucasian states, which would act as a useful barrier against 'the march of Russia in Central Asia'[43]. The British refused, however, to be drawn. Sympathetic as Lloyd George and Curzon were to the Greek cause, they were not prepared to back them

38. *Ibid.*, No 69.
39. *Ibid.*, No. 52.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, No. 33.
43. *Ibid.*

in an attempt to settle their differences with the Turks by means of force alone. Nor were they much impressed by Bekir Sami Bey's blandishments. They accordingly decided that, in the future, they would remain neutral, a decision with which the French and the Italians agreed to associate themselves[44]. General Harington, Commander of the British forces in Constantinople, was accordingly instructed to arrange for the demarcation of a line dividing British forces on the Ismid Peninsula from Greek forces there[45], and in May an area approximate to that occupied by Allied forces on the Straits was designated a neutral zone, which the belligerents were advised to avoid[46].

The Greeks launched their offensive on 23 March 1921. They attacked on two fronts, against Eskişehir in the north and Afyon Karahissar in the south. They succeeded in capturing Afyon without much difficulty. In the north, however, they were stopped on the Inönü, before Eskişehir, which, despite repeated attacks, they failed to take. As a result the troops occupying Afyon, exposed and under pressure, were forced to withdraw[47].

Following their failure to take Eskişehir, the Greeks withdrew their forces in the north to a defensive position based on Bursa. As a result the Ismid Peninsula, defended only by a handful of British troops, supported by the Greek eleventh division which the Greek Commander-in-Chief had informed the Allies he intended to withdraw in the immediate future, was once again exposed to attack by the Nationalists. The British Cabinet accordingly authorised General Harington to withdraw British forces from the peninsula to the European side of the Bosphorus should he consider such a move necessary[48]. For the moment, however, General Harington was content to hold on and await developments, aware that the outcome of the struggle between the Greeks and the Turks remained as yet undecided.

During the following weeks, however, reports suggested that the Greek position had further deteriorated, while that of the Nationalists, supported both morally and materially by the Bolsheviks, and, according

44. *Ibid.*, No. 88.

45. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 71, n. 3.

46. *Ibid.*, No. 159.

47. Kinross, *Ataturk: the Rebirth of a Nation* (London, 1964) [hereinafter cited as kinross], pp. 264-5.

48. CAB. 23/25, C17, 21, Cab. meeting, 4 April 1921.

to numerous reports, by the Italians, had improved[49]. When, therefore, in May 1921, Harington returned to London to report to the War Office and consult with the Cabinet, he advised that it was unlikely the Greeks would again be able to take the offensive against the Turks with any expectation of success. Nor, indeed, could the Allies any longer expect to reach agreement with Mustapha Kemal, whom success in war and diplomacy had hardened in his determination to accept nothing less than the National Pact in full[50]. In a memorandum, containing Harington's appreciation, presented by the Secretary of State for War to the Cabinet, the General Staff pointed out that, in these circumstances, the Greek forces would in all probability concentrate their forces at Smyrna, leaving the approaches to the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles uncovered. As for the Turks, they would almost certainly launch an attack in the near future, either against the Greeks before Smyrna, or against the Allied positions at Ismid and Chanak. They advised, therefore, that the British forces on the Straits should be withdrawn, before they became involved in 'a dangerous situation'. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Wilson, agreed. In a forthright introduction to the memorandum he declared:

> I think the chances are that the Turks will drive the Greeks back to Smyrna, and quite likely out of Smyrna too, and that our troops in Constantinople will be in danger. Nor in such a case can I see any possibility of holding the Dardanelles. In short, I think we ought now to take the necessary steps to withdraw, and to withdraw completely, both from the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles[51].

The Foreign Office, however, differed. In a memorandum, dated 30 May 1921, Sir Eyre Crowe pointed out that the presentation of the case merely as a military problem obscured the magnitude of the issues involved:

> The Turks reestablished, as a result of military victory on his part, and the flight of the allies, means the loss of practically the whole fruits of our victorious campaign in which Turkey was completely defeated... We should have

49. CAB. 24/123, C.P. 2981, *The Military Situation in Turkey,* memo. by the S. of S. for War, 26 May 1921; CAB. 23/25, C44, 21, Cab. meeting, 31 May 1921.

50. CAB. 24/123, C.P. 2981, *The Military Situation in Turkey,* memo. by the S. of S. for War, 26 May 1921.

51. *Ibid.*

> a Sultan with fully reestablished authority at Constantinople, commanding the Straits as before, his Christian subjects returning to the old régime of oppression and massacre, Turkish sovereignty restored in Western as well as Eastern Thrace. This would very soon be followed by the revival of some kind of connection with the Arabs, a perpetual threat to our position in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, and probably in Egypt. A reconstituted great Turkey, run after by France, Italy, and Germany, as it certainly would be, would intentify the pan-Islamic movement, which has for its object the destruction of our Indian Empire, and Constantinople would become again the centre of all anti-British intrigues all over the world[52].

Curzon presented these arguments in broad outline to the Cabinet when they met to discuss the situation on 31 May 1921. The consequences of a policy of withdrawal would, he declared, be 'far-reaching and calamitous'[53]. Whether Mustapha Kemal dealt with Smyrna or Constantinople first, he would certainly get control of Constantinople in the end. 'Mustapha Kemal, victorious and bitterly hostile, would have achieved a position from which he could not be ejected'[54]. Churchill added that withdrawal, unless carried out as part of a general agreement, would adversely affect the British position in Iraq and Palestine[55]. In spite of the persuasiveness of the case presented by Curzon, however, the Cabinet remained undecided. It was agreed, therefore, that the Staffs of the Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry should be instructed to draw up in concert a report on the possibility of holding a position on the Straits which could be maintained against a Turkish attack; at the same time the General Staff were instructed to advise whether the passage of the Straits (Dardanelles) by armoured ships could be safeguarded in the long run by holding a position on the European shore only[56].

The Combined Chiefs of Staff reported that, as a temporary measure, it would be possible to secure the passage of the Dardanelles by holding the Gallipoli Peninsula alone, more especially if it were possible to secure a foothold at Chanak as well. But the control of the Dardanelles alone would be of little value: even if armoured ships did enter the Sea of Marmora they would only be able to bombard lines

52. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 201.
53. CAB. 23/25, 44, 21, Cab. meeting, 31 May 1921.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. W.O. 32/5236, 24, Extract from minutes of Cab. meeting, 31 May 1921.

of communication, an operation of little military significance. As regards the long-term effectiveness of securing the passage of the Dardanelles by holding the Gallipoli Peninsula alone, though it might enable them to pass armoured ships through into the Sea of Marmora, these would quickly be cut off as an enemy laid mines and brought submarines into the area. In either case, a considerable force would be needed hold the Gallipoli Peninsula, with or without a foothold at Chanak[57].

On the basis of this advice, pessimistic as it evidently was, a Cabinet committee set up at the time to deal with the question, decided against immediate evacuation[58]. It decided, rather, to await the outcome of events: in the meantime British forces in the area might be reinforced. The committee could not agree, however, on the general course British policy should take. Some argued that the British government should at once seek a negotiated settlement with Mustapha Kemal, offering him Smyrna, Constantinople, the Straits and, it was suggested, Batum and Baku. Others argued that, as 'the basis of our recent policy in the Near East had been that the position at Constantinople and the freedom of the Straits could be secured only by means of a strong Greece', they might still consider supporting the Greeks[59]. In the end, under Curzon's guidance, the committee decided to pursue neither course but rather to approach the Greek government in an effort to obtain its approval for the opening of negotiations with the Turks on the basis of a modification in favour of Turkey of the terms proposed at the recent London Conference. Should the Greeks accept, but the Turks reject, this attempt at mediation, then Greece might be supported in the war, not by arms, but by means of a naval blockade of the Black Sea and Mediterranean ports of Asia Minor, and by the provision of facilities for the acquisition of war materials, munitions and finance, and, perhaps, volunteer forces[60]. In order to obtain French and

57. W.O. 32/5236, Report by the Naval, General and Air Staffs on the possibility of holding a position which would enable the Allies to secure the passage of the Dardanelles, 8 June 1921.

58. *Ibid.*, 28, Meeting of the Committee on the future of Constantinople, 2 June 1921.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*, 30, Meeting of the Committee on the future of Constantinople, 9 June 1921.

Italian support for an initiative, on 17 June 1921, Curzon crossed to Paris to consult M. Briand and Signor Galli, the Italian Ambassador.

Curzon found the French well disposed towards his suggestion that the time was ripe for a further attempt at mediation. In recent weeks they had been disturbed by the apparent arrogance of the Turkish Nationalists, who had refused to confirm the agreement drawn up by Briand and Bekir Sami Bey during the London Conference[61]. They feared that a further Kemalist victory would make the Turks, as General Pelle, the French High Commissioner in Constantinople, put it at the time, 'even more impossible to deal with than at present.' Curzon was able to put his proposals forward, therefore, with some confidence. These were, the minutes of the opening meeting record:

> an extension of the London proposals regarding Smyrna, demilitarisation of that part of Eastern Thrace beyond the Chatalja line, possible further modification of financial control, a general assurance of support to a reconstituted Turkey, a possible suggestion to the Turks that the Allies would see no objection to Turkish expansion in the Caucasus, the abolition or modification of the tripartite agreement, and the other concessions contained in the London proposals[62].

Briand at once expressed general approval of Curzon's scheme. He doubted whether the Turks would accept a settlement that left the Greeks on the Chatalja line. In order to relieve the anxiety of the Turks regarding the security of their capital and, as he put it, 'to effect the transference of the Government from Angora to Constantinople, in which place the Turkish Government would be more readily controlled'[63], an international zone might be created in Eastern Thrace, policed by an international gendarmerie. Alternatively, a commission of enquiry might be instituted similar to that proposed at the London Conference. On this issue, however, Curzon was unwilling to give way. As far as Turkey in Europe was concerned, he wished, as far as possible, to preserve the position set out in the Treaty of Sèvres. He doubted if the Greeks would accept proposals which required them to abandon effective control of both Smyrna and Eastern Thrace. Briand accordingly agreed to defer discussion of the question until it was seen if the Greeks would respond to the Allied initiative. The final form of

61. *Ibid.*, 31, Summary of a statement by Curzon on his visit to Paris, 18-19 June 1921.

62. D.B.F.P., xv, No. 88.

63. *Ibid.*

the Thracian solution could, he declared, only be arrived at when formal negotiations had begun[64].

It soon became evident, however, that the Allies had underestimated the determination of the Greeks to defend what M. Rizo-Rangabé, the Greek Chargé d'Affaires in London, called 'the cause of civilisation in the East'[65]. On 25 June 1921, the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the British Ambassador that the Greek Government would not accept the Allied offer: 'Military interests alone can now guide her [Greece's] conduct and her decisions..[66]'. On 10 July 1921, under the personal leadership of King Constantine, the Greek army in Asia Minor once again moved forward. On this occasion, better organised and equipped than they had been in March, they succeeded in capturing Afyon Karahissar, Kutahya and Eskishehir. The Turks, aware as ever that time was on their side, and that the empty wastes of Central Anatolia would work for them in the harsh struggle for survival in which they were engaged, retired before the oncoming Greeks until they reached the River Sakarya, where with grim determination, they turned, and stood, and fought[67]. On 13 August 1921, the Greeks resumed their advance. On this occasion they were ordered to cross the Sakarya, crush the enemy and occupy Ankara. After twenty two days of continuous fighting, however, they failed to break through: too exhausted to press the attack further, they retired to a defensive position on the west bank of the river. Informed of the Greek retreat, Mustapha Kemal at once returned to Ankara to inform the Grand National Assembly of the success of his troops. In Athens, too, the Greek people were informed that their army had won a decisive victory. Of the two peoples there was little doubt which had most cause to celebrate. As Churchill later wrote: 'The Greeks had involved themselves in a politico-strategic situation where anything short of decisive victory was defeat: and the Turks were in a position were anything short of overwhelming defeat was victory'[68].

During these hostilities, the Allies continued to insist on and, in varying degrees, enforce the neutrality they had declared at the London

64. *Ibid.*
65. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 262, n. 5.
66. *Ibid.*, No. 260; CAB. 23/26, C54, 21, Meeting of Ministers, 27 June 1921.
67. Kinross, pp. 267-71.
63. W. Churchill, *The World Crisis, the Aftermath* (London, 1944), pp. 400-402.

Conference of March 1921. Until August a total ban was imposed on the supply of war material to Greece and Turkey. Thereafter, following a decision of the Supreme Council, taken during the Third Conference of Paris in August 1921, the ban was imposed only on governments, private firms being allowed to trade on a normal commercial basis[69]. The Greeks, however, were allowed to continue in their use of Constantinople as a naval and military base, a fact which led the Turks frequently to protest[70]. Though each of the Allies recommended at one time or another a stricter interpretation of neutrality in this respect, they were never sufficiently in agreement to take action. On one occasion the French argued that the Greeks should not be deprived of harbour facilities at Constantinople as they enjoyed them in virtue of the armistice conditions[71]. On another the British decided that, in view of the evident hostility of Mustapha Kemal, there was little point in enforcing a decision so clearly favourable to him[72]. The Greeks were, therefore, left in full enjoyment of their privilege. The Turks equally protested that the freedom of passage of the Straits, accorded by the Allies to Greek ships-of-war, constituted unfair practice[73]. On this issue, Curzon, who had a long memory, remained firm. The Turks were informed that the situation was governed, until the ratification of the Treaty of Sèvres, by the precedent created by the passage of the *Goeben*. The Allies could not close the Straits to Greek men-of-war without departing from strict neutrality[74].

The continuance of the war in Anatolia raised once again the possibility of a Greek attempt on Constantinople. In spite of repeated Allied declarations to the contrary, leading members of the Greek government continued to believe that Britain, at least, would support such an attempt[75]. In August 1921, however, the Allies succeeded in convincing the Greeks that they would oppose by force any move against the Ottoman capital. Nevertheless, some Greeks continued to hope. In the course of a conversation with Lord Granville, British Ambassador in Athens, on 17 August 1921, M. Gounaris suggested that,

69. D.B.F.P., xv, No. 94.
70. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 128, n. 1.
71. *Ibid.*, No. 164.
72. *Ibid.*, No. 294.
73. *Ibid.*, No. 273.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*, No. 334.

together with the zone of the Straits, Constantinople might be included in an autonomous state under the joint guarantee of Great Britain and Greece, a proposal which, in Granville's opinion, embraced the hope that the city might in time fall to Greece[76].

The failure of the Greeks to crush the Turks on the Sakarya created in Anatolia what Churchill called 'a condition of stalemate so far as the Mediterranean side was concerned...' Fearing that the Nationalists might turn eastwards to attack the British in Mosul, Churchill suggested that the Allies should once more attempt to mediate a settlement[77]. Curzon agreed that, on the military side, the moment seemed propitious. On the political side, however, he believed it to be less promising. Terms acceptable to the Nationalists still appeared to differ substantially from the proposals put forward by the Allies at the London Conference in March and the Paris meeting in June. Nor did the Greeks appear as yet willing to accept Allied intervention. Curzon recognised, however, that in view of the immense strains imposed by the war on both belligerents, they might in the near future welcome Allied intervention, provided 'sufficiently facesaving terms' could be presented[78]. He accordingly advised the Cabinet that they might consider a further initiative on the basis of the March and June proposals, with the addition of minor but significant concessions to both parties. The Greeks might be offered the abolition of any customs barrier between the Smyrna province and Greece; a share in the Tripartite Agreement, or 'understanding between gentlemen' which it had been proposed in Paris should take its place; recognition of their king; and financial assistance. The Turks might be offered an extension of the Sèvres frontier in Europe to take in the territory bordering the northern shores of the Marmora up to Rodosto, and a limitation on the number, and a restriction on the location, of Greek troops stationed in Eastern Thrace.[79] In this way Curzon hoped Turkish concern regarding the security of Constantinople might be allayed, while Greek control of the Gallipoli Peninsula and the greater part of Eastern Thrace,

76. *Ibid.*, No. 359.

77. CAB. 24/128, C.P. 3328, *Greece and Turkey,* memo. by the S. of S. for the Colonies 26 Sept. 1921.

78. *Ibid.*, C.P. 3384, *Intervention between Greece and Turkey,* memo. by Curzon, 7 Oct. 1921.

79. *Ibid.*

which he considered essential to the maintenance of Allied control of the Straits, would be assured.

An opportunity to broach the question of a further attempt at mediation arose at the end of October when M. Gounaris, the Greek Prime Minister and M. Baltatzis, his Foreign Secretary, visited London to confer with the British government. Curzon explained the proposals he had in mind, and enquired if the Greeks would be prepared to place themselves 'in the hands of the Powers'[80]. Gounaris, who had little confidence in the impartiality of the French and the Italians, was not enthusiastic. Nevertheless, after consulting Athens, he informed Curzon that his government would, in principle, agree[81]. An unexpected development, however, forced Curzon to put the matter aside for the moment. As he explained to the Cabinet at a meeting held on 1 November 1921, the receipt from Paris of the terms of a draft agreement, concluded on 20 October 1921 between Franklin-Bouillon, a French diplomat, and Mustapha Kemal, raised questions concerning the essential structure of Anglo-French relations, questions to which it was essential to find an answer before any further steps were taken to reach a settlement[82].

Curzon believed that the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement, as it came to be called, constituted 'a breach of honour and good faith'[83]. Article 1 of the Agreement appeared to provide for the conclusion of a separate peace with Turkey, articles 3 and 5, concerning the evacuation of Cilicia, to be in violation of the Tripartite Agreement, and article 8, which delineated a frontier between Turkey and the mandated territory of Syria, to be in conflict with the Treaty of Sèvres. Moreover, Curzon also believed that the terms of the Agreement would prove damaging to British interests in the Near and Middle East. A French evacuation of Cilicia, he advised the Cabinet, combined with an adjustment of the frontier of the mandated territory of Syria, would leave the military approaches of Mesopotamia unprotected. In such circumstances the Kemalists might be tempted to turn eastwards in an attempt to drive Britain from Mosul, and even, possibly, from Iraq[84]. At the

80. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 425; CAB. 23/27, C84, 21, Cab. meeting, 1 Nov. 1921.
81. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 431.
82. CAB. 23/27, C84, 21, Cab. meeting, 1 Nov. 1921.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*

same time the Agreement would, in all probability, make it impossible for France to participate in energetic measures against the Nationalists, should such prove necessary as a result of an eventual Nationalist advance on Constantinople[85]. In a high state of anger, therefore, Curzon sent for the French Ambassador and asked him to explain the agreement which, he declared, he had read with feelings of astonishment: '...that a local arrangement of a relatively minor character for the evacuation of French troops, or the release of French prisoners, should have been expanded in this elastic fashion to include this vast motley of interests and concessions' seemed one of the 'most unusual diplomatic achievements' of which he had ever heard[86].

The French were clearly embarrassed by Curzon's remonstrances. In a carefully worded reply, designed to conciliate the British without actually admitting in any particular the justice of their case, they informed the Foreign Secretary that the Agreement, far from constituting a treaty of peace, was in fact merely 'an arrangement of local significance'[87]. The proposed evacuation of Cilicia was essential: both the Chamber of Deputies and the Nation were determined on it. As regards the slight alterations regarding the northern frontier of Syria, they were not important; in any case they conformed to the principle of nationality which had dominated the whole peace settlement[88].

This response, Curzon found to be 'quibbling, casuistical and disquieting'[89]. Nonetheless, he recognised its conciliatory character. Rather than become engaged in a fruitless dispute, therefore, he decided to reply, acknowledging its courteous tone and noting the assurances which it contained[90]. At the same time he took the opportunity of suggesting that, in the near future, a conference should be called to which the Kemalists would be unconditionally invited.

The conciliatory attitude adopted by the French over the Fran-

85. CAB. 24/129, C.P. 3474, *The Situation in the Near East,* memo. by the S. of S. for War, 9 Nov. 1922.

86. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 432.

87. CAB. 24/131, C.P. 3501, Translation of French reply to British representations concerning Agreement between M. Franklin-Bouillon and Angora Gov., 17 Nov. 1921.

88. *Ibid.*

89. CAB. 23/27, C88, 21, 2, Cab. meeting, 22 Nov. 1921.

90. *Ibid.*

klin-Bouillon affair could not, however, disguise the fact that they intended to pursue, and indeed were pursuing, a policy in the Near and Middle East radically different from that advocated by Curzon. This became clear when, on 30 December 1921, Curzon communicated a memorandum to Paris containing the proposals he wished to put forward as a basis for discussion at a meeting of Allied foreign ministers, which it was intended to hold prior to the convening of the proposed conference[91]. These proposals were, for the most part, identical with those adopted at the Conferences of London and Paris in March and June 1921, together with the modifications concerning the position of Turkey in Europe Curzon had suggested to Gounaris and Baltatzis in October. In order, however, to give the provisions regarding the Straits what he called 'a more definitely international complexion'[92], Curzon had suggested that the League of Nations might take over the duties of administering the Straits Commission and assuring the effective demilitarisation of the proposed zone; similarly the League might be asked to administer the Smyrna zone. In their reply, which was accompanied by a memorandum containing an alternative set of proposals, the French not only suggested that Curzon's proposals were partisan, but also declared that in no circumstances would they join with the British in imposing 'mesures coercitives' on the Turks[93]. Their memorandum, the French Ambassador wrote,

> a été redigé, non pour répondre au memorandum britannique, mais pour exposer le point de vue français dont M. Poincaré a déja entretenu Votre Seigneurie. Comme le memorandum anglais tenait compte des dispositions des Grecs manifestées par M. Gounaris au cours de des longs entretiens avec Votre Seigneurie le document français tient compte des dispositions des Turcs, que nous conaissons d'aprés les indications de notre Haute Commissaire à Constantinople, de M. Franklin-Bouillon et de Ferid Bey, représentant officieux d'Angora à Paris[94].

In view of the success of the Nationalists in the field and the complementary failures of the Greeks, it was necessary to offer the Turks more favourable terms than those proposed in March 1921:

> Les conditions nouvelles de la paix ne paraissent par suite pouvoir comporter que des diminutions très restreintes du territoire proprement turc (le sort des

91. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 496.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Adm. 116/2133, de Saint Aulaire to Curzon, 27 Jan. 1922.
94. *Ibid.*

> territoires de population arabe n'étant pas modifié), une limitation des forces militaires plutôt qu'un désarmament et un contrôle de l'administration de la Turquie conciliable avec ses droits de souveraineté[95].

Curzon was shocked at the tone and content of the French note. He was aware that Poincaré, who had in January succeeded Briand as President of the Council, was out of touch with the affairs of the Middle East. Nonetheless, he could hardly believe that he could so misunderstand the position. The suggestion, he informed the British Ambassador in Paris, that His Majesty's Government intended to take the side of the Greeks against the Turks at the forthcoming conference, demanded 'the most prompt and emphatic repudiation'[96]. Nor would he admit the right of the French to speak on behalf of the Turks. Just what, he enquired querulously, did the French Government intend?

As at the time of the Franklin-Bouillon affair, the French proved conciliatory. On this occasion, however, Poincaré decided to explain in some detail the considerations which inspired French policy. In a courteous but firm note, based largely on a memorandum by Marshall Foch on the military and strategic aspects of the situation, he declared that France, like Britain, wished first and foremost to see peace reestablished in the East[97]. In considering the question of possible peace terms the French government had sought merely to discover 'des bases pratiques pour le rétablissement de la paix'[98]. The French proposals were, in fact, by no means as far removed from the British as Curzon appeared to believe:

> Pour Smyrna et pour la Thrace orientale, si l'on compare les deux propositions, on se rend compte que je me suis borné à avancer dans la voie indiquée par Lord Curzon lui-même. Pour la Thrace occidentale, il ressort de cette comparaison qu'il n'y a aucune divergence de vues entre nous. En ce qui concerne Constantinople et la Commission des Détroits, il n'y a pas non plus de divergences notables entre nos deux points de vue, et je ne crois pas qu'il soit impossible de subordonner l'évacuation de Constantinople, par example à un commencement d'exécution du Traité[99].

France, however, could not envisage 'la reprise des hostilités contre les Turcs et répugnerait même à des mesures coercitives'. Nor did he,

95. *Ibid.*
96. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 515.
97. *Ibid.*, No. 519, enclosure 1.
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*

Poincaré, believe that the British people would agree to send an army to Asia Minor.

> Dans ces conditions, si nous voulons imposer la paix à l'une des deux parties, nous n'aurons pas la force à notre disposition. Je ne crois pas, étant donnée la situation de l'Asie Mineure, qu'un blocus soit un moyen de pression effectif. Je ne crois pas non plus que les Turcs céderaient devant la menace de voir prolonger l'occupation de Constantinople. Cette menace, si on la réalisait, les rejetterait simplement en Asie Mineure, vers les Soviets et vers un panislamisme qui comporterait de graves dangers[100].

Curzon in general did not question Poincaré's analysis of the military and strategic aspects of the situation. Indeed, Foreign Office studies of the situation at the time confirmed its validity. In general, however, he believed that the threat posed by the Turkish Nationalists to Allied and, in particular, British interests in the Near and Middle East could only be met by a display of firmness. Any indication of weakness would merely encourage the Turks to step up their demands. In certain circumstances, it might even bring on the catastrophe the French feared. Poincaré, on the other hand, concluded that only by removing as far as possible the cause of Turkish grievance could the dangers inherent in the situation be contained. A strong policy, pursued without regard to the realities of power in the area, would merely exacerbate the situation. As Marshall Foch put it a note on the question:

> ...la continuation de la lutte contre le nationalisme ne risque pas seulement de faire éclater l'impuissance des Alliés; elle comporte en outre des dangers:
> Le maintien de l'occupation de Constantinople et des Détroits, sans être de nature à faire céder le Gouvernement d'Angora, aura pour résultat de ruiner davantage le prestige du Gouvernement de Constantinople et du Khalifat et de rejeter définitivement en Asie le Gouvernement effectif de la Turquie;
> Le maintien des Grecs sur le front de Smyrna entretiendra et développera l'exaltation du sentiment national turc, et continuera à fournir au Gouvernement kémaliste le levier nécessaire pour soutenir et augmenter son effort militaire;
> Enfin, la politique de coercition à l'égard du Gouvernement d'Angora aboutira infailliblement à consolider l'alliance factice, mais rendue ainsi plus nécessaire, du pouvoir soviétique et du nationalisme turc. Il est même à prévoir que Mustapha Kemal, qui, dans un but de conciliation, a proclamé son renoncement à tout programme pantouranien et panislamique, sera amené à réprendre la politique ainsi abandonnée, pour s'en faire un instrument de combat contre les deux grandes Puissances musulmanes qui s'opposent à la réalisation du pacte national: la France et surtout l'Angleterre[101].

100. *Ibid.*
101. *Ibid.*, No. 519, enclosure 2.

The arguments employed by Poincaré in his note to Curzon resembled in many respects those used on numerous occasions since the Armistice by the India Office and the War Office. As recently as October 1921, the Viceroy of India had drawn the attention of the Secretary of State for India to the importance to India of an early settlement of the Turkish question[102], while in November the Secretary of State for War had proposed in Cabinet that the British government should at once inform the Kemalists that it desired an immediate settlement, and that, as a token of good faith, it was willing to withdraw all British forces from Turkish territory[1003]. In March 1922, on the eve of the meeting of allied foreign ministers due to be held in Paris, Montagu, too, reiterated his opposition to Curzon's policy, emphasising the need for a settlement which would satisfy Moslem opinion in India[104]. At the same time, on his own initiative, he gave the Viceroy permission to publish a communication denying Greek rumours that the British government intended to furnish Greece with the sinews of a fresh campaign in Asia Minor. This announcement, which was couched in terms suggesting sympathy for the Turks, caused a storm of indignation at the Foreign Office. 'The part', Curzon wrote to Montagu on 6 March 1922, 'that India has sought to play, or been allowed to play, in this series of events passes my comprehension'[105]. To Austen Chamberlain he appealed in even more intemperate language:

> My pitch is queered, my hand is shattered... If the policy of His Majesty's Government is the policy of the Viceroy and Montagu then let Montagu go to Paris in my place and fight to obtain Adrianople and the Holy Places for his beloved Turk. He will then have the failure which his own action has rendered inevitable instead of thrusting it on me ..But matters cannot rest where they are, for in that case I cannot undertake my task[106].

The Cabinet, however, thought it important Curzon should continue to represent Britain: Montagu was, therefore, forced to resign, while Curzon, having reestablished his authority, returned once more to the work in hand.

102. CAP. 24/129, C.P. 3474, *The Situation in the Near East,* memo. by the S. of S. for War, 9 Nov. 1922.

103. *Ibid.*

104. CAB. 24/133, C.P. 3794, Tel. from Viceroy circulated by Montagu, 3 March 1922.

105. Nicolson, p. 267.

106. *Ibid.,* pp. 267-8.

In considering his approach to the meeting of Allied foreign ministers, Curzon recognised that the principal problem facing the Allies was that of Eastern Thrace[107]. As he explained to the Cabinet in the course of a meeting held on 20 March 1922, the Nationalists had made it clear that they would insist on the possession of both the Smyrna zone and Eastern Thrace. The Greeks, for their part, had made it equally clear that, though they might, in certain circumstances, agree to evacuate Smyrna, they would never agree to withdraw from Eastern Thrace. Britain's interest lay in the continued presence of Greece on the western shores of the Dardanelles. As for the French, while recognising the logic of British policy in this respect at least, they had decided to work for the restoration of Turkey to a position approximate to that of her pre-war supremacy in the area. The only hope of a peaceful settlement which he could foresee, therefore, would be one whereby, in exchange for a speedy Greek evacuation of Anatolia, the Turks might be persuaded to accept the loss of Eastern Thrace, while the Greeks might, similarly, be persuaded, in return for secure possession of Eastern Thrace, to accept the loss of Smyrna. In order to make such an arrangement more acceptable to the Turks, the Allies might return to them the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles as part of a widened demilitarised zone[108]. As for the administration and military command of the Straits, these might be placed in the hands of the League of Nations.

When the Allies met in Paris on 22 March 1922, Curzon explained the proposals he wished to see adopted. Poincaré, however, reverting to a suggestion originally made by the French delegation at the Paris meeting of June 1921, proposed that the Greeks should be expelled from Eastern Thrace, and that a buffer state, garrisoned by Allied troops under League of Nations control, should be established there[109]. Only in this way, he argued, could the Greeks and the Turks be kept from each others' throats. Curzon, however, declined to consider this suggestion. 'What Government', he enquired, 'was going to be set up? How was the region to maintain itself...? Where was it to find its administration and its staff, and under whose mandate would it be?'[110] And who

107. CAB. 23/29, C19, 22, Cab. meeting, 20 March 1922.
108. *Ibid.*
109. W. O. 106/1421, Hardinge to F.O., 25 March 1922.
110. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 564.

would drive the Greeks from the province should they refuse to leave? In view of Curzon's evident hostility, Poincaré did not press his proposal. He continued to insist, however, that a solution should be found which would secure the Turks in their possession of Constantinople. As one possilibity, he proposed that a neutral zone might be established running the full length of the Greco-Turkish border[111]. This proposal, which resembled a suggestion he had, himself, put forward at the Paris meeting of June 1921, Curzon found more to his liking. He agreed, therefore, that the Allied military advisers should be asked to advise on the possible extent of a neutral zone. At the same time it was agreed that they might delineate a new frontier for Turkey in Europe and consider an adjustment of the Straits zone[112].

The military experts, under the chairmanship of Marshall Foch, reported to the meeting on 25 March 1922[113]. They recommended that the Greco-Turkish frontier should start from a point just east of the Gallipoli Peninsula near Ganos and west of Rodosto, whence it would run north-east of the Maritsa to the west of Baba Eski and Kirk Kilisse to the Bulgarian frontier in the neighbourhood of the Stranja mountain range. They also recommended that the whole of Eastern Thrace, with the exception of Adrianople, should be demilitarised and that the demilitarised zone in Asia Minor should be extended to take in the whole of the sandjak of Chanak[114]. Subject to a number of changes in the proposed frontier in a sense favourable to the Greeks, which Curzon succeeded in persuading his Allied colleagues to approve, these proposals were adopted. Curzon was delighted. The frontier decided on, he informed the Cabinet, was better than he had ever expected to obtain: it rendered possible a division of Eastern Thrace between the Greeks and the Turks. Moreover, they had secured the extension of the demilitarised zone in Asia Minor, considered by the War Office to be essential if Turkish sovereignty were to be readmitted on the Asiatic shores of the Dardanelles and Allied troops confined to the European shores[115].

111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*, No. 565.
114. *Ibid.*
115. W.O. 106/1421, Political, Turkey and Greece, Hardinge to F.O., 25 March 1922.

Having thus reached general agreement on the principal conditions of a possible settlement, the Allies informed the Greek and Turkish governments of their proposals and invited them to accept them as the essential basis of a peace settlement, the precise details of which might be discussed at a conference[116]. At the same time they invited the belligerents to conclude an armistice in order, as they put it, 'to enable the counsels of peace and the prospects of an amicable settlement to prevail'[117]. The efforts of the Allies, however, proved no more successful on this occasion than they had done in the past. Though the Greeks agreed to conclude an armistice, the Constantinople and Ankara governments announced that they would only do so on condition that the proposed evacuation was immediately begun, and that it was completed within a period of four months[118]. The British War Office pointed out that, if the Nationalist conditions were accepted, the Turks would arrive at the conference with the Anatolia question settled[119]. The Nationalist army would then be free to move on Constantinople and Eastern Trace:

> Thus the centre of activity would probably shift to Thrace. In which case, the Allied Forces at Constantinople might find themselves with a Greek Army behind them in Thrace and a Turkish Nationalist Army in front of them at Ismid threatening Constantinople or in the Chanak Sandjak threatening the Dardanelles or in both places. This would create a most dangerous situation for the Allies[120].

The Turkish conditions were accordingly rejected. The Allies suggested, however, that evacuation might be proceeded with 'as soon as the totality of the peace conditions have been accepted and under reservation of the discussion of particular points'[121]. Negotiations on the question continued, but with little result. As the summer progressed it became increasingly clear that the Allied attempt at mediation had failed.

In Paris, Curzon had conceded more on the Straits than the Admiralty would have wished. Prior to the conference he had consulted the Lords Commissioners on the question and they had reiterated their advice that the sea lines of communication with the Black Sea could

116. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 568, annex I.
117. *Ibid.*
118. *Ibid.*, No. 583.
119. *Ibid.*, n. 5.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*, No. 599.

only be guaranteed if both shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles were in Allied hands[122]. From this precept of perfection Curzon had already receded in February 1921 when, at the Third Conference of London, he had agreed to give up the right to garrison Constantinople and the Ismid Peninsula. Now, in Paris, it appeared he was ready to give up also the right to keep troops on the Asiatic shores of the Dardanelles. It was left, however, to Admiral de Robeck, the Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean fleet, to argue the Admiralty's case. In a letter dated 13 April 1922, he outlined the results he believed would follow from the realisation of the Allied proposals:

> ...«Control» of the Dardanelles as well as the demilitarization of the specified areas will remain in force just so long as it suits the Turkish Governement and no longer.
> The Allied garrison in Gallipoli - which has the inherent weakness of being composed of troops of three nationalities can only exist on the good will of Turkey.
> The Nationalists, the coming power under the new auspices, are deeply hostile to the British, Allies of the French, neutrals perhaps of the Italians. A garrison such as that will succumb to a very faint show of force if it does not succumb to mere intrigue[123].

Nor could the Allies expect any greater security in the demilitarised zones, which the Turks would be able to occupy in a matter of hours:

> It does not appear to be too much to say that the Bosphorus will henceforth be Turkish entirely and the Dardanelles, though nominally under Allied control, will only retain that veneer, so long as the Turks have no inclination to push their insistence further and that therefore Clause 1 of the Armistice and, from the naval point of view, the most important provision in the Treaty of Sèvres stand abrogated[124].

Indicating their full agreement with de Robeck's views, the Admiralty passed his letter to the Foreign Office[125]. Curzon, however, was not perturbed. He had long since concluded that Admiralty desiderata concerning the Straits could not be realised in full, and that limited control of the Dardanelles, together with effective inspection of the neu-

122. Adm. 116/2133, Revision of the Treaty of Sèvres, French Proposals, 13 Feb. 1922.

123. *Ibid.*, Remarks of C. in C. Med. Fleet on proposals of the Conf. on the Near East Problem, 13 April 1922.

124. *Ibid.*

125. W. O. 32/5774, 124 B, Adm. to F.O., 17 May 1922.

tral zones would suffice. He replied, therefore, that he saw no reason for concern, provided 'the inspecting officers attached to the allied garrison carry out adequately the duties assigned to them'[126]. The Admiralty was forced to accept Curzons's decision. The Lords Commissioners informed the Foreign Office, however, that as the question of maintaining the freedom of the Straits was primarily a naval one, they felt it 'incumbent on them to reiterate their opinion that this is only feasible if both shores of the Dardanelles, Marmora and Bosphorus are iu Allied occupation'[127].

'This principle', they added, 'which was adhered to in the Sèvres Treaty, was then considered essential by the Allied Naval and Military Advisers, and My Lords are not aware that any circumstances have since arisen which should have caused the Allied Military Representatives to modify their views'[128].

During the late summer of 1922, the Allies were unable to make further progress in their search for the basis of an acceptable peace settlement. The British continued to insist that all negotiations must be carried on on the basis of the Paris resolutions[129], while the French suggested that the belligerents might be invited to attend what they called 'a preliminary conference' at which the proposals of the Allies would be discussed and explained[130]. In Anatolia the Turks, who remained sceptical of the possibility of obtaining a satisfactory settlement by peaceful means, continued to prepare for battle. During this period the Greeks, too, began to consider what they referred to as 'measures for putting an end to conflict'[131]: by which, it was widely rumoured, they meant the seizure of Constantinople, in the opinion of many the only move likely to bring Mustapha Kemal to the conference table. In July, the Greek High Command transferred two divisions from Smyrna to Thrace and concentrated troops, already stationed in the province, on the border. On receiving reports of these developments, the Allies at once reiterated earlier declarations that any move in the direction of the Ottoman capital would be resisted[132]. Nevertheless the

126. *Ibid.*, 124 E, F.O. to Adm., 25 May 1922.
127. Adm. 116/2133, Adm. to F.O., 30 June 1922.
128. *Ibid.*
129. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 645.
130. *Ibid.*, No. 630.
131. *Ibid.*, No. 697.
132. *Ibid.*, No. 698 and 700.

situation remained tense. Finally, on 29 July 1922, the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs communicated to the Allies a note requesting that Greece be granted permission to occupy the city[133]. Balfour, who had replaced Curzon at the Foreign Office during the latter's illness, met the request with what the British Ambassador described as 'a point-blank refusal'[134]. At the same time in Constantinople, General Harington organised the forces at his disposal for the defence of the city[135]. The Greeks were, therefore, obliged to abandon a scheme which, according to Nicolson, might have 'revived the failing confidence of his [Constantine's] army and... placed him in possession of an invaluable asset in any future negotiations'[136].

The withdrawal of Greek troops from Asia Minor, combined with reports that the Greek government had elaborated an organic statute intended to establish a permanent Greek administration in the Smyrna zone, convinced Mustapha Kemal that the time had come to launch the offensive he and his generals had been preparing for throughout the spring and summer[137]. The attack, an assault on the Greek forces south of Afyon Karahissar, combined with a holding operation to the north, took the Greeks by surprise. Within a matter of days their front had collapsed. Within a fortnight the Greek army had been swept from Anatolia[138].

The defeat of the Greeks effectively ended whatever possibility remained of the Allies imposing the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres and the Tripartite Agreement on any part of Anatolia. At the same time it destroyed the shield which, since June 1920, had protected the Allied forces on the Straits from the encroachments of the Nationalist troops in the interior. Within a matter of days of the Greek collapse, Allied detachments on the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus were once again threatened by Kemalist forces, while the Allied governments were called on to decide what steps, if any, they would take to hold the position they had won. As the French and the Italians had long since decided they had more to gain by supporting than by opposing

133. *Ibid.*, No. 703.
134. *Ibid.*, No., 709.
135. *Ibid.*, No. 711.
136. Nicolson, pp. 269-270.
137. D.B.F.P., xviii, No. 3; Nicolson, p. 270.
138. Kinross, pp. 308-19; M. Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold* (London 1973), pp. 257-8.

the Turks, the onus of decision fell largely on the British. On this occasion, however, as distinct from that which had existed in May 1920, they had no 'lever', as Lindley, the British Ambassador in Athens, called it, in the form of the Greek army, with which to prize back the Turkish Nationalists and persuade them to accept a compromise settlement[139], while the Turks were, as Curzon put it, 'flushed with victory'[140], supplied and equipped with French, Italian and Russian weapons and ammunition, their eastern and southern frontiers secure behind them, aware that nothing but a handful of allied, mainly British, troops stood between them and their capital, Constantinople, the rolling plains of Thrace and the sacred city of Adrianople.

139. D.B.F.P., xvii, No. 727, n. 5.
140. CAB. 23/31, C49, 22, Cab. meeting, 15 Sept. 1922.