

President Asks Aid for Armenia

A Washington dispatch dated May 24, says: Authority to accept for the United States a mandatory over Armenia was asked of congress today by President Wilson.

The president informed the senate that he had accepted the invitation of the allied supreme council that he undertake to arbitrate the questions of the boundary between Turkey and Armenia, saying he had thought it his duty "to accept this difficult and delicate task."

Provision for mandates is made in the peace treaty and it is set forth that such mandates shall be executed under the league of nations but since the United States is not a member, administration officials said if congress decided that the United States should act for Armenia the treaty provisions would be waived in this case.

The question of a mandate over Armenia was discussed in the report of the American mission to Armenia, headed by Major General Harbord, recently presented to the senate. The general estimated that acceptance of the mandate would necessitate the presence of fifty thousand American troops there. Other estimates however, have placed it at less, once the Turkish army had been demobilized.

After referring to the senate resolution the president said:

"I received and read this document with great interest and with genuine gratification, not only because it embodied my own convictions and feelings with regard to Armenia and its people, but also, and more particularly, because it seemed to me the voice of the American people expressing their genuine convictions and deep Christian sympathies and intimating the line of duty which seemed to them to lie clearly before us.

"I cannot but regard it as providential and not as a mere casual coincidence, that almost at the same time I received information that the conference of statesmen now sitting at San Remo for the purpose of working out the details of peace with the central powers which it was not feasible to work out in the conference at Paris, had formally resolved to address a definite appeal to this government to accept a mandate for Armenia. They were at pains to add they did this not from the smallest desire to evade any obligations which they might be expected to undertake, but because the responsibilities which they are already obliged to bear in connection with the disposition of the former Ottoman empire will strain their capacities to the uttermost and because that the appearance on the scene of a power emancipated from the prepossessions of the old world will inspire a wider confidence and afford a firmer guarantee for stability in the future than would the selection of any European power.

TRUST OF CIVILIZATION

"Early in the conference at Paris it was agreed that to those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the states which formerly governed them, and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be afforded.

"It was recognized that certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized, subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone.

"It is in pursuance of this principle and with a desire of affording Armenia such advice and assistance that the statesmen conferring at San Remo have formally requested this government to assume the duties of mandatory in Armenia. At the same sitting it was resolved to request the president of the United States to undertake to arbitrate the difficult question of the boundary between Turkey and Armenia and the Vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and it was agreed to accept his decision thereupon, as well as any stipulation he may prescribe as to access to the sea for the independent state of

Armenia. In pursuance of this action, it was resolved to embody in the treaty with Turkey and Armenia and the other high contracting parties agree to refer to the arbitration of the president of the United States of America of the question of the boundary between Turkey and Armenia in the Vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and to accept his decision thereupon as well as any stipulations he may prescribe as to access to the sea for the independent state of Armenia, pending that decision the boundaries of Turkey and Armenia to remain as at present. I have thought it my duty to accept this difficult and delicate task.

ASKS CONGRESS TO GRANT POWER

"In response to the invitation of the council at San Remo, I urgently advise and request that the congress grant the executive power to accept for the United States a mandate over Armenia. I make this suggestion in the earnest belief that it will be the wish of the people of the United States that this should be done. The sympathy with Armenia has proceeded from no single portion of our people, but has come with extraordinary spontaneity and sincerity from the whole of the great body of christian men and women in this country by whose free will offerings Armenia has practically been saved at the most critical juncture of its existence. This great and generous people have made the cause of Armenia their own. It is to this people and to their government that the hope and earnest expectations of the struggling people of Armenia turn as they emerge from a period of indescribable suffering and peril and I hope that the congress will think it wise to meet the hope and expectation with the utmost liberality. I know from unmistakable evidence given by responsible representatives of many peoples struggling towards independence and peaceful life again that the government of the United States is looked to with extraordinary trust and confidence, and I believe it would do nothing less than arrest the hopeful processes of civilization if we were to refuse the request to become the helpful friends and advisers of such of these peoples as we may be authoritatively and formally requested to guide and assist.

CRITICAL KIND OF TASK

"I am conscious that I am urging upon the congress a very critical choice, but I make the suggestion in the confidence that I am speaking in the spirit and in accordance with the wishes of the greatest of the Christian peoples. The sympathy for Armenia among our people has sprung from untainted consciences, pure Christian faith and an earnest desire to see Christian people succored in their time of suffering and lifted from their abject subjection and distress and enabled to stand upon their feet and take their place among the free nations of the world. Our recognition of the independence of Armenia will mean genuine liberty and assured happiness for her people if we fearlessly undertake the duties of guidance and assistance involved in the functions of a mandatory. It is therefore, with the most earnest hopefulness and with the feeling that I am giving advice from which the congress will not willingly turn away that I urge the acceptance of the investigation now formally and solemnly extended us by the council at San Remo into whose hands has passed the task of composing the many complexities and difficulties of government in the one-time Ottoman empire and the maintenance of order and tolerable conditions of life in those portions of that empire which it is no longer possible in the interest of civilization to leave under the government of the Turkish authorities themselves."

PRESIDENT VETOES KNOX PEACE PLAN

The Knox resolution, restoring normal conditions without a formal treaty, and adopted by both branches of congress, was vetoed by President Wilson, May 27. A later effort to override the veto failed. The full text of the veto message follows:

"To the House of Representatives:

"I return, herewith, without my signature, House Joint Resolution 327, intended to repeal the joint resolution of April 6, 1917, declaring a state of war to exist between the United States and Germany, and the joint resolution

of Dec. 7, 1917, declaring a state of war to exist between the United States and the Austro-Hungarian Government, and to declare a state of peace.

"I have not felt at liberty to sign this joint resolution because I cannot bring myself to become party to an action which would place ineffaceable stain upon the gallantry and honor of the United States. The resolution seeks to establish peace with the German Empire without exacting from the German Government any action by way of setting right the infinite wrongs which it did to the peoples whom it attacked and whom we professed it our purpose to assist when we entered the war.

IS SACRIFICE IN VAIN?

"Have we sacrificed the lives of more than 100,000 Americans and ruined the lives of thousands of others and brought upon thousands of American families an unhappiness that can never end for purposes which we do not now care to state or take further steps to attain? The attainment of these purposes is provided for in the Treaty of Versailles by terms deemed adequate by the leading statesmen and experts of the great peoples who were associated in the war against Germany. Do we not now care to join in the effort to secure them?

"We entered the war most reluctantly. Our people were profoundly disinclined to take part in a European war, and at last did so only because they became convinced that it could not in truth be regarded as only a European war, but must be regarded as a war in which civilization itself was involved and human rights of every kind as against a belligerent Government. Moreover, when we entered the war we set forth very definitely the purposes for which we entered, partly because we did not wish to be considered as merely taking part in a European contest.

"This joint resolution which I return does not seek to accomplish any of these objects, but in effect makes a complete surrender of the rights of the United States so far as the German Government is concerned. A treaty of peace was signed at Versailles on the 28th day of June last which did seek to accomplish the objects which we had declared to be in our minds, because all the great Governments and peoples which united against Germany had adopted our declarations of purpose as their own and had in solemn form embodied them in communications to the German Government preliminary to the armistice of Nov. 11, 1918.

TREATY REJECTED BY SENATE

"But the treaty as signed at Versailles has been rejected by the Senate of the United States, though it has been ratified by Germany. By that rejection and by its methods we had in effect declared that we wish to draw apart and pursue objects and interests of our own, unhampered by any connections of interest or of purpose with other Governments and peoples.

"Notwithstanding the fact that upon our entrance into the war we professed to be seeking to assist in the maintenance of common interests nothing is said in this resolution about the freedom of navigation upon the seas, or the reduction of armaments, or the vindication of the rights of Belgium, or the rectification of wrongs done to France, or the release of the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire from the intolerable subjugation which they have had for so many generations to endure, or the establishment of an independent Polish state, or the continued maintenance of any kind of a understanding among the great powers of the world which would be calculated to prevent in the future such outrages as Germany attempted and in part consummated.

"We have now in effect declared that we do not care to take any further risks or to assume any further responsibilities with regard to the freedom of nations or the sacredness of international obligations or the safety of independent peoples. Such a peace with Germany—a peace in which none of the essential interests which we had at heart when we entered the war is safeguarded—is, or ought to be, inconceivable; is inconsistent with the dignity of the United States, with the rights and liberties of her citizens, and with the very fundamental conditions of civilization.

"I hope that in these statements I have sufficiently set forth the reasons why I have felt it incumbent upon me to withhold my signature.

(Signed) WOODROW WILSON.

"The White House, May 27, 1920."