

IV

**Factors used as the Basis of the Boundary Decision.**

In the formulation of this report we have proceeded upon the following assumptions:

1. That the Turkish Treaty states clearly that Armenia is not to extend, upon the south and west, beyond the confines of the four vilayets;

2. That it is to have access to the sea if President Wilson deems it necessary; and

3. That a zone of adjacent Turkish territory is to be demilitarized if President Wilson regards this as an essential requirement for the immediate and the future welfare of the Armenian State.

Despite the obvious conclusion that President Wilson has no technical or legal competence to deal with any territory outside the boundaries of the four vilayets specifically named, the Armenian Delegation at Paris sent a petition to the President, dated July 22d, requesting that he draw the boundaries so as to include the city of Kharput and the district about it in Armenia. This area is a part of the Vilayet of Mamuret-ul-Aziz. They beg the President to consider the fact that the historical frontier of Armenia has always lain west of Kharput, that it is geographically an indivis-

ible portion of the central plateau of Armenia, and that it is economically necessary to Armenia because of its mineral wealth. They suggest that the boundary line follow that of the former province of Erzerum, that is, the administrative division of Erzerum of the early nineteenth century, which included the Kharput area.

American organizations interested in the Armenian question have also sent in letters and petitions that the President use his good offices to include Kharput in the Armenian state.

By the terms of the Turkish Treaty, which has been signed and is technically in operation, the city and Sandjak of Kharput are already a part of Kurdistan, which is to be immediately an autonomous state in Turkey, and, after a year, possibly an independent state. It is our belief that it is now beyond the power of President Wilson to assign any portion of the Vilayet of Mamuret-ul-Aziz to Armenia and that it is very doubtful whether he should so assign it if he had the technical right to do so. It would also, in our judgment, be inadvisable that he recommend to the Supreme Council that Kharput be included in Armenia. Assent to such recommendation on their part would necessitate a revision of the treaty already signed, which would only serve to alienate further the Turkish Nationalists and further complicate for the Armenians the task of establishing their state, which is already difficult enough.

We have restricted our boundary consideration, therefore, to the four vilayets named in the treaty, Erserum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis. In this fixed and limited field of operation, the guiding considerations which we followed were those of the geography and of the people. Historic and ethical arguments as to the rights in the case did not enter into consideration. These were regarded as settled by the consensus of Allied opinion and the general feeling throughout the world as expressed in the fact of the reestablishment of the Armenian State by the terms of the Turkish Treaty. The area which may possibly be assigned to Armenia by the decision of President Wilson is less than one-half of that originally claimed by the Armenians and their friends. We have, therefore, felt that as much territory within the four vilayets should be assigned to the new state of Armenia as possible, in conformity with the best interests of Armenia itself. Its interests will undoubtedly be best served, in the long run, by adherence to the strategic, economic, and ethnographic considerations which have been our guiding principles.

The geographic factor we have considered from three points of view, physiographic unity, military-strategic unity and defensibility, and economic unity.

The correct settlement of the problem of military defense, which brings in the question of demilitarization of adjacent Turkish areas, will be of primary immediate

importance to the new Armenian State, inasmuch as no one of the Allied Powers has accepted responsibility for the enforcement of the Turkish Treaty in Armenian Turkey; nor is it probable that any one of the Great Powers will do so.

The factor of the economic unity of the four vilayets was necessarily looked upon in two ways:

1. As a question of the present commercial connection of definite valley areas with their market towns by existing highways and camel-and-donkey caravan routes;

2. The railway lines under construction and those projected which will, in the future, furnish the transportation facilities for the economic wellbeing of the country. With this latter question, that of an adequate sea terminal for the Armenian State is indissolubly connected.

The consideration of the ethnographic elements comprising the present and prospective population of the four vilayets is greatly beclouded. This uncertainty is caused by the original lack of genuine statistics upon the pre-war population of these vilayets, by the deportations and massacres of the Armenians, and by the terrible losses also among the Moslem Turkish and Kurdish inhabitants. These Moslem losses resulted from war cas-

ualties, refugee movements of the Moslems consequent upon the Russian military advance over these areas, and most of all from the ravages of typhus and other diseases among the local Moslems, both military and civilian. We regard it as entirely safe to assume that the Moslem population within the four vilayets suffered losses proportionally almost equal to those of the Armenians.

Within the range of possibility set by these disturbing factors the attempt was made to consider the ethnographic distribution of Armenians, Kurds, and Turks by sandjaks (administrative sub-divisions of the vilayets), and even by villages along those boundaries which the more important strategic and economic factors tended to establish for us beforehand. By this method of approach the obvious natural, economic, and military barrier extending from the Persian border south of Lake Van and south of the Armenian city of Bitlis as far as the city of Mush, was so strongly supported as to become inevitable. The mountain ridges along this natural frontier range from 7,500 feet in height to 11,000 feet. The passes themselves are from 5,500 feet above sea level to 8,800 feet, with one pass, that below Bitlis, at 2,100 feet. The adoption of this natural barrier between Kurdistan and Armenia cuts off from the area which President Wilson might assign to Armenia the Sandjaks of Hakkiari and Sairt and the south-

western part of the Sandjak of Bitlis. Ethnographically, this is justified by the population estimates for the Sandjaks of Hakkiari and Sairt given in the report upon the "Population of Asiatic Turkey", used by the American Peace Delegation at the Paris Conference. These estimates are as follows:

	Turks	Kurds	Armenians	Nestorian Christians
Hakkiari	10,000	130,000	10,000	85,000
Sairt		66,000	26,000	

or by percentages:

	Turks	Kurds	Armenians	Nestorian Christians
Hakkiari	4.15%	54.4%	4.15%	35.9%
Sairt		65.3%	25.7%	

The exclusion of these two sandjaks from Armenia is accepted as proper and inevitable by the Armenian leaders.

It was considered advisable to reduce the westward extent of Armenian territory in Trebizond Vilayet as much as possible so that the latitudinal stretch of the country might not be over-extended. In Trebizond Vilayet the Moslem and Greek elements outweigh the Armenian to such an extent that Armenia has no ethnic claim whatsoever to any portion of the vilayet. It is only the requirement of a sea terminal which gives Armenia any right to the territory granted to it. But this economic requirement seemed absolute and decisive.