

# DISSOLUTION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Shaping the Modern Middle East

Adapted from *a Peace to End all Peace* – David Fromkin

Today, the middle east is one of the most politically complex regions of the world, with continually shifting powers, alliances, and influences. The factors that lead to this situation are numerous, but many people, when looking to a source of the troubles that wrack the middle east today, will point to the partitioning of the region following the first world war. Many problems stem from those fateful decisions, so the question becomes: Could they have been avoided? Put into the same position as the people who decide the fate of the middle east, could you do any better?

This committee will begin in January 1922, and your goal will be to advance your positions as much as possible, compromising wherever you have to in order to come to a final agreement. While you should aim to be as comprehensive as possible, this is, of course, a complicated topic that resists simple solutions. It will be up to you to set the agenda throughout the conference, and to redraw the map of the middle east.

While many of you likely know the broad outlines of WWI's western front, and the outcome of it in the Treaty of Versailles, the eastern front today is somewhat more obscure. Around the time of the end of the war, political leaders in many of the combatant countries regarded it as just as vital as the west, to some even more. To understand why a degree of historical context about the middle east will be necessary.

## HISTORY

The term "Middle East" is a relatively new invention, having been coined by the American naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan in the early 1900s. However, the region Mahan described has long been relevant on the world stage. This region held the earliest civilizations in the world, in Mesopotamia and later in Egypt, and as the junction between Africa, Asia, and Europe played a vital role in world trade. Around the beginning of the Common Era, the relevant powers were the Roman (and later Byzantine) Empires and the Persians, but the region would change irreversibly in 610 CE, when the prophet Muhammad, a member of the Banu Hashim clan that controlled Mecca, founded Islam. In the beginning, the religious and political authority of the leaders of Islam were equivalent, and the Islamic Empire expanded rapidly. After

Muhammad's death, a dispute over succession would eventually lead to the split of Islam into Sunni and Shia branches. The Caliphate of Islam continued to expand during the Umayyad and later Abbasid dynasties when the expansion finally ended. When the Abbasid dynasty finally fell, the Mamluk leaders of Egypt claimed succession and relocated the Abbasid leaders, who held no real power in the Mamluk state.

## OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Founded by Osman around the year 1300, the Ottoman Empire began as a small principality of Turks in Anatolia, over the centuries the house of Osman grew their empire to conquer Constantinople and end the last remnants of the Roman Empire. They would also go on to conquer and control Arab middle east, much of the Balkan peninsula, and North Africa to the Moroccan border, including Egypt. In defeating the Mamluks in Egypt, the Ottomans took for themselves the legacy of the caliphate, with the Turkish sultans claiming the title, though at first solely as a ceremonial title.

In 1798, the French Leader Napoleon Bonaparte successfully invaded Egypt, displaying in a shocking manner how inadequate Ottoman forces had become in rivaling modern European militaries. The invasion was eventually repelled with the help of the

British, leaving the both the Mamluks, who at the time were still the regional administrators of Egypt and the Ottomans in a weakened position. Seeing opportunity in the newly formed power vacuum, an Albanian military officer in the Ottoman forces named Muhammad Ali raised popular support and then seized control of Egypt, eventually obtaining Ottoman recognition as the Khedive of Egypt. Though the khedives of Egypt exerted full independence in their actions and policies, they were nominally still a part of the Ottoman empire until the outbreak of World War I, even after Egypt was invaded and mostly annexed by the British in 1882.

By the turn of the century, there was a great deal of discontent with the Ottoman government within some groups, who formed themselves into secret societies to avoid detection by Ottoman authorities. One of those secret societies, the Committee on Union and Progress, grew in influence in the Ottoman Greek city of Salonica, eventually taking over the city. Members of the C.U.P, known as Young Turks, went on to mostly gain control of the overall Ottoman government. Realizing that the Ottoman Empire would need a reliable ally to defend itself against Russian encroachment, Young Turk leaders like Enver Pasha sought out alliances with various European countries, including, bizarrely, the Russians themselves, that they thought could perform that defensive role. Unfortunately for the Turks, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and Germany did not believe the Ottomans had enough to offer themselves to justify the putting themselves at risk in a defensive pact. Ultimately, due to some sleight of hand in offering ships to Germany that had already been seized by the British, the Turks were able to secure an alliance with the German government, bringing them in on the Triple Entente side of the nascent World War.

### THE ARABS

The Arabs were initially a population of nomads that lived in the south part of the Arabian Peninsula, in the Arabian Desert. There were a few Arabian civilizations known to antiquity, including the Nabateans, the builders of the ancient city of Petra. The Arabs were important regarding trade

but were mostly dominated by the regional powers of Rome and Persia until the rise of Islam. When the Islamic caliphate expanded, it took with it the Arab culture and language, leading to a process of Arabization in many regions that had previously been regarded as distinct. Arabic was the central unifying feature of all of the newly Arabized populations, and as the language of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam became the dominant language of the Muslim world. As the influence of the Arab caliphate waned during the Abbasid era, Persian took on the role of Arabic as the language and culture of the high classes, though the general population remained Arabic speaking. Later, Turkish took on that role as the Ottomans conquered and ruled the Arab world over the centuries. Although the whole region was under the control of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish rule was mainly limited to the coastal and more highly populated areas, where the Ottomans would appoint rulers to represent them, either from the local population or from elsewhere in the empire. The interior regions of Arabia remained dominated by tribal leaders, who ruled over small nomadic Bedouin populations.

Over the course of the Imperial age, European powers dominated and took colonized nearly all of the land area across the world. From the Americas to South and Central Asia, to Australia, and to Africa, countries like the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and Spain left their mark. At the turn of the century, just two areas of the world remained broadly free from European domination: East Asia, and the Middle East. Europe was adamant to change this. By this time the United Kingdom came to take control of a broad swath of Africa, along with the majority of India and Southeast Asia and placed an extreme premium on protecting and expanding their Indian holdings, the crown jewel of the British Empire. The most significant threat to that goal, in their view, was the expansion of Russia south and into the land connecting the UK to its eastern dominions. The conflict between Russia and the UK over Asia was known as "the Great Game" in London and played a substantial influence on how British leaders formulated their middle eastern policies. Specifically, officials in the government wanted to extend

their sphere of influence in the middle east so that they could hold an unbroken chain of land from the southern tip of Africa, arcing over into south-east Asia.

The British grew to believe that they would need a Muslim ally of their own, to gain political influence over the Middle East. People like Lord Kitchener wanted to avoid a situation where the Russians could influence the Ottoman caliph to raise a popular Muslim revolt against the British in India and Egypt. Kitchener, who would be the War Minister during WWI, determined that the best way to accomplish this would be for Britain to install a caliph of its own, settling on Hussein ibn Ali. Hussein was a member of the Banu Hashim and claimed direct descent from the prophet Muhammad, and was the Emir of Mecca appointed by the Ottomans. Hussein had come to believe both that the Ottomans would soon withdraw their support of him, removing him from his position, and that the Arabs were ripe for a revolt against their Turkish rulers. Hussein had sent his son Abdullah to Cairo in the past to seek out support for a revolt against the Ottomans that didn't materialize, and so they had established a relationship already. Once the war began, Kitchener and his supporters believed that Hussein's position and stature would be enough to convince other Arab leaders to follow him in a revolt. While feelings of Arab nationalism were indeed beginning to stir in Arab secret societies in cities like Beirut and Damascus, support for outright revolt was still somewhat slim. Instead, Arab leaders wanted more autonomy for Arabs, who made up around 40% of the Ottoman population, still within the Ottoman Empire itself. As would be seen throughout the process of shaping the Middle East, Arabs preferred to be ruled by the Muslim Turks, over being nominally independent and dominated by British interests. The UK also made another crucial error in judgment when allying with Hussein and supporting him as caliph. The British were expecting Hussein to hold a position similar to the Pope's within Christianity, holding some limited territory around Mecca and having religious authority over Islam. Hussein, meanwhile, interpreted the idea of Caliph differently: he expected to be supported as

the holder of a hereditary ruling authority over all of the lands of Islam, or at least the Arab world, as the caliphs had been in the centuries following the Prophet's death. So Kitchener's ultimate message to Hussein read as follows:

"If the Arab nation assist England in this war that has been forced upon us by Turkey, England will guarantee that no internal intervention take place in Arabia, and will give Arabs every assistance against foreign aggression." He later added, "It may be that an Arab of true race will assume the Khalifate at Mecca or Medina, and so good may come by the help of god out of all of the evil which is now occurring."

#### OTTOMAN EMPIRE DURING THE WAR

In 1914, the Ottoman Empire did not have much desire to go to war with the UK and her allies but was eventually forced into it when Germany, who had signed a secret alliance with the Ottomans, sheltered some warships there to escape from the British. The Germans, hoping to force the Ottomans to join the war, shelled Russian territory from Turkish waters, leading to Russia and then the United Kingdom declaring war. The Middle Eastern theater remained a somewhat minor part of the war for some time, with the majority of European powers focusing on the western front or the war with Russia. Still, Turkish forces were mostly unsuccessful as they forayed into Russian territory. Eventually, the Turkish military leader Enver Pasha turned over military command to German commanders, after which Ottoman fortunes much improved. Crucially, the Ottoman military secured and mined the Dardanelles, cutting off Russia's access to the Mediterranean and their only port accessible in the winter. Understanding the strait's importance, Allied forces in 1915 began the Gallipoli campaign to reopen the pathway for Russia. The Navy attempted open the strait and sail onto Istanbul, but mines and Ottoman forces stifled their push. The Ottoman army similarly stopped the campaign to take the Gallipoli peninsula by land and resulted in a long, protracted land battle that lasted over a year. The Gallipoli campaign, in addition to its strategic impact, had significant political

implications for two people: Mustafa Kemal, the front-line commander, became a hero in Turkey for his success in repelling the British attack, while Churchill the First Lord of the Admiralty lost his position in the government following the British defeat.

The Turkish victory in Gallipoli turned out to be the high point of the war for the Ottoman Empire. Armenians under Russian occupation began fighting Turks in the north, while Russian regular troops advanced. British forces took over Baghdad and most of Mesopotamia, the Arab revolt headed by Hussein's sons launched guerilla campaigns against the Empire, and General Allenby's forces, aided by the Jewish league founded by Jabotinsky, captured Palestine, forcing the Ottoman Empire to sign the Armistice of Mudros eventually. Soon after, the Allied forces occupied Istanbul and Greece occupied Smyrna.

Mustafa Kemal, who had returned to Istanbul, was unsatisfied with the Ottoman government in their loss, and when he was assigned to reorganize what was left of the Ottoman Army, he defected and began a rebellion in the interior of Turkey. Kemal was a Turkish nationalist and wanted to use his rebellion to overthrow the remnants of the Ottoman government and create a new independent Turkish state, free from Greek occupation or influence from France and the UK.

### **SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT**

The Sykes-Picot Agreement, properly the Sykes-Picot-Sazanov agreement after Russia signed on, is commonly pointed to as one of the most impactful agreements in shaping how the middle east would look after the war.

### **HOW THE AGREEMENT CAME TO BE**

Mark Sykes was at the time the resident middle east expert of the British government having studied Turkey and the Arab World and visited the region before the war, unlike the majority of the European politicians involved. Francois Picot was a staunchly colonialist Frenchman, and together, Sykes and Picot attempted to come to an agreement for their countries that advanced their interests in the

middle east. It is important to note that the agreement was signed in May of 1916, long before the war had come to a close, and remained secret even to members of the French and British governments until November of 1917.

France felt that it had a historical tie and therefore claim to the regions of Greater Syria and Mt. Lebanon. Going back to the time of the crusades, France had established kingdoms in the region of Syria and subsequently exercised a degree of influence over the area, leading them to believe that Syrians would be welcoming of French control. The French also believed that in controlling Damascus, a prominent city in Syria and the ancient home of the Umayyad caliphate, they could exercise influence over the Muslim world. In Lebanon, the French had ties with the Maronite Christians who had a majority around Mt. Lebanon. Ultimately, France hoped to gain direct control of the Mediterranean coast of Greater Syria, along with Christian Lebanon and a buffer area surrounding it. Realizing it would be costly and difficult to administer the interior regions directly, they wanted to leave them to Arab rule, under their influence.

The British similarly felt that what the Arabs wanted was independence, which to London politicians meant British colonization. They also wanted a French sphere of influence to offer a buffer between them and the Russians, and to have their Hashemite allies control the remaining Arab areas. The British did not, however, feel that Arabs were capable of ruling themselves, and so intended to leave a confederation of independent Arab states that ultimately answered to the British Crown. Both France and Britain also wanted control of Palestine.

The Arabs themselves (who of course were not consulted for their opinions in this process) really wanted a unified, independent state, but that was not relevant to the British and French powers.

### **WHAT THE AGREEMENT SAID**

Ultimately, the French and British came to a compromise that mostly satisfied the both of them. France got the Lebanon + buffer area they wanted under direct control, plus exclusive interest over

most of Syria, while the British got their French border between them and the Russians. Basra and Baghdad, in what is now Iraq, also went to the UK. Palestine was to be controlled by an international administration (what would become the League of Nations), except for two ports and a strip of land through which Britain could build a railroad. As Fromkin put it:

*“Except for Palestine and for the Areas in which France or Britain exercised direct rule, the Middle East was to form an Arab state or confederation of states, nominally independent but in reality divided into French and British spheres of influence.”*

Importantly, the Sykes-Picot agreement made no provision for the Jewish populations that were already growing in size in Palestine. Meanwhile, the French had secretly made an agreement with the Russians that international administration of Palestine would not work, and that Russia would support France for exclusive control of the region in exchange for Russia getting control over Istanbul and the surrounding areas.

## **RUSSIA DURING THE WAR**

### **ZIONISM AND PALESTINE**

Zionism began as a movement in central and eastern Europe to create a homeland for the Jewish people in the late 1800s. The focus of the Zionist movement was explicitly at forming a Jewish nation in the ancient homeland of the Jewish peoples, historic Israel. By the time of WWI, it had gained steam in elite Jewish circles, though among the broader Jewish population it was still somewhat unpopular. Still, the Jewish population in Ottoman Palestine had become a small but significant minority in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the leading Zionist voices in the United Kingdom was Chaim Weizmann who had the ear of British leaders due to his efforts in chemistry during the war. Through Weizmann and other's efforts, British leaders came to believe that an announcement declaring their support for

Zionism would be necessary. There are various reasons for this, mainly having to do with ensuring that Jewish populations around the world would agitate for British support in their respective countries, notably Russia and the United States. The announcement, known as the Balfour Declaration read as follows:

*His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.*

The seemingly contradictory ideas of establishing a national home for Jews while not impacting the rights of the current population of Palestine was not seen that way by British and Zionist leaders. They felt that the region of Palestine would be able to support a much larger population than currently live there and that Arab and Jewish populations would be able to coexist peacefully in any state or collection of states in Palestine; most people agreed. However, as Jewish people from around the world continued to move into Palestine during and after the war, tensions between the new populations and locals rose, resulting in a number of riots in the early 20s. The United Kingdom, weary from the war and beginning to grasp the economic and military costs of securing the Jewish population, began to waver from their support of the Zionist cause.

### **GREEK CAMPAIGN IN TURKEY**

Following the Armistice of Mudros, Greece attempted to take territory in the Ottoman Empire and landed in the city of Smyrna to claim the territory, facing little resistance. Greece launched a

series of offensives cutting further into Turkey, with the support of the British. Eventually, the Ottoman Empire was forced to sign the treaty of Sevres, giving the region around Smyrna over to the Greeks. The Greeks advanced up to the Battle of Sakarya, where they were stopped by Mustafa Kemal's Turkish Nationalist Army based in Ankara.

## OIL

For almost 100 years, oil and the Middle East have been practically synonymous, and any political question regarding the Middle East inevitably has essential global economic consideration because of it. Almost 100 years. At the time in question, oil was nowhere near as significant in the middle east as it is now. While oil was already becoming politically vital for European countries, the vast majority of oil was still supplied by the United States through Standard Oil or the Netherlands through Royal Dutch-Shell, and Persia was alone among Middle Eastern states in having confirmed oil within its territories. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now known as BP) was formed in 1909 to take advantage of the oil there. This discovery made Aden, as the entry point into the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal take on new importance in trade. Oil was also commonly thought to be present around Mosul, in modern day Iraq, but at the time people were skeptical of the idea that oil was present in significant quantities in the middle east.

## ROLES

What follows is a short description of the roles that will be present in the committee. Note that these descriptions are not a substitute for a well-researched position paper, and are mostly here so you can get an idea of the character of the committee itself. You should try to make sure your positions during the committee sessions are somewhat aligned with what's written below; it is ok to diverge but only if you feel that you have a compelling reason to. If you're having trouble filling out a position paper, try to write about not just what policies you're going to be advocating for but *why* you, or your role, would expect those policies to be the best and most successful.

A note on the timeline: this committee takes place at the start of 1922, which is a somewhat arbitrary date. In the interest of letting the committee have the broadest range of options available to them, I've noted some places where I've decided to diverge from the real timeline in italics.

## ABDULLAH IBN HUSSEIN

Abdullah was the oldest son of Hussein, the Emir of Mecca. Described by TE Lawrence as quiet and unassuming, he nonetheless had a considerable degree of political acumen, though he was not necessarily the most inspiring leader. In 1919 he led a raid against his family's Saudi rivals and was thoroughly defeated. Later on, when his brother Feisal was expelled from Syria, Abdullah gathered forces to retake Damascus, and is currently in Amman, with plans to soon attack. *Not yet King of Jordan.*

## EDMUND ALLENBY

Field Marshall Allenby led the British forces that captured much of Middle East, including Palestine and Syria. After the war, he was sent to Egypt as High Commissioner to deal with unrest in the county agitating for the removal of British control. As high commissioner, Allenby was in favor of independence for Egypt, though he hoped to retain some control over Egyptian policy such as foreign policy and unrestricted military movement within Egypt.

## GERTRUDE BELL

Gertrude Bell was an English writer and traveler who before the war had traveled extensively throughout the Middle East. She was relied on by the British government for her expertise on the region. She tended to support protectorates for the new nations of the Middle East over other modes of governance and hoped to create a united Iraq in Mesopotamia, ultimately favoring Feisal for the leadership of the new nation.

## DAVID BEN GURION

Ben-Gurion was a Polish Zionist who settled in Palestine in 1906 and led the socialist labor movement

there. During the war, Ben-Gurion attempted to raise a Jewish force for the Ottoman empire, even after he and other Zionist leaders were exiled. Ben-Gurion strongly believed that Arabs and Jews had equal rights to Palestine, and could ultimately co-exist together in Palestine as part of autonomous communities. He advocated cooperation with both the British and Arabs.

#### WINSTON CHURCHILL

Churchill probably defies summary, but in 1922 he was the Colonial Secretary, in charge of setting policy for the whole of the United Kingdoms imperial holdings. Churchill was a staunch imperialist and wanted to hold on to as much power in the Middle East as the UK feasibly could. He did, however, understand how costly that would be, and so was chiefly concerned with projecting power as cheaply as possible. His overarching policy design for this was to have nominally independent Arab states with the British military, especially Air Forces, present, allowing the Arab leaders to deal mostly with domestic policy and the British to control foreign policy.

#### GILBERT CLAYTON

Clayton was one of the chief architects of the UK's Hashemite policy during the war, believing that influencing the caliph could allow Britain to have extensive influence over all of Islam. He was Edmund Allenby's chief political advisor, though they diverged somewhat in belief. He believed in Zionism in a narrow sense of a cultural center for Jews without their own state and the British annexation of Egypt.

#### GEORGE NATHANIEL CURZON

Curzon was the former Viceroy of India and The Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom in 1922. Curzon was a firm believer in holding onto Mesopotamia and Iran as a buffer between Russia and India and wanted to prop up independent governments there that were within the British sphere of influence. Curzon also did not believe in partitioning Palestine between Arabs and Jews, foreseeing that it would lead to conflict between the two groups.

#### ALLEN DULLES

Dulles was chief of the Near Eastern Affairs Division of the Department of State, in charge of foreign policy in the Middle East for the United States. Dulles was focused on protecting American interests, chiefly oil interests, in the Middle East. He felt that helping the British and French retain control in the region, and allowing American companies to negotiate with them rather than local leaders would lead to the best outcomes. He also wanted to ensure that American interests could access any oil discovered in the area in the future.

#### FEISAL IBN HUSSEIN

Feisal was the third son of Hussein, the Emir of Mecca. Feisal was the central leader of Arab forces during the Great Arab Revolt, helping to conquer Damascus and becoming the leader of that city and Syria. He was forced out in 1920 by the French when they were granted the Syrian mandate and exiled to the United Kingdom. There, British officials felt that he would be a good candidate for leader of Iraq because of his longstanding relationship with the British. *Not yet King of Iraq.*

#### AHMED FUAD

Fuad, a descendant of Muhammad Ali, rose to the position of Sultan of Egypt in 1917, after unsuccessfully attempting to take control of the Albanian throne. Fuad was an influential voice in favor of full independence in Egypt and may have been a factor in causing the anti-British revolts of the early 20s. Fuad was instrumental in dispelling the myth that the Arabs wanted British rule.

#### DIMITRIOS GOUNARIS

Gounaris was the Greek Prime Minister who launched the Greek campaign in Turkey with the support of the British. As 1922 came about, he realized that the Greeks did not have the military strength to defeat the Kemalist forces, and so sought out aid from various European countries, mainly the UK.

#### CHARLES EVANS HUGHES

Hughes was the American Secretary of State for President William Harding. Hughes represented a

shift away from the Wilsonian ideals of his predecessor, looking primarily to protect American interests instead of promoting self-determination. Hughes and Harding also did not share Wilson's interest in supporting Christian missions in the Middle East. Hughes did not feel that the US had any responsibility to intervene in middle eastern matters that were mainly being developed and affected by European countries.

#### **AMIN AL-HUESSEINI**

Husseini was a staunchly anti-Zionist Arab leader that was chosen by the British as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 1920, a position that gave him some legitimacy and leadership with Palestinian Arabs. He was likely placed in that position by an anti-Zionist British official who disagreed with his government's pro-zionist policy. Husseini was also elected to the president of the Supreme Muslim Council, which advised the British government on how to deal with Muslim affairs in Palestine.

#### **ZE'EV JABOTINSKY**

Jabotinsky was a Russian Jew and leader of the Zionist movement. Jabotinsky started the Jewish Legion in 1917 as a group of Jewish volunteers to fight against the Ottoman Empire for the British and to help settle and found a Jewish state in Palestine. Jabotinsky, unlike Ben-Gurion, did not believe that Jews and Arabs would be able to coexist in Palestine and that furthermore the British would not be able to adequately protect the Jewish settlers so that they would have to create their own defensive force to protect themselves.

#### **MUSTAFA KEMAL**

Mustafa Kemal gained fame within Turkey for his leadership during the Gallipoli campaign and went on to lead a nationalist revolt within Turkey. He was a secularist who also fought back against what he felt were overly harsh Allied terms. Kemal secured support from the newly formed Soviet Union to stifle British interests, as well as the Italians to push back against the Greeks. By the end of 1921, France, unwilling to spend the money associated with supporting the Greeks and holding onto their territory in Turkey, also signed a treaty with Kemal,

ending the war between them and recognizing Kemal's government as the legitimate government of Turkey, in defiance of the UK.

#### **THOMAS EDWARD LAWRENCE**

TE Lawrence was an English army intelligence officer during the war, whose exploits were popularized early on by the American showman Lowell Thomas, and later immortalized in the movie *Lawrence of Arabia*. Lawrence played an important role in the Arab revolt, though probably not as crucial as he allowed people to believe. Lawrence was highly critical of British policies in the Middle East, seeing them as overly violent and writing that "My own ambition is that the Arabs should be our first brown dominion, and not our last brown colony."

#### **VLADIMIR LENIN**

Lenin was a leader of the communist revolution that led to the formation of the Soviet Union from Russia. He was opposed ideologically to imperialism, and also to Kemal's nationalist movement that fought against Bolshevism in Turkey. He ultimately hoped to expand the ideology of communism around the world. He also argued for more self-determination in Russia's ethnically Turkish provinces in central Asia.

#### **SULTAN MEHMED VI**

Mehmed VI was the leader of the Ottoman Empire during the war and still headed up what little remained of the Ottoman State. His primary goal was just to remain in power, and he sought out allies and policies that would allow that to happen as long as possible. Already the Ottoman parliament had declared the Sultan a puppet of the Europeans, and Kemal the president. He did, however, have some loyalists throughout the pre-war Empire.

#### **RAYMOND POINCARÉ**

Poincaré took office as the Prime Minister following the failure of the previous French government to come to an agreement with the British over dealing with the Kemal revolt. His goal was to move away from the UK and attempt to reach great power status by allying with other countries in central and eastern Europe.



### ABDULAZIZ IBN SAUD

Abdulaziz was the leader of the House of Saud, closely allied with the Wahhabi religious movement and a rival with the Hashemites for influence in Arabia. Despite the British sponsorship of the Hashemite family, the Saudis also had a close relationship with the British. Ibn Saud looked to gather as much territory and influence in and around Arabia as possible.

### JOSEF STALIN

Stalin was much more practical and less idealist than Lenin, though they were very close allies in Russia. Stalin was the Commissar for Nationalities and State Control and held the view that Russia's imperial holdings should remain part of the Soviet Union, though with some measure of autonomy. Stalin also shared Lenin's goal of expanding communism globally.

### SAYYID TALIB AL-NAQIB

Talib al-Naqib was an Iraqi politician who received support from British India before the war. As the British looked to appoint a ruler for Iraq, Talib campaigned for and gained widespread support in the country, under the slogan of "Iraq for the Iraqis!" Though it is unclear if Talib had the power or influence to raise a popular rebellion against the British in Iraq, he claimed to.

## RESOURCES

Peace to End all Peace

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle\\_Eastern\\_theatre\\_of\\_World\\_War\\_I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Eastern_theatre_of_World_War_I)

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