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Конференция в Сан-Ремо и армянский вопрос (апрель 1920 г.)

Аннотация

Данная статья представляет Армянский вопрос на конференции в Сан-Ремо (апрель 1920 г.). Верховный совет Союзников обсудил вопрос о мандате для Армении, а также вопрос об установлении границ армянского государства. Верховный совет обещал помочь Армении в политических, военных и финансовых вопросах. Главы стран Союзных держав пришли к соглашению о том, что армянские провинции Эрзерум, Ван, Битлис и Трапезунд (который обеспечивал выход к Чёрному морю), являются неотъемлемой частью Армении. После соглашения армянской и турецкой сторон Верховный совет потребовал, чтобы президент США Вудро Вильсон, как нейтральная сторона, утвердил границу между Арменией и Турцией. Президент Вильсон, следуя международному праву, подписал арбитражное решение (22 ноября 1920 г.), подтверждающее легальные границы между Арменией и Турцией.

Ключевые слова: конференция в Сан-Ремо, армянский вопрос, армянско-турецкая граница.

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The San Remo conference and the Armenian question (April of 1920)

Abstract

Present article presents the Armenian question during the Conference of San Remo (April of 1920). The Allied Supreme Council discussed the question of a mandate for Armenia and the delimitation of its boundary. The Supreme Council pledged to support Armenia politically, military and financially. The Allied leaders agreed that the Armenian provinces of Erzerum, Van, Bitlis, as well as Trebizond (which would ensure access to the Black Sea) were integral parts of Armenia. The Supreme Council requested, after the consent of Armenian and Turkish sides, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, as a neutral party, to delimit the boundary between Armenia and Turkey. President Wilson agreed and in accordance with international law made the Arbitrary Award (November 22, 1920), which established the legal state boundary between Armenia and Turkey.

Keywords: San Remo conference, Armenian question, Armenia-Turkey boundary.

On March 9th, 1920, Jean Jules Jusserand, the French Ambassador to the United States, informed the Acting U.S. Secretary of State, Frank Lyon Polk that the Turkish side had agreed during the London Conference (held from February 12 to 24, 1920) of framing a final peace treaty with the Allies. During the London Conference the Allies with the consent of Turkish and Armenian delegates agreed on the approximate borders of Turkey. In the north and the west, the Turkish border would reach the Black, Marmora and Mediterranean seas. On the east, Turkey's frontier would extend to the Armenian state which would be made up of the four Armenian provinces (Van, Erzerum, Bitlis, Trebizond) of the former Ottoman Empire [1]. On the south Turkey would

border Cilicia (under French control with possible Armenian autonomy), and would be north of Aintab, Birejik, Urfa, Mardin and Gzira, which would not form part of the future Turkish state and would be under French administration. Armenia would have access to the Black Sea through the province of Trebizond [2].

On April 19, 1920, the Allied Supreme Council (Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan), convened a conference of its foreign ministers in San Remo (Sanremo), Italy, in order to settle the question of the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Armenia was among these territories and it was decided:

1. To communicate to President Wilson a request that the United States assume a mandate over Armenia.

2. To invite the President, whatever be the reply of the American Government with regard to the mandate, to arbitrate the frontiers of Armenia [3].

On April 7th, 1920, on the eve of the San Remo Conference, Avetis Aharonian, the President of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia to the Paris Peace Conference sent a note to the Supreme Council stating that the Armenians of Eastern Armenia were ever anxious to realize their dream of joining hands with their fellow countrymen of the Armenian provinces of the former Ottoman Empire.

Aharonian was certain that the boundaries of Armenia, encompassing its eastern and western portions, would be fixed based on ethnic, strategic and geographic conditions, and would thus effectively put an end to the deplorable state of anarchy that existed throughout the region [4].

On April 11, 1920, H.A.L. Fisher, the British Representative to the League of Nations, reported that Great Britain's Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, acting in his capacity as the President of the Conference of Allied Foreign Minister and Ambassadors, on March 12th, 1920, sent a telegram about the future status of Armenia, enquiring of the Council of the League of Nations as to whether they would be prepared to accept, on behalf of the League of Nations, the protection of the future independent State of Armenia [5]. The Council of the League of Nations did not return an immediate reply to the enquiry in «view of the fact that the matter was one which required the most careful consideration». [6]. A number of «special meetings» were held in Paris from April 9 to 11, 1920, which examined the issue «in all its important bearings». The Council of the League of Nations authorized Fisher to express the conclusions, which were unanimously reached which concluded that a mandate for Armenia by a «civilized state», under the League of Nations, should be assumed. Such a solution, would only be welcomed by Armenians, and would offer the best earnest of an efficient and prosperous administration, and would be in conformity with the arrangements which were planned, under the League of Nations in other parts of the world, in which the political conditions were similar [7]. The Council was also of the opinion that the answer to this question would depend both on the military measures which would be devised to liberate the territory of Armenia and to protect the frontiers of the new state, and also upon lending financial support to the newly created nation [8].

On April 22nd, 1920, during the San Remo Conference the future of Armenia was discussed in detailed fashion [9].

Italian Prime Minister Francesco Saverio Nitti presented the points which the Supreme Council desired to put before the Armenian Delegation and said that the two principal questions which they wished to ask Boghos Nubar, who represented the Armenian National Delegation at the Paris and London peace conferences were whether Armenia was prepared to defend the country's new frontiers and desired the inclusion of Erzerum within those borders.

Furthermore, the Supreme Council wanted to know if Nubar believed Armenia was in a position to reorganize its army and to provide the means to safeguard the new

state. The British Prime Minister David Lloyd George further inquired if Armenians were in a position to capture Erzerum, which was still held by the Turks [10].

Boghos Nubar answered that he had no doubt at all that the Armenians could establish themselves at Erzerum and could consolidate their position there. They already had set up an army in the Republic of Armenia, a force that also included seasoned veterans who had fought during the Great War and proved themselves to be excellent soldiers. The Armenian army was prepared to fight again and to liberate Erzerum, a historic Armenian fortress-city that was essential to Armenia. The Armenian army had 15,000 men and could easily raise another 40,000 if the Allies were prepared to provide them with munitions and equipment. Boghos Nubar stated that the Armenian soldiers were in need of boots, and they had shortage of munitions [11].

Armenian troops that fought in the Allied armies were praised by French Minister of Foreign Affairs and also by the British Field-Marshal Lord Edmund Allenby.

Lloyd George stated that the difficulty of the Allied Powers was that they had already undertaken immense obligations in regard to Germany and elsewhere. If Erzerum were ceded in the terms of the Treaty to Armenia, it must be captured from the Turks and Armenians had to carry this out on their own.

Boghos Nubar answered that he was aware of the terrible difficulties which confronted the Allies after their awful experiences during the Great War. He fully understood that it was most difficult for them to send troops. Much as Armenia would have liked to have received military support from the Allies, the Armenians did not feel that this assistance was indispensable. The great majority of the Armenian soldiers who had fought during the war had been demobilized but could be readily remobilized [12].

Prime Minister Nitti asked if there were any Armenians left in Erzerum, to which Boghos Nubar replied that a great number of Armenians had been killed there, however, if it was liberated from Turkish yoke many Armenians would return to their homes.

Lloyd George also enquired whether, in the province of Erzerum, during the last 50 or 100 years, the Armenians were in majority. Boghos Nubar gave an affirmative answer, stating that in Erzerum and in adjoining vilayets (provinces) Armenians formed the majority of the population.

On April 23, 1920, the Italian Prime Minister Nitti, continuing the discussion from the previous day, noted that the San Remo Conference had been much preoccupied with the question of Armenia, and the Allied Supreme Council was anxious to reach a decision which would be based on the interests of the Armenian people. Nitti, addressing Aharonian, stated that he realized that Erzerum was important to Armenia; however, he should be aware that it was impossible for the Allied Powers to send troops to the assistance of Armenia. However, the Allies could provide training officers, munitions, and equipment to the Armenian army, if those armies would be able to drive the Turks out of Erzerum and maintain themselves in that fortress and secure their new frontier [13].

Aharonian added that it would be possible in the course of the next two or three months to raise an army numbering not less than 40,000 men. It was essential, however, that this army, as was promised, would be equipped with clothing and munitions provided by the Allies. Training officers were also needed to further strengthen the proficiency of the Armenian army. Aharonian was confident if and only when these measures were taken, the Armenian army could march and liberate Erzerum from Turkish occupation. Aharonian also believed that he was certain that if this was carried out, Armenians would also be in a position to liberate other Armenian provinces such as Van [14].

Aharonian pointed out that the heartland of Armenia was in the west and that Yerevan was not the «real capital of Armenia». Without the strategically important fortress-city of Erzerum it was impossible to conceive of a secure Armenian state.

Lloyd George also asked about the population of Armenia. Aharonian replied that the population of the Armenian Republic in Caucasia amounted to 1,292,000 inhabitants, which included Russians, Greeks, and others. Of these about 300,000 were Turkic-speaking Tatars (Azerbaijanis). The population of Erzerum province stood at around 240,000 Turks and 230,000 Christians. This showed a slight preponderance of Turks, but Aharonian pointed out that the Turks included in these numbers their military garrisons, which amounted to about 40,000. Lloyd

George stated that the Turks had provided statistics showing that they had 800,000 Turks in the province of Erzerum, to which Aharonian replied that it was well documented that there has been always a Turkish preponderance of greatly exaggerating and amending statistics in their favor, while the Armenian statistics were based on European sources [15]. Nitti noted that there were about 15,000 Turkish troops in Erzerum and that the Armenian army was to take not only the forces of the Turkish nationalist bands led by Mustafa Kemal but would also have to fight the Tatars (Azerbaijanis), who were siding with them. Aharonian stated that the Armenians were not at war with the Tatars (Azerbaijanis). There was a certain amount of fighting on the frontiers, but this was not a state of an all-out war. The intention of the Armenian Republic and its government was to have good neighborly relations with all of its surrounding states [16].

On that day (April 23rd, 1920), the United States communicated to the Allied and Associated Powers that it recognized the de facto government of the Republic of Armenia on the condition that the territorial frontiers should be left for later determination [17]. On May 17, 1920, the U.S. Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby telegraphed Hugh Campbell Wallace, the American Ambassador in France and instructed him to notify the Allied leaders that the U.S. President had agreed to act as arbitrator in establishing the international frontier between Armenia and Turkey [18].

References

1. This was a suggestion made by U.S. Gen. James Harbord in late 1919 and was later embraced by the U.S. and other Allied leaders. Initially, during the Paris Peace Conference the American and British delegations were in support of including in the State of Armenia a larger territory extending from the Black to the Mediterranean seas which would be united with the Armenian provinces of Eastern Armenia. See in The National Archives, London, UK, CAB 24/72, Foreign Office, Political Intelligence Department, Special I, Memorandum Respecting the Settlement of Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula and David Hunter Miller, My Diary at the Conference of Paris, with Documents. – Vol. 4. – New York: Appeal Printing Company, 1924. – Document 246. – p. 219.
2. Gayane Makhmourian (ed.) Armenian in the Documents of the U.S. Department of State: 1917-1920 / Republic of Armenia National Academy of Sciences, History Institute. – Yerevan, 2017. – p. 387.
3. Ara Papian (ed.) Arbitral Award of the President of the United States of America Woodrow Wilson. – Yerevan, 2011.
4. NAA, fund 430, register 1, file 1327, folios 16-17.
5. NAA, fund 430, register 1, file 1223, folio 3.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., fol. 4.
8. Ibid.
9. NAA, fund 430, register 1, file 1333, folio 4.
10. Ibid., fols. 5–6.
11. Ibid., fol. 6.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., fol. 11.
14. Ibid. fols. 12–13.
15. Ibid. fol. 13.
16. Ibid., fol. 14.
17. Papian, Arbitral Award.
18. Ibid.