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Only War By England With All Islam Will Prevent Partial Return Of The Turk To Europe

Despite Defeat in First Balkan War, and in World War, Turks Seem Destined to Secure Fairly Good Sized Patch of Europe.

By FRANK H. SIMONDS.

(Special Correspondent)

WASHINGTON, Sept. 29.—Unless all signs fail and Great Britain risks a war not with Turkey but with the whole of Islam, the solution of the present Near Eastern Turkish problem is in sight and it will be a Turkish solution. Not only will the Turk return to Europe, occupying his capital freed from Allied garrisons, but he will resume control in Adrianople and once more hold the eastern bank of the Mar- Mar. This means that despite defeat in the World Wars, preceded by defeat in the First Balkan War, the Turk is going to make good his hold on a fairly considerable jumping off place in Europe.

It would be a mistake, however, to see in this return of the Turk to European soil any real menace to the neighboring Christian states. The Turkish bolt in Europe has been shot and each recession during the past century and a half has been, save in the case of Adrianople, a final withdrawal Turkish re-appearance in Eastern Thrace is not important because of its relation to the Balkans, its sole real significance lies in the effect it will have upon the Straits.

With Turkey re-established at Adrianople however a new question arises. In the Paris Conference days the Bulgarians, supported by the American representatives and by Frank Polk, who represented us in Europe later, strove to retain their narrow facade upon the Aegean and their single port of Dedeagatch. This territory finally fell to Greece with Adrianople and the whole of Thrace under the settlement of Sevres. Now however, since Thrace is to go to Turkey, the Bulgarians are renewing their demands for Dedeagatch, Eastern Thrace Great Loss To Greece.

In losing Eastern Thrace Greece will have to surrender a territory of some eight or nine thousand square miles, an area about equal to that of New Jersey, with a population of something more than 600,000. While the Greek element in this district is probably the most numerous and the Greek tradition unmistakable, there are still many Turks in the centre and many Bulgarians in the north.

Just before the First Balkan War Greece had a population of 3,500,000, when the World War had been liquidated. Greece had expanded her European population to nearly 6,000,000, while her possession of the Smyrna district in Asia Minor added still another 2,000,000. As a result of the changes which are now practically certain, the Greece of Constantine will have to surrender at least half of the territories won by Venizelos. Smyrna is lost and Eastern Thrace as good as lost probably in the end Greece will find herself with some five millions of people, that is about twice her population of ten years ago and with her area similarly doubled.

But if Bulgaria regains her strip on the Aegean simple justice would demand that Greek claims in the Northern Epirus and in the Aegean islands should be recognized. Yet it is unfortunate for Greece that while France seems to back the Bulgarian claims to Dedeagatch Italy resolutely opposes the Greek rights in the islands and in Epirus as well. What the Italians desire is to see Greece reduced to the smallest conceivable limits, what the French are interested in is intercepting a strip of Bulgarian territory between the Greeks and the new Turkish frontier, that is a new barrier to Greek advance to Constantinople.

Adrianople Lost To Turkey In 1913. For the world, however the fate of Adrianople is of relative insignificance. It was lost to Turkey in 1913, after a famous siege in which Bulgarian and Serb fought as Allies. It was retaken a few months later by the Turk, when all the Bulgarian troops were fighting the Serb. Part of the city, the quarter across the Maritza was ceded to the Bulgars by the Turks in 1915, just before Bulgaria came in on the German side and to insure the Bulgarian rail communication on their own soil with the Aegean at Dedeagatch, which was still theirs. In 1918, when the Turks surrendered, the Greeks in their turn occupied Adrianople and have held it ever since.

What actually counts now in the Near East—and the Far East as well—is that the British have lost one of the biggest diplomatic battles in recent history and are faced now with a dilemma each horn of which carries grave difficulties. To make war upon the victorious Turk is to risk a long and expensive struggle, to make peace is to surrender the most of the prizes won in the war by the British. Americans are prone to forget that the East, everything from Constantinople to Siam is the scene of the greatest effort by British Imperial statesmanship and thus to misinterpret recent events.

British Control Seemed To Be Set Up. The World War and the peace which followed, in giving Britain Mesopotamia, Palestine and virtual control at Constantinople, together with the control of the Greek army, the largest and best equipped force in the Near East, seemed to establish British control beyond challenge. At the same time the British had been able to reach a basis of agreement with the Arab and to restrict if not to eliminate the French influence in the Near East resulting from the Syrian mandate.

Unhappily for the British they have been unable to hold their gains. The Greek army has been destroyed and the Turk has come back victorious and hostile. The Arab has found British policy in Mesopotamia and Palestine very unsatisfactory and is in arms now against his British ally of the war. Finally the whole Mohammedan world is now clamoring that the Turk be permitted to re-occupy Constantinople and Adrianople and if British policy continues to oppose both these demands, the results are bound to be grave in the extreme. Little Belief Lloyd George Will Insist.

But there is very little reason to believe that Lloyd George will insist. What is taking now would seem to indicate that the necessary change of policy is rapidly taking form and that all that is now being sought is a decent cover for his inevitable retreat. The disaster is supreme and final, but there is still a chance of a dignified retirement which will minimize the loss of prestige, if not abroad at least in the House of

Commons, which is what really counts for Lloyd George.

In any event it is idle to talk of another World War or of a general European conflagration. Europe has not the smallest intention of becoming embroiled in what is essentially a British venture, a gamble for complete control of the Near East, which has come to grief. And neither British finances nor British public sentiment is in any condition to encourage the present government in risking a new war, which would gravely disturb the Mohammedan population all over the Empire.

There remain two dangers. The Turks may refuse to permit the British the decent interval which would enable them to change their policy without too patent surrender to pressure, the British may seek to postpone too long the surrender which they now have to make. Either eventually might mean

conflict along the Asiatic shore of the Straits, fighting on the soil which from the siege of Troy to that of Gallipoli has known many struggles, but there is really no reason why the Turk should risk war, when the fruits of victory are assured—and under pressure, no one changes front so rapidly as Lloyd George.

Actual War Less Likely As The Days Pass.

Probably we shall have many alarms in the next few days and even weeks, we may even have outpost encounters, but actual war would seem to be becoming less and less likely as the days pass. The key to the Dardanelles is to be found in Mesopotamia and Palestine, in fact, in the whole Mohammedan fraction of the British Empire and the key is thus beyond the protecting reach of the British fleet. If Britain were assured the support of any allies she might stick to her old policy, but this aid has been refused.

Actually what British statesmanship sought to accomplish in the case of France and Germany, namely to isolate France, if the French insisted upon occupying Ruhr, French and Italian statesmanship has achieved in the case of Britain and Turkey. If Britain moves she will have to move alone and with the consciousness of the unconcealed disapproval of all Continental nations.

The Turkish affair is, however, the gravest defeat Lloyd George has known since he took office. A whole policy has come crashing

down in ruins and the consequences must affect the Empire for many years to come. In his duel with France, too, the Turkish episode, following the Genoa check, represents still another score for Poincaré. (Copyright, 1922, by The McClure Newspaper Syndicate)

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