

committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain. It urged the party to stir up the British working class in preparation for class war. Later that month the letter was leaked to a national newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, igniting a political furore. It was a major embarrassment for MacDonald, who had recognized the Soviet government. Four days later Labour was defeated by the Conservatives.

The authenticity of the 'Zinoviev Letter', and how it came to appear in the press at such a critical moment, remained a source of debate. In 1999 the British government commissioned a study to determine what actually occurred, with full access to all records and with the cooperation of Moscow. It determined that the letter was indeed a forgery, but that the Foreign Office thought it was genuine. No evidence was found that the British intelligence service was responsible but it is likely that two of its officers were involved in leaking it to the press and to the Conservative party.

CONCLUSION

In May 1922 Lenin suffered the first of a series of strokes which led to his death in 1924. During this period the main energies of the political leadership were engaged in a struggle for Lenin's mantle. As Stalin emerged as the leader in the years after Lenin's death the confusions and lack of coordination of Soviet foreign policy ceased. However, the regime Lenin established in 1917 altered many of the precepts of the international system and introduced an ideological dimension which would increasingly pit the revolutionary Marxism of Lenin against the liberal democratic ideals of the United States. There was concern that Lenin's pronouncements would appeal to many people in a war-ravaged and exhausted Europe. Wilson's speech of the Fourteen Points, given not long after Lenin's seizure of power, was not only meant to provide a framework for a peace settlement, but also to provide an alternative to Lenin's rhetoric. After the end of the war Europe could be divided into three groups of states, the victors, the vanquished, and Russia. Among the victors Russia was seen not as a factor causing stability but rather as the major threat to stability. The 1922 German-Soviet rapprochement was therefore a matter of great concern and would provide a central motivation in the moves that soon ensued to rehabilitate Germany and thereby split it from Russia. In many ways the road to Locarno began at Rapallo.

Note

1 Quoted in *The Proletarian Revolution* (Moscow) 10 (Oct. 1922), p. 99.

CHAPTER SIX

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The postwar situation in the eastern Mediterranean was dominated by the consequences of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. For over a century the Eastern Question, which concerned the fate of the Ottoman Empire, had been a major problem in international relations and an area of tension between the Great Powers. British forces played a significant role in the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and by 1918 had seized control of an area stretching from the Mediterranean to the borders of Iran. In October 1918 the Ottoman government asked for an armistice and Britain, excluding the French from the negotiations, concluded one off Mudros, aboard HMS *Agamemnon*. The exclusion of France was indicative of the long-running competition between Britain and France for hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean. While they were global allies in the conduct of the war, they were longstanding regional rivals. Allied forces entered Constantinople and surrounding areas and Sultan Mehmed VI became virtually a prisoner of the Allies. The British navy now controlled the Dardanelles, the French had occupied Adana and the region of Cilicia, while the Italians had occupied the area around Antalya (Adalia), the chief port of southern Anatolia. The Ottoman Empire's fate was already the subject of numerous wartime secret treaties, agreements, and declarations. Several of these were contradictory and would provide the source for much postwar inter-Allied tension.

THE SECRET TREATIES

During the war the Allies had concluded among themselves a series of secret agreements dealing with the future of the Ottoman Empire, reached either to induce states to enter the conflict on the Allied side, or to prevent disagreements among the Allies as to the eventual disposal of the potential spoils of war. Wartime events had led to some adaptation of these agreements. All these agreements presumed the end of the Ottoman Empire, although a small, rump state might be left in part of Anatolia.

It had originally been agreed, in the 1915 Constantinople Agreement between Britain, France, and Russia, that the last would be given Constantinople and the Straits. Russia's withdrawal caused the promise of Constantinople to lapse, and the remaining key allies could not agree a replacement. It was also agreed in 1915, in the Treaty of London, that Italy would receive outright ownership of the Dodecanese islands, which it had seized in 1911. It was also promised, in vague terms, a share of the Ottoman Empire adjacent to Antalya. In April 1916 Britain, Russia, and France agreed that in the Middle East Britain would have a sphere of influence over Mesopotamia (Iraq) and the Mediterranean ports of Acre and Haifa, France would have a sphere of influence over Adana, Cilicia, southern Kurdistan and part of the Syrian coast, Russia would receive the part of Armenia under Ottoman rule and part of Kurdistan, and Palestine would be internationalized. In 1917, in the Treaty of Saint-Jean de Maurienne, Britain, France, and Italy agreed that France would receive control of the Adana region and Italy would receive more territory up the coast from Antalya, opposite the Dodecanese islands. During 1916 an Anglo-French agreement, known as the Sykes–Picot agreement after the negotiators, made more specific the 1916 agreement's provisions concerning the Middle East and gave Britain a sphere of influence over Mesopotamia and Palestine; France a sphere over Syria, Adana, Cilicia, and southern Kurdistan, and Russia was given an additional zone of influence over Armenia, part of Kurdistan, and parts of northeastern Anatolia.

The British government had also been in correspondence during the war with the Emir Hussein of Mecca, hoping to bring about an Arab revolt against the Ottomans. This correspondence, during 1915–16, held out the possibility of an Arab state, though the correspondence was inconclusive and no agreement was ever signed. One reason for this was that Britain was also aware of France's interest in the area of Syria and Lebanon. It had placed a caveat in its negotiations with Hussein that France's interests could not be ignored, which Hussein did not wish to give. The United States had not been party to these secret agreements and, as a result, refused to recognize their validity [*Doc. 4*]. The American position was complicated by the fact that while it had broken diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire it had never declared war upon it and therefore, technically, should not need to be involved in peace negotiations.

In addition to those already promised a share of the spoils expected to be carved out of the prostrate Ottoman Empire, Greece also laid claim to those areas of Asia Minor which possessed significant Greek ethnic populations. Large stretches of the Aegean coast of Anatolia contained substantial Greek populations who were referred to as the 'unredeemed' Greeks. The collapse of Ottoman power had opened the way for Greece to pursue what had been a central object of its foreign policy for several

decades, the *Megali Idea* (Great Idea), which envisaged uniting all the Greek populated areas into a single Greater Greece. Some Greeks even dreamt of re-establishing the Byzantine empire with its capital at Constantinople. The Greek premier, Venizelos, had worked assiduously during the war and at the peace conference to build good relations with the key Allied powers so as to obtain support for these plans.

FROM THE MUDROS ARMISTICE TO THE TREATY OF SÈVRES

The secret treaties had, in part, been an attempt to settle the most contentious issues concerning the future disposition of the territories of the Ottoman Empire. This turned out not to be the case but rather, a cause for dispute among the wartime Allies. Italy hoped to create an Aegean empire, having previously seized the Dodecanese islands in 1911 and the important mainland port of Antalya at the end of the war. The 1915 Treaty of London had promised Italy, in vague terms, a sphere of influence around Antalya. Italian troops were landed at several strategic places along the coast in preparation for a move to take Smyrna. This city also formed the centre of Greek ambitions. The other members of the Council of Four began to fear that Italy would attempt to preempt its decisions by occupying more of Anatolia, moving out from its mainland foothold in the direction of the key city of Smyrna. With all their forces fully deployed the Allies decided to take advantage of these conflicting Greco-Italian ambitions to force Italy not to act unilaterally. In May 1919 the Allied powers authorized Greece to occupy Smyrna. The Greek landing did indeed succeed in forestalling Italy, but it simultaneously ignited a Turkish nationalist reaction which was to have far-reaching consequences. The new communist government in Russia had already published the secret treaties, which they had found among the papers of the previous regime. This event, combined with the Allies' support for the Greek occupation around Smyrna, provided Turkish nationalists with ample proof of Allied intentions.

Turkish resistance was now rallied by one of the country's most successful generals, Mustafa Kemal (later surnamed Atatürk), who would become the most famous figure of twentieth-century Turkey. Kemal would later observe of that fateful landing of the Greeks at Smyrna, 'If the enemy had not stupidly come here, the whole country might have slept on heedlessly.'¹ Within days Kemal set about uniting the dispersed Turkish resistance. The army, together with many Turks throughout the country, rallied to him and he and his supporters subscribed to a 'National Pact' which vowed to preserve the integrity of the Turkish-speaking portions of the Ottoman Empire. It is noteworthy that the Nationalists laid no claim to the non-Turkish portions of the Empire, mostly lying south of the Tarsus mountains in the Middle East, recognizing that there was no chance of

regaining them. This allowed the new movement to harness Turkish nationalism, moving away from the more diverse identity of the Ottoman Empire. By the end of 1919 Kemal's supporters were in control of most of Turkey, with the exception of Constantinople and the contiguous area along the Straits, where the Sultan remained the notional ruler due to the Allied occupation, and the Greek enclave around Smyrna.

The Allies, concerned by the potential threat to their plans posed by the growing Nationalist movement, now hurried to complete the peace treaty with the Sultan's government, the last of the peace treaties to be concluded. The terms of the treaty were made public in May 1920, though the treaty was not signed until August at Sèvres, near Paris. By its terms Greece received significant territorial gains in Thrace and Asia Minor, receiving Adrianople (Edirne), the strategically valuable islands of Imbros and Tenedos, and control of the Smyrna district for five years after which a plebiscite would be held on its incorporation into Greece. In addition, two new states were created and initially intended to be League of Nations mandates: Armenia and Kurdistan. The Ottoman Empire's Middle Eastern provinces became League of Nations Mandates. Britain received the mandates for Palestine and Iraq, with the oil-rich district of Mosul being added to Iraq. France received Lebanon and Syria, with control of the area around Adana in Turkey. Italy's sphere of influence over the Antalya area was confirmed, as was its sovereignty over the Dodecanese islands. The Straits were opened to all shipping at all times and placed under the control of an International Straits Commission, dominated by Britain, France, Italy, and Japan. Turkey, in common with the other defeated Central Powers, was to pay reparations and its army was limited to 50,000 soldiers. War criminals were to be handed over to the League of Nations for trial. By concluding a peace treaty with the Sultan's government, rather than with Kemal's Nationalists, the Allies became committed to attempting to preserve the monarchy against the revolutionary movement led by Kemal. By obliging the sultan to sign such a harsh treaty, however, they simultaneously seriously undermined what authority he had left. The Turks now had two governments, the decayed sultanate under Allied occupation and the nationalist movement led by Kemal.

THE GREEK-TURKISH WAR

The Nationalists reacted vigorously to the terms of the treaty, including making some forays against British positions. At the time Britain was distracted by uprisings in Ireland and Egypt, tension with Afghanistan which had led to a brief war in 1919, and an extremely volatile situation in British-ruled India. France was tied down by events in Syria. Britain and France, therefore, decided to turn to Greece for assistance in dealing with

the Nationalists. Greek forces now moved out from the Smyrna enclave, initially with great success. The situation for Greece changed dramatically, however, when one of those quirks of fate, with which history is replete, intervened to change the course of events. In October 1920 King Alexander of Greece died after being bitten by a pet monkey. This led to a general election in which the architect of Greece's wartime diplomacy, Venizelos, suffered a surprise defeat and left the country, opening the way for the return of Alexander's exiled father, King Constantine, who had been driven from the throne in 1916 by Venizelos on the dubious pretext of pro-German sympathies. Whatever the reality of Constantine's sympathies, he was viewed by the Allies with profound suspicion and his return to Athens led to a dramatic decline in pro-Greek sentiment among the Allies. The new royalist government was viewed as untrustworthy, and memories of its supposed wartime pro-German sympathies led to its being treated as virtually an enemy government. Overnight the perception of Greece shifted from that of loyal ally, under the venerated Venizelos, to that of a pariah state under a king, already once deposed with Allied connivance.

The new Greek royalist government proceeded to purge the army of Venizelist officers, weakening its efficiency at a critical time. The Greek government, however, was determined to maintain Greece's position in Anatolia, and a series of offensives were mounted against the Nationalist forces between January and August 1921, pushing them back to the Sakkaria River. The Turkish line here was the last obstacle before Ankara, the Nationalist headquarters, some forty miles away, but as events proved it was also the high water mark of the Greek advance. The Battle of the Sakkaria River saw Kemal brilliantly envelop the Greek army. The Turkish counter-offensive shattered the Greek army which fled towards Smyrna, where inadequate planning trapped many of the soldiers. Smyrna fell to the Nationalist army, and most of the Greek sections of the city were burned, with many Greek deaths. This event effectively ended the war. The debacle sent over one million refugees fleeing to Greece. King Constantine abdicated and, subsequently, the new Greek government tried and executed five ex-ministers for their part in the disaster. The Greek defeat became known in Greek history as the 'catastrophe'.

FROM THE CHANAK CRISIS TO THE TREATY OF LAUSANNE

In the wake of the signature of the Sèvres treaty, with domestic support for them rapidly increasing, the Nationalists gained international credibility as a force in Turkish politics. In March 1921 the Soviet government recognized the Nationalist government and concluded a Soviet-Turkish treaty of Friendship. Initially, it had been difficult for Kemal to communicate with other governments due to his geographical isolation and British command

of the seas. Lying between Russia and Turkey was the newly independent Armenian republic, which was deeply hostile to Turkey and which aspired to annex the parts of historic Armenia under Turkish control. The Armenian republic had provided a base for raids on border villages and this, in turn, led the Turkish nationalist forces to attack the Armenian republic. The Turks succeeded in capturing Kars and Ardahan, and peace was concluded with Armenia by the Treaty of Alexandropol in November 1920. This opened the way for communication with the Russian government and, as a result, Soviet Russia became the first state to recognize the Ankara government. Because of these links Kemal was suspected at the time of being a Soviet fellow traveller, which in fact was not the case, but this increased suspicion on the part of the Allies helps to explain why they were so reluctant to deal with him.

Lloyd George had consistently pursued a strongly pro-Greek policy and, although disappointed by the fall of Venizelos, he hoped that the defeat of the Greek royalist army at the hand of the Turkish Nationalists would see the restoration of a friendly government in Greece. As a result Lloyd George continued to oppose the Nationalists. The French, meanwhile, had begun diverging from cooperation with Britain. In March 1921 the French negotiated an agreement with Kemal, by which the Nationalists committed themselves to repaying Turkey's prewar bonds, which were mostly due to French holders. In return France evacuated its forces from Turkey. Later the same month Italy made a similar agreement.

Kemal, after his defeat of the Greeks, had set his sights on taking Constantinople, a possibility enhanced by his agreements with France and Italy. The French and Italians had withdrawn their garrisons from Constantinople in September 1921 and Britain was, therefore, now alone in defending both the Sèvres settlement and Constantinople, where it had a small force deployed. Constantinople and the key points on the Straits remained in British hands, and British seapower assured control of these coastal areas through the presence of its powerful Mediterranean fleet. In September 1922 Nationalist soldiers crossed the Dardanelles with the goal of driving Greek forces from eastern Thrace. In so doing they entered the British-declared neutral zone near the strategically important Chanak peninsula. Lloyd George was determined to defend Constantinople and called upon the support of the British dominions. He was supported by the hawks in his cabinet, among them Churchill, but was opposed by the foreign secretary, Curzon. It seemed, at that moment, as if a major war was about to erupt. Kemal, though, proved himself not only to be a brilliant general but a sagacious political strategist. He knew when to push and when to be moderate. Having displayed his potential military power he agreed to talks in October at Mudania. An agreement was quickly reached that allowed the Nationalist forces to enter eastern Thrace, on the

European side of the Straits, and it was agreed that the Treaty of Sèvres would be renegotiated. As a result of this agreement Turkey would become the only one of the defeated Central Powers to succeed in challenging the terms imposed upon it.

The Chanak Crisis, which had threatened war, proved the last straw for Lloyd George's coalition government. Bonar Law, leader of the Conservative Party, complained that Britain could not alone act as the policeman of the world. The Conservatives withdrew from the coalition and Lloyd George, the architect of Britain's victory in the First World War, was forced to resign. He was replaced by a Conservative government led by Bonar Law. A further consequence of the crisis was that Britain's self-governing dominions, concerned that they might have been hastily committed to war over a crisis obscure to their interests, began to demand greater independence. This was the turning point in Britain's relations with these countries and would lead to their full independence under an agreement reached at the 1926 Imperial Conference and confirmed by the Statute of Westminster in 1931.

At the end of October 1922 the Nationalists took control of Constantinople and, in November, abolished the monarchy. A few days later the last Ottoman sultan fled into exile aboard HMS *Malaya* and a new era in Turkish history began. Kemal was careful to have a gradual transition, and Mehmed's heir Abdulmecid, was allowed to assume the historic title of caliph, symbolic of leadership of the Islamic world. In 1924 even this vestige of the old imperial regime was abolished and a republic was proclaimed, with Kemal as its first president.

The new Conservative British government now faced the task of negotiating a new peace with Turkey. Lord Curzon continued as foreign secretary in the new cabinet and was a key figure in the peace negotiations conducted at Lausanne, in neutral Switzerland. Here the parties to the redundant Sèvres treaty met the representatives of the Nationalist Turkish forces and, after much tough negotiating, reached a settlement [*Doc. 15*]. By the Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923), which superseded the earlier Treaty of Sèvres, Turkey confirmed its loss of the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire, but regained control from Greece of the strategic Aegean islands of Imbros and Tenedos, as well as eastern Thrace. The right enjoyed by citizens of the major European states to extraterritoriality, known as the capitulations, was abolished and it was agreed that Turkey would not have to pay reparations. The plans for separate Armenian and Kurdish states embodied in the Sèvres treaty were dropped. The Straits remained open to all commercial traffic, the number of naval vessels of non-riparian states in the Black Sea at any one time was restricted and, if Turkey was at war, only neutral ships would be allowed to pass. The application of these regulations was entrusted to an International Commission of the Straits reporting to the League of Nations. These provisions were later superseded by the 1936

Montreux Convention. Greece and Turkey agreed to an exchange of populations, with 400,000 Turks being sent to Turkey, in exchange for 1.3 million Greeks. For Greece the influx of refugees from both the war in Anatolia and those exchanged by Turkey proved a vast strain upon the economy and underlay a difficult domestic political scene for years to come.

One thorny issue was left by the Lausanne treaty to be settled by the League of Nations, the future of the potentially oil-rich region of Mosul, which lay between the new Turkey and the British-administered Mesopotamia mandate. This area was predominantly Kurdish and, as the Turkish National Pact claimed sovereignty over non-Arab Muslim regions, it therefore included this region. Kemal hoped that the Kurdish population already within Turkey could be assimilated, a task which would be made much more difficult if a substantial Kurdish culture remained outside Turkey's frontiers. Britain, however, wanted to see this area, potentially rich in oil, coming within its sphere. It was agreed to refer the matter to the League of Nations. Eventually, in 1925, the League awarded most of the disputed territory to Mesopotamia. The Kurds, thus, were spread over the territory of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Soviet Russia and their quest for an independent Kurdistan remains a vexatious issue in international relations.

THE MIDDLE EAST

In the Middle East during the war an Arab national revolt in 1916, combined with a British attack from Egypt, drove out the Ottoman regime. Jerusalem fell to the British in 1917 and Ottoman forces were finally defeated at the battle of Megiddo in September 1918. The Mudros armistice found Britain in occupation of most of the former Ottoman Middle East. At the peace conference its fate would cause great tension between Britain and France, which had been traditional rivals for dominance in the region. There were also local aspirants to control, with both Arabs and Jews hoping to gain control of some part of the former Ottoman lands.

After the Ottoman Empire's entry into the war the British High Commissioner in Egypt, McMahon, had begun secret correspondence with the Emir Hussein, head of the Hashemite clan who controlled the Muslim Holy City of Mecca. Britain hoped that an Arab popular revolt would cause a serious diversion for the Ottoman army. Britain held out a hope in the McMahon–Hussein correspondence of a future Arab state led by Hussein, though it reserved the area west of Damascus as a reward for France, and lower Iraq for itself. The Arab revolt began in June 1916 led by Hussein's son, Faisal and, though it enjoyed limited success, it achieved its purpose, from Britain's perspective, of tying down Ottoman forces and, from Hussein's side, it added to the importance of his family, positioning them to become the leaders of the Arab cause.

The issue was further complicated by an intra-Arab dispute. The Emir Hussein dreamt of uniting the Arabs under his rule and had been instrumental in the Arab revolt which had done so much to remove Ottoman rule. Initially, he had attempted to assume the title 'King of the Arabs', but was forced by the Allies to adopt the more modest style of King of the Hejaz, the region around Mecca. In this region, though, Hussein faced opposition from Ibn Saud, leader of the puritanical Wahabi Muslims. Here, the vast geographical interests of the British Empire brought it into conflict with itself. The British Government of India supported Ibn Saud, while Hussein enjoyed support from the British authorities in Cairo. The British viceroy in India was concerned that the Arab national revolt could prove a dangerous precedent in India, while the British administration in Egypt was focused on the immediate issue of defeating the Ottoman army. In 1919 Hussein's and Ibn Saud's forces fought a number of battles and skirmishes, each having been supplied with British arms. The incident illustrates the difficulty of coordinating policy in an empire that straddled the globe. The rivalry between Hussein and Ibn Saud continued; Ibn Saud slowly gained the upper hand, taking Mecca in late 1924 and, by the end of 1925, gaining control of most of the Arabian peninsula. Subsequently, he renamed the country he controlled Saudi Arabia. The Hashemites, with their ambitions thwarted in Arabia, sought outlets elsewhere in the Middle East.

At the end of the war Hussein's son, Faisal, had occupied the Syrian capital, Damascus, on behalf of the Allies. Faisal hoped that this could be used as the core of a new Arab kingdom. Faisal was present at the Paris Peace Conference, but it was made clear to him that he represented only his father's small state of the Hejaz, and not a wider Arab state. Faisal argued the Arab case on the basis of Wilson's pledge of national self-determination and suggested a commission of inquiry. Wilson happily accepted the idea but Britain and France, with aspirations to control the region themselves, did not. In the end only two American commissioners visited the region, producing the King–Crane report for the peace conference. King and Crane travelled through Syria and Palestine during the summer of 1919, and it is likely that local British officials were able to exert some control over whom they interviewed. The report concluded that: the population of the region did not wish to become a League mandate as this was viewed as merely another form of imperial rule, though some transitional arrangement was acceptable as a preparation for full independence. The King–Crane report concluded that the local inhabitants preferred any help to come from the United States, would accept Britain if necessary, and definitely did not want France. As a result Britain and France chose to ignore the report, while Wilson by that time was not in a position to press for the report's consideration. The Allies, as a result, proceeded with their plans to divide control of the Middle East.

In an effort to preempt this Faisal, upon his return from the peace conference in the spring of 1919, had organized the election of a national congress to meet at Damascus. In November he reached a pragmatic compromise with France that left France in control of the coast, with a commitment that France alone would provide assistance to the new Syrian state. Faisal could not persuade the other Arab leaders to accept this and in March 1920 the congress declared Syria's independence with Faisal as king. It was intended that this new Syria would also include Palestine and an autonomous Lebanon. At the same time, Iraq declared its independence with Faisal's brother, Abdullah, as king.

The following month the Allies, meeting at San Remo, decided upon the distribution of the new League of Nations mandates for the region assigning Syria and Lebanon to France, and Palestine and Iraq to Britain. The Palestine mandate included a provision for Britain to create a Jewish homeland there. In July 1920 some of Faisal's forces attacked French positions in Lebanon and, in response, France decided to resolve the situation by force, occupying Syria in July 1920 and expelling the erstwhile king. There were, however, other thrones to be won and Faisal was not long without one.

Britain, which was already facing the strains of a globally dispersed empire and with few resources it could deploy in the new mandates, sought ways of minimizing the demands upon its resources that these mandates would cause. Churchill travelled to Cairo in March 1921 where a conference was held among the British officials. It was decided that it would be most effective to govern Britain's Arab mandates by placing them in the nominal charge of an Arab ruler who, it was hoped, would assure the support and loyalty of the predominantly Arab populations, though would be subject to the advice of British High Commissioners and a small British military and administrative presence. It was decided to offer Faisal the throne of Iraq, and his brother Abdullah the throne of Transjordan. The latter state was officially part of the Palestine mandate, but did not include that part designated to form a Jewish national home.

The plan for a Jewish national homeland in the ancient Holy Land had been an aspiration of many Jews, and their non-Jewish supporters, for some time. The vicious oppression of many Jewish populations in the nineteenth century, particularly in Russia and other eastern European states, had led to discussion about finding a safe haven for these populations. Eventually, the idea of a return to their ancient homeland became the favoured option and a Zionist movement emerged. This idea also appealed to many in British government circles as a way both to block French ambitions and create a British dependent buffer for the Suez Canal. As the war progressed it was thought an official pronouncement to this effect would also be useful public diplomacy, particularly in the United States, and in November 1917 the

British Foreign Secretary, Balfour, expressed Britain's views in what has become known as the Balfour Declaration [*Doc. 1*]. While the declaration did not expressly state that Britain would assume the oversight of any such settlement, it was clearly an aspiration of many British policy makers.

The French opted to rule their mandate directly through a high commissioner. Traditionally, France had interests in the predominantly Christian Mount Lebanon area around Beirut, which had been an autonomous district of the Ottoman Empire since 1861. France now extended Lebanon to include predominantly Muslim Tripoli and the Bekaa valley, thus altering the religious balance of the country. Decades later these changes would become the basis for the Lebanon Crisis that erupted in 1976. As with the imposition of British rule in its Middle East mandates, the Arab population was unhappy and a revolt broke out in 1925 against French rule that simmered for two years.

Britain was forced to review its relationship with Egypt as a result of the First World War. Egypt had been theoretically part of the Ottoman Empire until the war, but was really under British domination. With the outbreak of war Britain had declared Egypt independent of the Ottoman Empire and a British protectorate. The events of the war and growing frustration with British dominance led to a rising in 1919, one of several such events throughout Britain's empire in that year which led to a severe overstretching of its military resources. It became clear to the British that to continue the existing arrangement was to court a full-scale revolt. In 1922, therefore, the protectorate was abolished and the independence of Egypt recognized, subject to certain safeguards for British interests. This was not sufficient to assuage nationalist feeling and led to the assassination in 1924 of Sir Lee Stack, British commander of the Egyptian army, who served simultaneously as governor-general of Sudan, at that time an Anglo-Egyptian condominium. Britain retaliated by imposing a large financial penalty upon Egypt. The situation would oscillate in subsequent years between tension and moderate cooperation, culminating in the 1956 Suez Crisis which saw the Egyptian expropriation of the Suez Canal and the ending of Britain's special position in Egypt.

CONCLUSION

The Eastern Question, that long-running problem of international relations over the fate of the Ottoman Empire, now seemed to have been resolved. The political geography of the eastern Mediterranean was transformed. The successor states of the Ottoman Empire would, however, prove a volatile mix in the decades to follow and would engage the diplomatic attention of the Great Powers. Greece, after a brief bid to restore itself to the glory of the old Byzantine empire, was forced back and a new Turkish republic

emerged with a strong sense of national identity. Relations between these two states were to remain peaceful until the 1950s but the animosities that had culminated in the Greek-Turkish War of 1919–22, together with the severity of its impact, would ensure that this would be a tense relationship for the remainder of the century. In the Middle East Britain and France emerged as the predominant powers but, although they remained cooperative on many issues elsewhere, in the Middle East they would remain regional rivals. Both Britain and France had been severely drained by the war and they had few resources to spare for these newly acquired Middle Eastern realms. The mandates would increasingly become a drag on Britain and France as they were confronted by a rising tide of opposition from the inhabitants. The eastern Mediterranean world would remain a problem area in international relations as much after the war as it had during the century which had preceded it. In many ways the postwar settlement only marked a new phase of the old Eastern Question.

Note

- 1 A. Mango, *Atatürk* (London, 2000), p. 217.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NAVAL RIVALRY AND EAST ASIAN STABILITY

One of the most serious areas of international tension after the First World War was East Asia. Very little relating to it had actually been resolved at the Paris Peace Conference and the trajectory of conflicting ambitions and naval rivalry in the Pacific, abetted by mounting political turmoil in China, made this a potential area of conflict between some of the Great Powers. Japan's growing strength was bringing it increasingly into conflict with the other rising non-European power, the United States. Britain was caught in the midst of this friction as it was allied, on the one hand, to Japan but, on the other, seeking a closer relationship with America. The immediate cause for concern was the growing likelihood of a naval arms race involving these three states. After the destruction of the German navy only these three countries possessed navies with significant power. All were Pacific basin states and, thus, the questions of naval strength and the Pacific balance of power became inextricably linked. The problem was solved, at least for much of the decade of the 1920s, through the favored mechanism of postwar diplomacy, the holding of a conference. The Washington Conference of 1921–22, through a network of agreements, established a framework for naval arms control, the first ever voluntary agreement for such a purpose, and established parameters for the Great Powers' relations with China.

THE RISE OF JAPANESE POWER

Just as the war in Europe had seen a change in the relationship of the traditional regional actors, so the war had also affected the balance of power in East Asia. Japan took the opportunity to continue its drive for regional dominance that had been slowly increasing since its dramatic and rapid modernization in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1895 it had defeated China and taken the island of Taiwan. In 1902 it had formed an alliance with Britain, the first such peacetime alliance concluded by either state. In 1905 it had inflicted a stunning defeat on the Russian Empire, seizing control of Port Arthur (Lushun), a key Russian naval base leased from