

**A MEMORANDUM  
ON THE ARMENIAN QUESTION**

**PRESENTED TO THE  
COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS**

**MARCH 7, 1947**

**ARMENIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA**

**381 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.**

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The Armenian Question once more challenges the attention of the civilized world. This is not a new question; it is unfinished business remaining from World War I. Its equitable solution is indispensable for the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Near East. We, the undersigned, therefore, urgently request the Council of Foreign Ministers to place the Armenian Question on its agenda. We respectfully submit to your consideration a brief summary of the Armenian case.

## SUMMARY OF THE ARMENIAN CASE

The Armenian Question is a part of the Near Eastern problem, an outcome of the misrule of the Turk. With the decline of the Turkish Empire in the 19th Century began the intervention of the European Powers seeking markets and spheres of influence. This policy encouraged the long-suffering subject peoples to seek and regain their independence one by one with the help of friendly governments; thus, the Roumanians, the Greeks, the Serbs and the Bulgarians became free.

The Armenian people still remained under the Turkish yoke and their conditions grew steadily worse in the second half of the last century. The defeat of Turkey in the Russo-Turkish War of 1876 brought the Armenian Question to the fore. The Peace Treaty of San Stefano, signed on March 3, 1878, between Russia and Turkey, by the Article 16 obligated Turkey to

effect necessary reforms in the Armenian provinces under its rule, and to guarantee the security of life and property therein. (*See Appendix I*) The evacuation of Russian troops from Armenian territory was contingent upon the performance of these obligations by Turkey.

#### THE ARMENIAN QUESTION RECOGNIZED AS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM

The rivalry between the Great Powers, however, led to the revision of the Treaty of San Stefano. A Six Power Conference was held in Berlin in 1878. At this Conference the Armenians requested that the six Armenian provinces in Turkey be granted autonomy under European control subject to the sovereignty of the Sultan. This request was rejected, but Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin signed on July 13, 1878, provided that Turkey was to institute reforms and guarantee security in the Armenian provinces, and she was to report periodically to the signatory Powers, under whose supervision the measures were to be carried out. (*See Appendix II*)

The Armenian Question was thus *officially recognized as an international issue* and the six great Powers of Europe assumed joint responsibility for the reforms to be effected. By the Cyprus Convention, signed on June 4, 1878, between England and Turkey, England assumed an additional responsibility in this respect. (*See Appendix III*)

#### PROMISES AND PERFORMANCES

Turkey has always been profuse in promises of reform under pressure, but very reluctant on performances. The provisions of the Treaty of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention remained a dead letter, owing to the jealousies and disunion of the Great Powers. From 1878 to 1914 the Powers made a few face-saving attempts to compel Turkey to respect her treaty obligations, but no effective action was ever taken. The new friendship of Germany with Turkey proved a detrimental factor. The political situation in Europe and the balance of power encouraged Sultan Hamid II to launch his infamous program of Armenian massacres, which took a toll of over 300,000 Armenian lives in every part of Turkey during the years of 1895 and 1896.

In 1908 the Young Turk Party came into power. As under the Sultans, the elimination of minorities and especially of Armenians, became an established policy of this new regime. The massacre of 30,000 Armenians in Adana, Cilicia, in 1909, once more shocked the world. The persecution of the Christ-

ian races throughout Turkey became intense and led to the Balkan War of 1912.

#### THE BALKAN WAR AND THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

After the Balkan War of 1912 in which Turkey suffered defeat, the Ambassadors Conference of the Powers, which met in 1913 to draft the terms of peace between Turkey and the Balkan States, once again took up the Armenian Question.

By the treaty of January 26, 1914, which Turkey signed, the six Armenian provinces, and the province of Trebizond, were recognized as the homeland of the Armenians, and were divided into two administrative districts, each headed by a European Inspector General; but while the Inspector Generals were on their way to their posts, World War I broke out in August, 1914. The Turkish Government then abrogated the execution of the reform plan, entered the war on the side of Germany, and ended further international attempts to ameliorate conditions in Turkish Armenia.

#### INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF ARMENIAN TERRITORIAL CLAIMS

It is important to note that before World War I the territory in the north-eastern part of Turkey, comprising the six Armenian provinces, was recognized as part of the historic homeland of the Armenian people, both by the Great Powers of Europe and by the old and new Turkish regimes. Furthermore, the Young Turk Party, which included in its membership the leaders of the present Turkish Government, recognized the historic right of the Armenians not only to the six provinces, but to the province of Trebizond as well.

#### WORLD WAR I AND THE ARMENIANS

The entry of Turkey into World War I as an ally of Germany brought the greatest tragedy to the Armenian people. Freed from all international controls, the Turkish rulers considered time was opportune to dispose of the Armenian Question once and for all by a plan of annihilation. A monstrous plan of genocide, that is, the plan to exterminate an entire nation, was thus first conceived and executed by the Turks, with the connivance of Germans, who drew the blueprints of the plan leading to what Major General James G. Harbord described as "the most colossal crime of all ages." (*See Appendix IV*)

The entire Armenian population of Turkey was uprooted and deported and its property, amounting to several billions of dollars, confiscated by the Turkish authorities. Through massacres, starvation, exposure and disease, *more than one million Armenians perished during World War I*. The remnants were scattered to the four corners of the earth, and have been waiting for the last thirty years to return to their homeland.

#### ARMENIAN MORAL AND MILITARY AID TO THE ALLIED CAUSE

The Armenian people, while bleeding to death, remained steadfast in their attachment to the Allied cause. They won the admiration and respect of the civilized world. Their martyrdom roused a wave of indignation against Turkey and Germany, and thus helped to increase the sympathy and support of many peoples to the Allied cause.

During World War I the Armenians rendered noteworthy military service to the Allies on all strategic fronts, far in excess of their numerical strength. Nearly 200,000 Armenians fought in the Russian army; several other thousands fought in France, Palestine and Syria under the banners of France and England. Thousands of Armenian youths enlisted in the ranks of the United States Armed Forces. They fought heroically for the cause of humanity, justice and democracy and for the freedom of Armenia. (*See Appendix V*)

The Allied leaders highly praised these contributions of the Armenians and solemnly pledged that, at long last, Armenia would be accorded justice and given independence. (*See Appendix VI*)

#### THE ARBITRAL AWARD OF PRESIDENT WILSON

In fulfillment of the promises made to liberate Armenia the Allied Supreme Council, in session at San Remo on April 27, 1920, and in consultation with the Government of the United States came to an agreement in regard to the settlement of the boundaries of Armenia within the Armenian provinces in Turkey and requested the President of the United States to define the boundaries of Armenia. (*See Appendix VII*)

President Wilson accepted the invitation and after examining, as he stated, the question in the light of the most trustworthy information available, and having in mind the highest interests of justice, rendered his decision and fixed the boundaries of Armenia. (*See Appendix VIII*)

The Treaty of Peace between the Allied Powers and Turkey was signed at Sevres, on August 20, 1920. Turkey, in signing the Treaty of Sevres, had agreed to accept the decision of the President of the United States. The text of the Award of President Wilson was made public on December 17, 1920. (*See Appendix IX*)

The ink was hardly dry on the Treaty of Sevres, when the Turks once more broke their solemn pledge and resumed their program of massacre. They slaughtered some 30,000 Armenians and occupied Kars and Ardahan. What little remained of Armenia saved itself from complete annihilation by declaring itself a Soviet Republic, on the 29th of November 1920, and joining Soviet Russia.

#### THE REBIRTH OF ARMENIA

Repeatedly forsaken and betrayed by the Great Powers, the Armenian people have carried on with an indomitable spirit and will to live. And now on a small portion (one-tenth) of their homeland they are enjoying freedom and progress.

The Soviet Union proved to be a good Samaritan to the Armenian people. The history of the last 26 years has proven that the Armenians, in those perilous days of November, 1920, had made the only practical and prudent choice when they joined the Soviet Union. The fate of Armenia is now inseparably linked to the Soviet Union. This Union has given to the Armenian nation security, and the possibilities of economic and political development, and a noteworthy cultural renaissance. Thanks to the energy and the native talent of the Armenian people and the fraternal assistance of the Russian people, Armenia today has attained a high degree of productivity in agriculture, industry, mining, commerce, and greatly advanced in all educational, scientific and cultural fields.

#### ARMENIA AND WORLD WAR II

During World War II Armenians again gave their wholehearted support to the cause of the United Nations. They fought valiantly against the forces of the Axis. More than 250,000 Armenian soldiers and many distinguished generals served in the ranks of the Soviet Army. About 10,000 Armenian soldiers fought heroically in the armies of France. About 20,000 American young men of Armenian origin fought, mostly as volunteers, in the Armed Forces of the United States.

## TURKEY AND WORLD WAR II

It must be remembered that Turkey was an enemy of the Allies and an instrument of destruction in the hand of Germany in World War I. Turkey, in World War II, failed to observe her obligation as an ally of Great Britain and France and did everything in its power to help Nazi Germany. Its hypocritical sham move in declaring war against an already defeated Nazi Germany, at the last moment, without even firing a shot, was only for the purpose of securing admission into the United Nations.

## THE ARMENIAN CLAIM TODAY

There are now one million and a half Armenian refugees scattered throughout the world. Hundreds of thousands of them have lived in a state of uncertainty and economic misery for the last thirty years. In order to bring some measure of relief, the Armenian Soviet Republic has recently opened her doors wide to the Armenian refugees wishing to return to their ancestral home. Within the last few months tens of thousands have already returned to Armenia, thanks to the facilities afforded by the Soviet Union and the people and the government of the Armenian Republic. Hundreds of thousands are awaiting their turn for repatriation.

The Armenian Republic, as constituted now, is a very small country with a territory of only 11,580 square miles, an inadequate fraction of the 40,000 square miles which was awarded to the Armenian people by the Allied Powers under the Treaty of Sevres. The restoration of those Armenian provinces, held by Turkey unlawfully and in defiance of the Arbitral Award of President Wilson, will provide a partial solution of the Armenian Question.

The Armenian people are united as one, in demanding without further delay, the effectuation of the Arbitral Award of the President of the United States in regard to Armenia. The Armenian people can be united and their future security and development assured only through the incorporation of these Armenian provinces within the boundaries of the present Armenian Soviet Republic. (*See Appendix X—map*)

The governments of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France, on various occasions, have made definite and solemn commitments to the Armenian people. We believe that public opinion in these countries, and throughout the civilized world, is strongly in sympathy with the cause of Armenia, and will welcome the fulfillment of these obligations by their

respective governments. Armenia, the first Christian nation, who for centuries has been the torchbearer of Christian civilization, and has stood as a bulwark in the East, for Western democratic ideals, against the tyranny and despotism of the usurping Turk, deserves this measure of justice at the hands of her Allies and friends.

We earnestly urge, therefore, the Council of Foreign Ministers, to place this question on its agenda and take definite steps to the end that the great injustice perpetrated against the heroic Armenian people be at long last remedied.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMENIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA

MARK J. SHAHINIAN	<i>Chairman</i>
MARTIC T. MARTENTZ	<i>Vice-Chairman</i>
SETH SHAHEN	<i>Secretary</i>
MESROB BAJAKIAN	<i>Treasurer</i>

*Joining in the Presentation of This Memorandum are Also  
the Following Church Representatives:*

BISHOP TIRAN of the ARMENIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA.

ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL UNION OF AMERICA, INC.

REV. EPHRAIM K. JERNAZIAN	<i>Moderator</i>
REV. ARSEN A. GOERGIZIAN	<i>Secretary</i>

*Dated March 7, 1947  
New York, N. Y., U. S. A.*





APPENDIX I

*San Stefano Treaty, March 3, 1878*

ARTICLE XVI

"As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupied in Armenia, and which is to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by the local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians."

*Great Britain Foreign Affairs, Parliament Sessional Papers, 1878, Vol. 83, Turkey No. 22, page 14.*

APPENDIX II

*Treaty of Berlin, July 13, 1878*

ARTICLE LXI

"The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out without further delay, the ameliorations and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds.

"It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers who will superintend their application."

*Great Britain Foreign Affairs, Parliament Sessional Papers, 1878, Vol. 83, Turkey, No. 38, page 30.*

### APPENDIX III

#### *Convention of Defensive Alliance between Great Britain and Turkey, signed June 4, 1878*

##### ARTICLE I

"If Batoum, Ardahan, Kars or any of them shall be retained by Russia, and if any attempt shall be made at any future time by Russia to take possession of any further territories of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in Asia, as fixed by the Definitive Treaty of Peace, England engages to join His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in defending them by force of arms.

"In return, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the Government, and for the protection, of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories; and in order to enable England to make necessary provisions for executing her engagement, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan further consents to assign the Island of Cypress to be occupied and administered by England."

*Great Britain Foreign Affairs, Parliament Ses-  
sional Papers, 1878, Vol. 82, Turkey No. 2,  
page 3.*



### APPENDIX IV

#### *Conditions in the Near East*

REPORT OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY MISSION TO ARMENIA BY  
MAJOR GENERAL JAMES G. HARBORD, U. S. ARMY.

"Meanwhile there have been organized official massacres of the Armenians ordered every few years since Abdul Hamid ascended the throne. In 1895 100,000 perished. At Van in 1908 and at Adana and elsewhere in Cilicia in 1909, over 30,000 were murdered. The last and greatest of these tragedies was in 1915. Conservative estimates placed a number of Armenians in Asiatic Turkey in 1914 over 1,500,000 though some make it higher. Massacres and deportations were organized in the spring of 1915 under definite system, the

soldiers going from town to town. The official reports of the Turkish Government show 1,100,000 as having been deported. Young men were first summoned to the Government building in each village and then marched out and killed. The women, the old men and children were, after a few days, deported to what Talaat Pasha called 'agricultural Colonies', from the high, cool, breeze-swept plateau of Armenia to the malaria flats of the Euphrates and the burning sands of Syria and Arabia. The dead from this wholesale attempt on the race are variously estimated from 500,000 to more than a million, the usual figure being about 800,000 . . . Driven on foot under a fierce summer sun, robbed of their clothing and such petty articles as they carried, prodded by bayonet if they lagged; starvation, typhus and dysentery left thousands dead by the trail side . . . Mutilation, violation, torture, and death have left their haunting memories in a hundred beautiful Armenian valleys, and the traveler in that region is seldom free from the evidence of this most colossal crime of all the ages."

*66th Congress, Second Session, Senate Document No. 266, pp. 6, 7, 8 and ff.*



#### APPENDIX V

##### *The Allied recognition of the military services rendered by the Armenians on all strategic fronts.*

"The military contributions made by the Armenians to the Allied armies most assuredly cannot be forgotten. The Armenians may well regard this as the charter of their right to liberation at the hands of the Allies."

*LORD ROBERT CECIL, October 3, 1918, writing from the British Foreign Office. From the Lausanne Treaty, Turkey and Armenia. Publication of the American Committee opposed to the Lausanne Treaty. 1926, p. 125 and ff.*

"Among the troops who took active part in the liberation of Syrian territory there is the Armenian Legion. During all the operations which have taken

place during the last few weeks, these Armenian fighters have given proofs of the best military qualities of greatest merit."

LE TEMPS in its issue of October 1918. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

"I am proud to have Armenian contingents under my command. They fought brilliantly and took a leading part in the victory."

GENERAL ALLENBY. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

"At the outbreak of the war the Turks captured Ardahan and were marching on Tiflis. All the high officials including the Viceroy were preparing for a hasty flight. Of all the races of the Caucasus, the Armenians alone stuck to their posts, organized voluntary forces and by the side of their Russian comrades faced the formidable assaults of the enemy, and turned his victorious march into a disastrous rout."

Former PREMIER KERENSKY, on August 20, 1918. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

"They attacked under the most difficult conditions without any artillery protection and in snow-covered mountains, and vigorously pursued the enemy. After two days fighting the enemy is dislodged from his entrenched position and defeated decisively. The victory is due principally to the precise and obstinate fire of our infantry, of which three-fourths are composed of Armenian detachments."

From the official report of the Russian General Troukhine. *Ibid.*, p. 133.



#### APPENDIX VI

##### *Declaration and promises of the Allied Powers to the Armenian people.*

"The liberation of the peoples who lie beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks; the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire which has proved itself so radically alien to Western civilization."

From Declaration of the Allied Powers in a joint note presented on January 10, 1917, in response to the request of President Wilson, by Premier Briand. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

"The Allies in their reply of January 10, 1917, to President Wilson stated that it was far from their purpose to annex or incorporate alien territories . . . the policy of the rights of nationalities is the honor of our traditions and history . . . And it applies to the Armenians . . ."

MONSIEUR PICHON, *Foreign Minister in the Chamber of Deputies on December 27, 1917. Ibid., p. 193.*

"The Allies see clearly that the time has come to put an end to Turkish domination over other races. During the past twenty years Armenians have been massacred with unexampled brutality. During the war, the exploit of the Turkish Government, in massacres, deportations and bad treatment of prisoners of war, exceeded in ferocity its former misdeeds. Not only has the Government failed to protect its subjects against murder and pillage, but it itself has organized and perpetrated these outrages. The Allies are determined to liberate from Turkish rule the regions inhabited by non Turks."

MONSIEUR MILLERAND, *Premier, at Spa, on July 16, 1920, on behalf of the Allies, in reply to Turkish counter proposals. Ibid., p. 198-; 99.*

"Some say that the Government has not fully stated the objects of the war . . . I stated them quite clearly at Glasgow . . ."

"In the second place the question of Mesopotamia must be resolved by the Peace Conference, with the clear understanding, however, that neither that region nor Armenia can ever be put back under the blighting dominion of the Turks."

MR. LLOYD GEORGE *in the House of Commons on December 21, 1917. Ibid., p. 194.*

"His Majesty's Government is following with earnest sympathy and admiration the gallant resistance of the Armenians in defense of their liberties and honor. I would refer the Honorable member to the public statements made by leading statesmen among the Allied Powers in favor of a settlement (of the Armenian case) upon the principle of self-determination."

MR. BALFOUR *replying to an interpellation by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in the House of Commons on July 11, 1918. Ibid., p. 194.*

"France, the victim of the most unjust aggressions, has included in her peace terms the liberation of oppressed nations.

"This spirit of self-abnegation of the Armenians, their loyalty towards their Allies, their contributions to the Foreign Legion, to the Caucasian front, and to the Oriental Legion, have strengthened the ties that connect them with France.

"I am happy to confirm to you that the Government of the Republic, like that of Great Britain, has not ceased to place the Armenian nation among the peoples whose fate the Allies intend to settle according to the supreme laws of humanity and justice."

MONSIEUR CLEMENCEAU in a letter dated July 14, 1918, and addressed to the Armenian National Delegation, Paris. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

"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."

PRESIDENT WILSON'S TWELVE POINTS, announced by him at a joint session of Congress on January 8, 1918. *Ibid.*, p. 194.



#### APPENDIX VII

##### *Views of the United States Government on the Peace Settlement with Turkey, as communicated to the Supreme Council.*

*The Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby to the French Ambassador (Jusserand) Washington, March 24, 1920.*

"There can be no question as to the genuine interest of this Government in the plans for Armenia, and the Government of the United States is convinced that the civilized world demands and expects the most liberal treatment for that unfortunate country. Its boundaries should be drawn in such a way as to recognize all the legitimate claims of the Armenian people and particularly to give them easy and unencumbered access to the sea. While unaware of the

considerations governing the decision reached by the Supreme Council, it is felt that the special rights over Lazistan would hardly assure to Armenia that access to the sea is indispensable to its existence. It is hoped that taking into consideration the fact that Trebizond has always been the terminus of the trade route across Armenia and that Mr. Venizilos on behalf of the Greeks of that region, has expressed their preference for connection with Armenia rather than Turkey, the Powers will be willing to grant Trebizond to Armenia . . ."

*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920,  
Vol. III, pp. 751-2.*

*The Secretary of State to the Italian Ambassador (Avezana) Washington,  
August 10, 1920.*

"Finally while gladly giving recognition to the independence of Armenia, the Government of the United States has taken the position that the final determination of its boundaries must not be made without Russia's cooperation and agreement. Not only is Russia concerned because a considerable part of the territory of the new State of Armenia, when it shall be defined, formerly belonged to the Russian Empire: equally important is the fact that Armenia must have the good-will and the protective friendship of Russia if it is to remain independent and free."

*Ibid., p. 465.*

*The Ambassador to Italy (Johnson) to the Secretary of State San Remo, April  
27, 1920.*

*The following answer to the American note on Turkey was approved by the  
Supreme Council at the sitting Monday afternoon (April 26). It was also de-  
cided that the note should be signed by the President of the Conference and  
forwarded through me.*

"The Allied Governments value the frank expression of the view of the United States Government . . . The Allied Governments have never concealed their wish to see the United States associated in the preparation and signature of the Treaty which is to embody the re-settlement of Turkey on a just and lasting basis. In the hope and expectation of American participation they had delayed the negotiations with Turkey at the risk of gravely imperilling the prospect of any satisfactory settlement being effected without a fresh recourse to arms. They fully understand and appreciate the reasons for which the United States Government have not, finally, seen their way to become parties to the Treaty.



"It has in the past been the policy of the Turkish Government to endeavor to play one European power off against the other with a view to retarding or evading the execution of necessary reforms. It is the desire of the Allies to prevent such tactics in the future."

*Ibid.*, p. 755.

"The Allies share to the full America's interest in the establishment of an independent Armenia. It has been their earnest desire to accord to Armenia the territory which she might reasonably claim for her present needs and future expansion. The problem has proved to be the most difficult of the whole Treaty and the obstacles with which the Allies have found themselves confronted have at times seemed almost insuperable. The matter is being fully and frankly dealt with within a separate communication to the United States."

*Ibid.*, pp. 755.

"That an Article in regard to Armenia should be inserted in the Treaty of Peace in the following sense: Turkey and Armenia and the other High Contracting Parties agree to refer to the arbitration of the President of the United States of America the question of the boundary between Turkey and Armenia in the vilayets of Erzeroum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and accept his decision thereupon as well as any stipulation he may prescribe as to the access to the sea for the independent state of Armenia."

*Ibid.*, pp. 755.



## APPENDIX VIII

### *President Wilson's Letter*

PRESIDENT WILSON TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ALLIED POWERS, DATED NOVEMBER 22, 1920.

MR. PRESIDENT:

By action of the Supreme Council taken on April 26th of this year an invitation was tendered to me to arbitrate the question of the boundaries between Turkey and the new state of Armenia. Representatives of the powers signatory on August 10th of this year to the Treaty of Sevres have acquiesced in conferring this honor upon me and have signified their intention of accepting the frontiers which are to be determined by my decision, as well as any stipulation which I may prescribe as to access for Armenia to the sea and any arrangement for the demilitarization of Turkish territory lying along the frontier thus established. According to the terms of the arbitral reference set forth in part III, Section 6, Article 89, of the Treaty of Sevres, the scope of the arbitral competence assigned to me is clearly limited to the determination of the frontiers of Turkey and Armenia in the Vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis. With full consciousness of the responsibility placed upon me by your request, I have approached this difficult task with eagerness to serve the best interests of the Armenian people as well as the remaining inhabitants, of whatever race or religious belief they may be, in this stricken country, attempting to exercise also the strictest possible justice toward the populations, whether Turkish, Kurdish, Greek or Armenian, living in the adjacent areas.

In approaching this problem it was obvious that the existing ethnic and religious distribution of the population in the four vilayets could not, as in other parts of the world, be regarded as the guiding element of the decision. The ethnic consideration, in the case of a population originally so complexly intermingled, is further beclouded by the terrible results of the massacres and deportations of the Armenians and Greeks, and by the dreadful losses also suffered by the moslem inhabitants through refugee movements and the scourge of typhus and other diseases. The limitation of the arbitral assignment to the four vilayets named in Article 89 of the Treaty made it seem a duty and an obligation that as large an area within these vilayets be granted to the Armenian state as could be done, while meeting the basic requirements of an adequate natural frontier and of geographic and economic unity for the new state. It was essential to keep in mind that the new state of Armenia, including as it will a large section of the former Armenian provinces of Transcaucasian

Russia, will at the outset have a population about equally divided between Moslem and Christian elements and of diverse racial and tribal relationship. The citizenship of the Armenian Republic will, by the tests of language and religion, be composed of Turks, Kurds, Greeks, Kizilbashis, Lazes and others, as well as Armenians. The conflicting territorial desires of Armenians, Turks, Kurds and Greeks along the boundaries assigned to my arbitral decision could not always be harmonized. In such cases it was my belief that consideration of healthy economic life for the future state of Armenia should be decisive. Where, however, the requirements of a correct geographic boundary permitted, all mountain and valley districts along the border which were predominantly Kurdish or Turkish have been left to Turkey rather than assigned to Armenia, unless trade relations with definite market towns threw them necessarily into the Armenian state. Wherever information upon tribal relations and seasonal migrations was obtainable, the attempt was made to respect the integrity of tribal groupings and nomad pastoral movements.

From the Persian border southwest of the town of Kotur the boundary line of Armenia is determined by a rugged natural barrier of great height, extending south of Lake Van and lying southwest of the Armenian cities of Bitlis and Mush. This boundary line leaves as a part of the Turkish state the entire Sandjak of Hakkari, or about one-half of the Vilayet of Van, and almost the entire Sandjak of Sairt. The sound physiographic reason which seemed to justify this decision was further strengthened by the ethnographic consideration that Hakkari and Sairt are predominantly Kurdish in population and economic relations. It did not seem to the best interest of the Armenian state to include in it the upper valley of the Great Zab River, largely Kurdish and Nestorian Christian in population and an essential element of the great Tigris river irrigation system of Turkish Kurdistan and Mesopotamia. The control of these headwaters should be kept, wherever possible, within the domain of the two interested states, Turkey and Mesopotamia. For these reasons the Armenian claim upon the upper valley of the Great Zab could not be satisfied.

The boundary upon the west from Bitlis and Mush northward to the vicinity of Erzingan lies well within Bitlis and Erzerum vilayets. It follows a natural geographic barrier, which furnishes Armenia with perfect security and leaves to the Turkish state an area which is strongly Kurdish. Armenian villages and village nuclei in this section, such as Kighi and Temran, necessarily remain Turkish because of the strong commercial and church ties which connect them with Kharput rather [than] with any Armenian market and religious centers which lie within Bitlis or Erzerum vilayets. This decision seemed an unavoidable consequence of the inclusion of the city and district of Kharput in the

Turkish state as determined by Article 27 II (4) and Article 89 of the Treaty of Sevres.

From the northern border of the Dersim the nature and the direction of the frontier decision was primarily dependent upon the vital question of supplying an adequate access to the sea for the state of Armenia. Upon the correct solution of this problem depends, in my judgment, the future economic well-being of the entire population, Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, Armenian, or Yezidi, in those portions of the vilayets of Erzerum, Bitlis and Van which lie within the state of Armenia. I was not unmindful of the desire of the Pontic Greeks, submitted to me in a memorandum similar, no doubt, in argument and content to that presented to the Supreme Council last March at its London Conference, that the unity of the coastal area of the Black sea inhabited by them be preserved and that arrangements be made for an autonomous administration for the region stretching from Riza to a point west of Sinope. The arbitral jurisdiction assigned to me by Article 89 of the Treaty of Sevres does not include the possibility of decision or recommendation by me upon the question of their desire for independence, or failing that, for autonomy. Nor does it include the right to deal with the littoral of the independent Sandjak of Djanik or of the Vilayet of Kastamuni into which extends the region of the unity and autonomy desired by the Pontic Greeks.

Three possible courses lay open to me: to so delimit the boundary that the whole of Trebizond Vilayet would lie within Turkey, to grant it in its entirety to Armenia, or to grant a part of it to Armenia and leave the remainder to Turkey. The majority of the population of Trebizond Vilayet is incontestably Moslem and the Armenian element, according to all pre-war estimates, was undeniably inferior numerically to the Greek portion of the Christian minority. Against a decision so clearly indicated on ethnographic grounds weighed heavily the future of Armenia. I could only regard the question in the light of the needs of a new political entity, Armenia, with mingled Moslem and Christian populations, rather than as a question of the future of the Armenians alone. It has been and is now increasingly my conviction that the arrangements providing for Armenia's access to the sea must be such as to offer every possibility for the development of this state as one capable of reassuming and maintaining that useful role in the commerce of the world which its geographic position, athwart a great historic trade route, assigned to it in the past. The civilization and the happiness of its mingled population will largely depend upon the building of railways and the increased accessibility of the hinterland of the three vilayets to European trade and cultural influences.

Eastward from the port of Trebizond along the coast of Lazistan no adequate harbor facilities are to be found and the rugged character of the Pontic range separating Lazistan Sandjak from the Vilayet of Erzerum is such as to isolate the hinterland from the coast so far as practicable railway construction is concerned. The existing caravan route from Persia across the plains of Bayazid and Erzerum, which passes through the towns of Baiburt and Gumushkhana and debouches upon the Black Sea at Trebizond, has behind it a long record of persistent usefulness.

These were the considerations which have forced me to revert to my original conviction that the town and harbor of Trebizond must become an integral part of Armenia. Because of the still greater adaptability of the route of the Karshut valley, ending at the town of Tireboli, for successful railway construction and operation I have deemed also essential to include this valley in Armenia, with enough territory lying west of it to insure its adequate protection. I am not unaware that the leaders of the Armenian delegations have expressed their willingness to renounce claim upon that portion of Trebizond Vilayet lying west of Surmena. Commendable as is their desire to avoid the assumption of authority over a territory so predominantly Moslem, I am confident that, in acquiescing in their eagerness to do justice to the Turks and Greeks in Trebizond I should be doing an irreparable injury to the future of the land of Armenia and its entire population, of which they will be a part.

It was upon such a basis, Mr. President, that the boundaries were so drawn as to follow mountain ridges west of the city of Erzingan to the Pontic range and thence to the Black Sea, in such a way as to include in Armenia the indentation called Zephyr Bey. The decision to leave to Turkey the harbor towns and hinterland of Kerasun and Ordu in Trebizond Sandjak was dictated by the fact that the population of this region is strongly Moslem and Turkish and that these towns are the outlets for the easternmost sections of the Turkish vilayet of Sivas. The parts of Erzerum and Trebizond Vilayets which, by reason of this delimitation, remain Turkish rather than become Armenian comprise approximately 12,120 square kilometers.

In the matter of demilitarization of Turkish territory adjacent to the Armenian border as it has been broadly described above, it seemed both impracticable and unnecessary to establish a demilitarized zone which would require elaborate prescriptions and complex agencies for their execution. Fortunately, Article 177 of the Treaty of Sevres prescribes the disarming of all existing forts throughout Turkey. Articles 159 and 196-200 provide in addition agencies entirely adequate to meet all the dangers of disorder which may arise along

the borders, the former by the requirement that a proportion of the officers of the gendarmerie shall be supplied by the various Allied or neutral Powers, the latter by the establishment of a Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control and Organization. In these circumstances the only additional prescriptions which seemed necessary and advisable were that the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control and Organization should, in conformity with the powers bestowed upon it by Article 200 of the Treaty, select the superior officers of the gendarmerie to be stationed in the vilayets of Turkey lying contiguous to the frontiers of Armenia solely from those officers who will be detailed by the Allied or neutral Powers in accordance with Article 159 of the Treaty; and that these officers, under the supervision of the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Organization and Control, should be especially charged with the duty of preventing military preparations directed against the Armenian frontier.

It is my confident expectation that the Armenian refugees and their leaders, in the period of their return into the territory thus assigned to them, will by refraining from any and all forms of reprisals give to the world an example of that high moral courage which must always be the foundation of national strength. The world expects of them that they give every encouragement and help within their power to those Turkish refugees who may desire to return to their former homes in the districts of Trebizond, Erzerum, Van and Bitlis remembering that these peoples, too, have suffered greatly. It is my further expectation that they will offer such considerate treatment to the Laz and the Greek inhabitants of the coastal region of the Black Sea, surpassing in the liberality of their administrative arrangements, if necessary, even the ample provisions for non-Armenian racial and religious groups embodied in the Minorities Treaty signed by them upon August 10th of this year, that these peoples will gladly and willingly work in completest harmony with the Armenians in laying firmly the foundation of the new Republic of Armenia.

I have the honor to submit herewith the text of my decision.

Accept (etc.)

WOODROW WILSON

*Washington, November 22, 1920.*

APPENDIX IX

*The Treaty of Sévres signed on August 20, 1920 between the Allied Powers including Armenia and Turkey.*

SECTION VI

Article 88.—Turkey recognizes Armenia as already recognized by the Allied Powers as a free independent State.

Article 89.—Turkey and Armenia as well as the other High Contracting Parties agree to submit to the arbitration of the President of the United States the determination of the boundary between Turkey and Armenia in the vilayets of Erzeroum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and to accept his decision as well as other conditions that may be prescribed by him relative to the access of Armenia to the sea and relative to demilitarization of the Ottoman territory adjacent to said boundary.

Article 90.—In the event of the determination of the frontier under Article 89 involving the transfer of the whole or any part of the territory of the said vilayets to Armenia, Turkey hereby renounces as from the date of such decision all rights and title over the territory so transferred. The provisions of the present treaty applicable to territory detached from Turkey shall thereupon become applicable to the said territory . . .”

Article 135.—Turkey undertakes to recognize the full force of all treaties or agreements which may be entered into by the Allied Powers with the states now existing or coming into existence in future in the whole or part of former Empire of Russia as it existed on August 1, 1914, and to recognize the frontiers of any of such states as determined therein. Turkey acknowledges and agrees to respect as permanent and inalienable the independence of the said states . . .”

Article 250, part VIII (Financial Clauses) and Article 277, Part IX (Economic Clauses) of the present treaty.—“Turkey accepts definitely the abrogation of the Brest Litovsk Treaties and of all treaties, conventions and agreements entered into by her with the Maximalist Government of Russia.”

*British Official Version Document Cmd, 964,  
Treaty series No. 11, 1920.*

APPENDIX X

Map showing the boundaries of Armenia as awarded by President Wilson.



- Turkish-Armenian boundary
- Other international boundaries
- Unmarked international boundaries
- Old Turkish-Russian boundary
- Vilayet boundaries
- Sandjak boundaries
- Kaza boundaries
- Railways, broad gauges

**ERZERUM** — Names of the vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Van, and Bitlis and other administrative units



Map compiled under the direction of Major Lawrence Martin, General Staff, U. S. Army, by the topographic branch U. S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with the Department of State, from field observations by the Harbord Mission and from maps of the Turkish General Staff, scale 1:200,000, German maps prepared during the war, scale 1:400,000, and British maps of Persian and Transcaucasian territory, scale 1:1,000,000

*Woodrow Wilson*



