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# The Sick Man's Last Fight: The Role of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War

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The Sick Man's Last Fight:  
The Role of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War



“O Muslims, know that our Empire is at war with the mortal enemies of Islam: the governments of Muscovy, Britain, and France. The commander of the Faithful summons you to Jihad.”

Henry A. Crouse

HIS 490-01: Senior Seminar

Brother John Buckley, FSC, Ph.D.

June 5, 2009

The Great War in 1914 to 1918 destroyed mighty empires, and created nations from their ashes. Both the Allied and Central Powers had been dominated by powerful empires. The Ottoman Empire, established by the Turks was at one point the largest empire in the world. Prior to World War I, it had fallen into decline as its territories were gobbled up by other powers. The world dismissed the Ottoman Empire as “the Sick Man of Europe.” Throughout the Nineteenth Century, the rest of Europe waited for the empire to implode. A few years before war broke out, the Turks had a revolution. The revolutionaries rebuilt the crumbling empire, making it a formidable force for war. Weighing their options, the Turks joined the Germans and Austria-Hungarians, hoping the war could restore it to its former glory. Both the Allied Powers and the Central Powers were dubious about the Empire’s ability to wage war. The British, who were to be the Ottomans’ primary opponent, expected them to be a puppet of the Germans and an easy mark. The Turks decided to wage a defensive war to keep the British in check and tie down their resources. In the early years of the war, the Empire protected its allies’ flank, strangled the Russian war effort, and tied up vast amounts of British war materiel and troops. The ability of the Sultan as Caliph to declare Jihad presented a serious threat to the British Empire. The British ruled millions of Muslims throughout the world; jihad could lead to colonial rebellion. The prewar reforms restored the Ottoman Empire’s strength, allowing it to be a significant player in 1914, 1915, and 1916, in which it won crucial battles at Gallipoli and Kut. The Ottoman Empire, the “Sick Man of Europe,” provided a valuable military contribution to the Central Powers in the early years of World War One.

The Ottoman Empire was one of the most successful empires in history. It was established by Osman I in 1299. By 1453, the Ottomans under Sultan Mehmed I conquered Constantinople, the capital and last stronghold of the Byzantine Empire. By 1683 the Empire

had conquered the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, Hungary, Southeastern Europe, and was finally stopped at the gates of Vienna. They controlled an enormous population consisting of numerous ethnicities and religions. “Ruling with a light touch made sense, peace in newly conquered lands, freed them to conquer more, and coming from a frontier region where faiths and traditions intermingled, they saw no need to impose a uniform culture” (Wood 2007). The Ottoman government was bound by Islamic law to respect the religions of others and to not force conversions. Their flexibility and acceptance of multiculturalism allowed the Empire to thrive.

The transformation of the Empire into the “Sick Man” was long, gradual, and took “an unconscionable time dying” (Palmer i). The failure to take Vienna in 1683 marked the end of perceived Ottoman invincibility. Corruption and hedonism infiltrated the Sultanate. As the Ottoman Empire fell into steady decay, Western Europe wrenched itself from the Dark Ages. The Industrial Revolution and overseas colonies made France, Spain, and Great Britain powerful. Wars with Russia and the Balkan states steadily drained the Ottoman treasury, army, and landholdings. On the eve of the Crimean War in 1853, Czar Nicholas I dubbed the Empire “the Sick Man of Europe.” Their frailty was exposed by their inability to win against Russia without aid from Britain and France. The Ottoman Empire became steadily economically weaker. The great powers of the day, Britain, France, Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary were all preparing for the Ottoman Empire’s eventual collapse, and scheming on how to profit from the final death knell. The Empire increasingly became economically dependent on foreign nations. “Germany, Britain, Holland, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary were represented on the Ottoman Public Debt Commission, an attempt to consolidate Turkey’s overseas borrowing, which by 1878 consumed 80 per cent of Turkish [sic] state revenues...Britain and France controlled most of the Ottoman Empire’s banking and financial system as well as its debt”

(Strachan 101). The European nations claimed that their increasing control of the Ottoman state was in the name of “humanitarian interventions” (Akçam 28). The spread of Western European ideals and philosophy also began to pervade Ottoman society. The Turks began to desire a distinctly Turkish state. Many groups living under the Ottomans began to crave their own national identity and eventual sovereignty. The very diversity that once strengthened the Ottoman Empire, allowed for the expansion of nationalism which would speed its collapse.

In 1908, a group of westernizers, liberals, army officers, secularists, and civil servants, unified under the belief that the sorry state of Ottoman affairs was the fault of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. They became the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), otherwise known as the Young Turks. They demanded that the Sultan restore the Ottoman Parliament he had suspended in 1878. In July 1908, an Ottoman army, rife with discontent, mutinied. The Sultan attempted to crush the rebellion. When the army began to march on Constantinople, the Sultan responded by reviving the Parliament and creating a constitutional monarchy. In 1909, Abdul Hamid II unsuccessfully attempted a counter coup to oust the reformists. His brother, Mehmet V replaced him, but was regarded as a figurehead.

Parliament lost nearly all of the Empire’s European holdings in the First Balkan War. A group of Young Turks decided to stage a coup. An army officer named İsmail Enver, better known as Enver Paşa, backed by soldiers, stormed into a cabinet meeting. They shot the War Minister and demanded that the Grand Vizier resign his post. Enver, along with Mehmed Talaat Paşa and Ahmed Djemal formed a triumvirate known as the Three Paşas and took control of the Ottoman Empire. The Empire Enver had inherited was outdated, economically weak, and exhausted. “Not only did Turkey [sic] lose further territory in North Africa (Lybia), but its military weakness put the control of what remained of its European possessions in doubt “(Orlow

75). Enver Paşa recovered lost territory, namely Thrace and Adrianople in a series of Balkan wars. He married the Sultan's niece, helping him consolidate power and become a military dictator. Enver instituted several military reforms. He accepted a German mission, led by Liman von Sanders, to modernize the army. He ordered new equipment from Germany, implemented German military methods, and allowed non-Muslim Ottoman citizens to serve in the army. In February 1914, Enver decided that the Ottoman Empire would be ready for full-scale war in five years. They still needed horses, artillery, rifles, and a common language for all soldiers. Although the reforms were cut short, at the beginning of the war, the Ottomans had at most 800,000 men ready to fight (Wallace 2004).

At the outset World War I, the Ottoman Empire was in a unique position; it was not entangled in the European Alliance system and thus could in theory choose either side. It was a traditional enemy of Russia. France already had a treaty with Russia. The British rejected the Ottomans. Alliance with the Entente was impossible, so the Ottomans looked to Germany. Enver, the de facto Ottoman dictator, had once been a military attaché to the German Empire and his experiences made him greatly favor the Germans. The German Army was the largest in the world, and it had helped with Enver's reforms. British military attaché Francis Cliff-Owen's took notice of the Ottomans' increasing strength and reported "there is no doubt that very considerable progress is being made in [the Ottoman army's] efficiency, and that it will be far superior to that in existence before the Balkan war. The continuous training...and the time which has elapsed for the deliberate organization of mobilization and administrative arrangements must cause the Turkish [sic] forces to now be regarded as a factor...to be seriously taken into account" (Strachan 107)

The German-Ottoman relationship had been growing for decades. The Kaiser had a long standing friendship with the Sultan. In the Ottoman Empire, Kaiser Wilhelm II was known as Hajji Wilhelm due to rumors that he had converted to Islam and made the trek to Mecca. The Germans and Ottomans also had economic ties including the Orient Express Railroad, which ran for decades from Berlin to Constantinople. The Ottomans planned to extend the railroad, in partnership with the Germans, to Baghdad to create the Berlin to Baghdad Railroad. The railroad would economically revive the Ottoman state and usher in a new period of industrialism. The Germans in turn would have an overland trade route linking them to their East African Colonies. Despite perceived Ottoman weaknesses, the Germans had several reasons for joining with the Ottomans. The German Empire's colonies had an infinitesimal population of Muslims, whereas the British, French, and Russians presided over millions. The Ottoman Sultan was also the Caliph, the spiritual leader of Sunni Islam. The Caliph could declare Jihad against the Allies, thus encouraging the colonies to rise up against their European masters. Colonial uprisings could severely hurt the Allied war effort, considering that a significant portion of the British and French armies were actually made of non-European colonial subjects. German agents would be able to cross Ottoman territory to incite Muslim rebellions against the British in India and against the Russians in Central Asia. The Ottomans would also help occupy the British and Russian armies on other fronts. By opening more fronts against the Allies, the Ottomans would draw resources and troops away from the Western Front. The British were particularly worried whether the Ottomans would join the Central Powers, fearing the threat to the Suez Canal and their colonies. As the war began, they hoped the Ottomans would remain on the sidelines.

The Great War began on July 28, 1914 with the Austrian declaration of war against Serbia. The Ottomans remained officially neutral during the opening months of the war. In

reality, Enver entered into a secret alliance with Germany on August 2, 1914 (Fewster 41), but kept the Turkish cabinet in the dark. The Germans faltered in the First Battle of the Marne and then saw the Ottomans as useful allies. Despite Enver's preference for Germany, he was unable at first to openly declare war for political reasons. While the Ottoman army was pro-German, the navy was pro-British (they had bought many ships from Britain), and the Sultan preferred neutrality. Enver knew the Empire could not remain neutral, and there was a strong case for going to war. If the Empire did not join the winning side, it would be in danger after the war. The government was in dire financial straits but could erase its debts and reconquer territory if victorious. Joining the war was "the last chance for the CUP and for the empire" (Akçam 125).

Some Germans had mixed feelings about their new Turkish allies. Chief of German General Staff Helmut von Moltke remarked, "Turkey is militarily a nonentity if Turkey was before described as a sick man, it must now be described as a dying man" (Wallace 2004). Others felt that the Turks would be very useful. Baron Maxwell von Oppenheim, a self-proclaimed expert on Islam tried to convince the Kaiser of the Turks' usefulness. He argued that the Sultan could declare Jihad against the Allies. An Islamic Holy War could cripple the British Empire by inciting rebellion in her colonies. The Kaiser agreed, stating, "our consuls in Turkey and India must enflame the whole Mohammedan world into wild uprising for if we are to be bled to death, at least England shall lose India" (Wallace 2004). India had an enormous population of Muslims. The Germans were very interested in destabilizing the British war effort by inciting revolt in India, Britain's prized possession. The diversion of troops to quash an Indian rebellion could mean a German victory in the war. By declaring Jihad, the Ottomans could incite the desired rebellion. Enver and his cohorts, while not religious fanatics, were willing to go along with the idea. The Turks were important members of the Central Powers for geographic reasons



as well. They controlled the Dardanelle and Bosphorus Straits, cutting off critical transportation routes between Britain and Russia. They controlled Mesopotamia, and could capture the new British oil fields there.

Even before the war, Constantinople had been a center for German spy networks seeking to destabilize the British Empire. Some worked with von Oppenheim, the so called expert on Islam. One group disguised themselves as a traveling circus. Upon arrival in Constantinople, they began working on strategies to incite India into revolt. The Afghani Amir supposedly had 50,000 Muslims willing to attack the British in India. After being joined by a group of Turks, the Circus left Constantinople to meet the Amir, despite having poor maps, and virtually no idea how to get to Afghanistan. A Turkish operative, Hussein Rauf said “what did we know about Afghanistan except its name? I can’t even visualize its place on the map. I don’t know how to get there. Do I go by America?” (Wallace 2004).

Days after the August 2 alliance, the British Mediterranean Fleet made contact with the German battlecruiser *SMS Goeben* and light cruiser *SMS Breslau*. The British pursued the German ships. Rear Admiral Souchon, commander of the German vessels received orders from Naval Secretary Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz: “Alliance with government of CUP concluded August 3. Proceed at once to Constantinople” (Massie 34). The German ships made for Constantinople and arrived in the safety of the Sea of Marmara “at 5 p.m. on 10 August” (Strachan 108). The Germans hoped their presence in Turkish harbors would prompt an Ottoman declaration of war against the Allies, but the Turks remained reticent. The Germans gave the Turks the *Goeben* and *Breslau* in an effort to entice the Turks into joining the war. They then gave the Turks over £5 million in gold to further sweeten the deal. Many Turks were unimpressed because the *Goeben* and *Breslau* simply replaced two ships the British had built for

the Turks, but decided to keep in case Turkey should join the Central Powers. The German naval crew retained their uniforms, but donned fezzes, and became members of the Ottoman Navy, which lost its British sympathies. British First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, was angry and humiliated at the perceived treachery, and regarded the Turks as enemies. He attempted to create a Balkan alliance against the Turks and readied the Indian Expeditionary Force D for a campaign against the Ottomans in Mesopotamia. The Ottoman Cabinet preferred peace, but the Triumvirate, led by Enver, eventually won the campaign to begin hostile action. German Admiral Souchon led a naval force of German and Ottoman ships, under the Ottoman flag into the Black Sea. On October 29 (109), Souchon's force attacked the Russian Black Sea ports of Sevastopol, Feodosia, Novorossiysk, and Odessa. Enver wish had been granted; the Empire passed the point of no return. The Ottoman Navy, using captured mines, blocked Russian trade routes, the Dardanelles, and the Bosphorus. The Germans sent howitzers and gunners to protect the narrows, the most strategic point of the Dardanelles Strait; the only possible invasion route to Constantinople. Admiral Souchon wrote to his wife, "I have thrown the Turks into the powder keg" (Gilbert 104). The Allies were outraged by the sneak attacks on Russian ports. The Russians declared war on November 2, 1914 and the British and French declared war on November 5 (<http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/declarationsofwar.htm>). British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith said upon declaring war on Turkey "It is the Ottoman Government and not we who have rung the death knell of the Ottoman dominion" (Gilbert 105).

The Allies took the Turkish attacks in the Black Sea as a declaration of war. In response, they attacked the Ottomans before there was a formal declaration of war. The surprise attacks on the Russian seaports had enraged the citizens of the Allied nations. Prime Minister Asquith's wife wrote, "I *loathe* the Turk and really hope that he will be wiped out of Europe. Germany

blackmailed Turkey till it went over, but except for threatening Egypt I doubt if it will bother us much” (Gilbert 105). The Turks were regarded as German puppets and not a threat to the British Empire. The British mistakenly did not take into account either the Sultan/Caliph’s power to declare Jihad or Enver’s military reforms. “On November 1, the British attacked a Turkish minelayer in Smyrna harbor. On the following day, a British light cruiser bombarded the Turkish Red Sea port of Akaba [sic]... November 3, British and French warships bombarded the Turkish forts at the Dardenelles. The fortress on the northern shore, Sedd-ul-Bahr, was hit and its powder magazine blown up” (Gilbert 105). The quick and easy destruction of the Sedd-ul-Bahr fortress gave the British and French a sense that the Ottomans were not formidable opponents. The fort was in reality destroyed by a lucky shot that landed in an ammunition magazine. The point of the British and French strike was simply to probe the Turkish defenses to get a sense of the Ottomans’ readiness to fight. They left with the false assumption that the Ottomans could not defend themselves. Later that day, Russian troops crossed the eastern Ottoman border. First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill pushed for an all out assault on Constantinople through the Gallipoli Peninsula. He argued that the quick capture of Constantinople would quickly knock the Ottomans out of the war, but his words fell on deaf ears. He pressured the Greeks to attack Constantinople, but they had divided loyalties. The Greek Prime Minister was Pro-Entente, but the Queen was the Kaiser’s sister and favored Germany. No attempt on Constantinople would be made until the following year. The Turks, alarmed by the destruction of a crucial fortress protecting the route to their capital, began to shore up their defense of the strait.

The British had been prepared for an attack on Mesopotamia by positioning the Indian Expeditionary Force D for an attack. The force had 4,182 Indian infantry and artillery compared

to only 918 British (Wilcox 9). On November 6, the day after the British declared war, Expeditionary Force D landed near Fao Fortress, an Ottoman stronghold in southern Iraq (Palmer 231). Fao Fortress was the most logical jump off point for an Ottoman attack on British oil interests in the region, especially the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. The British landed on November 6 and successfully defended against infantry counterattacks. Unable to advance up the beach since their artillery had not yet landed, they remained pinned down in hastily dug trenches under heavy Ottoman fire for two days. On November 8, the British artillery landed and the fort was quickly taken (firstworldwar.com). Two days later, British General Delamain made a second landing at Saniya, located two and a half miles north of an oil pipeline terminal in Abadan. The Turks skirmished with the British and Indians camped at Saniya, inflicting the first casualties on the British. General Sir Arthur Barrett arrived at Saniya and took command. Delamain remained in charge of the 16<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade in the 6<sup>th</sup> division and attacked the Turks at Saihan (Wilcox 10). Delamain outflanked the Ottomans, who quickly withdrew.

General Barrett then moved north to take Basra, located in modern day southern Iraq. Basra boasted a strong Turkish garrison of 4,500 men; the British moved towards it with over 5,000 (firstworldwar.com). It was originally suggested that the British ships could have sailed up the Shatt al Arab (the joined river of the Tigris and Euphrates), shelled Basra, and made a naval landing of infantry. The plan was rejected as too dangerous and the generals instead marched their armies to Basra. The British captured the forward Ottoman positions at Sahil, defeating 4,000 Turks and 1,000 Arabs (Wilcox 10). The battle proper began on November 19 (firstworldwar.com). The British and Indians faced many environmental hazards such as torrential rain, mud, heat, and mirages. They made little progress until the heavy artillery was

able to scatter the defenders, who slipped away under cover of a mirage. Mirages presented a unique challenge in warfare:

the mirage was one of the most remarkable features of campaigning in Mesopotamia. In the open desert, distant troops would appear to come forward, to retreat or suddenly vanish. Small bushes would turn into infantry platoons and a dozen sheep would become a squadron of camelry. At a distance of 1,000 yards large bodies of troops would be quite invisible while at the same 300 yards it might not be possible to indentify objects or even be sure if an object was there at all. Early in the morning the mirage caused things to merge together. A troop of Turkish horsemen would look like a row of trestle tables with elongated legs, but soon everything would be lifted off their feet. Where the troops had been, there was a floating table-the legs had disappeared. The camel of an hour before was a ship suspended in the air. A little mound resembled a burst of shrapnel with a clear streak of horizon under it (Wilcox 10).

The Turks tried to close the Shatt-el-Arab waterway by sinking a line of ships across it. A cable snapped, which left a space, known as Satan's Gap, for British ships to pass through one at a time. The Turks realized they had failed and slipped away under cover of darkness. The next day, a local Sheikh informed the British that the Turks were gone. The British took the city, after having sustained 500 casualties, while the Turks lost 1,000 (firstworldwar.com). Major General Sir Percy Cox, Chief Political Officer in Mesopotamia gave a proclamation (in Arabic) to reassure the native Arab population: "The British Government has now occupied Basra, but though a state of war with the Ottoman Government still prevails, yet we have no enmity or ill-will against the population, to whom we hope to prove good friends and protectors. No remnant of Turkish administration remains in this region. In place thereof the British flag has been established, under which you will enjoy the benefits of liberty and justice, both in regard to your religious and secular affairs" (Wilcox 12). It was the first of many promises of fair treatment of the Arabs by the British, but not necessarily one that was honored after the war.

On November 15 the Germans got their wish; the Sultan/Caliph declared jihad against the Allies. It was to be the puppet Sultan's only action during the war. Before a crowd the Caliph said, "O Muslims, know that our Empire is at war with the mortal enemies of Islam: the governments of Muscovy, Britain, and France. The commander of the Faithful summons you to Jihad" (Wallace 2004). British lack of knowledge of the Islamic world made them fearful of the Sultan's proclamation. The Empire's armies often fought with religious zeal. A German officer remarked that the Turk fought because "Allah wills it. He [the Turk] is deeply religious and sees his life as the first step to a better one...one can hear an 'Inshallah' (may God grant it) from many hundreds of deep male voices resound[ing] solemnly" (Fewster 96). Few non-Ottoman Muslims, however, took the declaration seriously. Most non-Turkish Muslims hated the Ottoman Empire for past trespasses and conquests. Many Muslims would have been more than happy to fight the Turks. Most Muslims saw the declaration of Jihad for exactly what it was: using religion for political purposes. The Central Powers would continue to attempt to use Jihad in their favor, but it was largely an impotent move. When the group of spies, dubbed 'The Circus' arrived in Afghanistan, they discovered that the Amir was only interested in playing them against the British for tribute. Despite the failure of Jihad to cause wholesale unrest in British colonies, it did have some effect on the British war effort. It sufficiently scared the British into reinforcing their armies in regions such as the Suez, which drained troops from the Western Front. Many Sepoys deserted from the British army because they did not want to kill fellow Muslims.

The British had taken Basra, and many considered the campaign over. The oilfields had been secured, and there was no more reason to continue the fight in Mesopotamia. The fight would be continued due to Britain's imperial ambition. Cox wrote to the Viceroy of India that

“Turkish troops recently engaged with us were completely panic-stricken and very unlikely to oppose us again...Effect of the recent defeat has been very great, and if advance is made before it wears off...Baghdad will in all probability fall into our hands very easily. After earnest consideration of the arguments for and against I find it difficult to see how we can well avoid taking over Baghdad” (Wilcox 13). Cox was primarily a political officer and greatly exaggerated the ease of taking over the Middle East. His primary motive in writing the letter was to push the idea of British hegemony the Middle East.

The Ottomans retreated from Basra to Qurna, eighty kilometers upriver, at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates. They fortified the town and had batteries on the other side of the Tigris. Barrett sent a small gunboat force and infantry accompaniment upriver. They failed at capturing Qurna, but they did defeat the batteries on the east side of the Tigris on December 4. Two days later, 2,100 British and Indian reinforcements arrived but also failed to capture Qurna. On December 8, the British army crossed the river far from Qurna in order to attack the town from behind while the gunboats attacked from the river, trapping the Turks in between. Before the battle started, the Turkish commander, Colonel Subhi Bey, surrendered the town and its 1,000 soldiers, while the British had only lost twenty-nine men (firstworldwar.com). The enormous success of the early Mesopotamian Campaign encouraged the Anglo-Indian forces to wage a far more aggressive campaign than the London War Office had planned. While the surrender was a substantial blow to the Ottoman forces, the best unit in the region, the Osmanjik battalion, led by Colonel Sulaiman Askari, escaped north. With Subhi Bey as a prisoner, Askari, an exceptional leader, took charge of the Turks in the region. The only reason he was in the Empire’s backwater was because he was not liked by the ruling CUP Party and had been sent as far away from Constantinople as possible.

The British now faced a difficult choice; continue fighting or stay put through the oncoming flood season. Cox favored a continued attack, but was overruled. The commanders then asked their superiors for reinforcements, but the Commander-in-Chief in India was opposed to sending more Indian soldiers and the India Office in London was also reluctant. A fierce argument broke out amongst the British generals and politicians over what was to be done next in Mesopotamia. While the British and Indian troops were bogged down in the flood season, the Ottomans and Germans set about creating havoc in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Persia. The local Muslims, especially Shi'ites, responded well to the Sultan's call for Jihad. A German agent and Muslim convert, Wilhelm Wassmuss arrived in the region to foment further guerilla action against the British. Prior to his arrival, the Mosques in Mesopotamia, Persia, and Syria had all been used for preaching Jihad against the Allies. Wassmuss realized that this was the perfect environment in which to incite Jihad. He had been a member of the German-Turkish Expedition to Afghanistan, but had left to pursue his own role in the war effort. He traveled through Persia, telling Muslims that Kaiser Wilhelm was in fact a Muslim, had made the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, and was now known as Hajji Wilhelm Mohammed. Wassmuss sought to portray the Kaiser as the defender of the faithful and push Jihad. Wassmuss, and agents like him, swayed the Persians through deception. In order to recruit locals as agents, he rigged a fake telegraph system, allowing potential recruits to supposedly communicate with the Kaiser himself. Wassmuss made the deception all the more believable by having gifts (including portraits of the Kaiser) delivered to recruits' houses. Wassmuss later unsuccessfully led a force of local Tangistanis against a British garrison. Another agent convinced local Muslims that the entire nation of Germany had converted to Islam under the guidance of the Hajji Kaiser. That lie was meant to give local Muslims the incentive to work for the Germans, who supposedly spoke for



them. Adding to British woes, there was a force of over 1,000 Persian mercenaries working for the Central Powers in the region. The locals sabotaged several valuable British oil pipelines and frequently assassinated British and Russian officials. British banks and telegraph offices were repeatedly plundered. The pro-German, Swedish gendarmerie made no effort to stop the chaos. The deserters preferred to fight on the side of Islam rather than serve Christian imperialists. Many Indian and Sepoy soldiers deserted from the British army to join the Germans and Turks. The British, hoping to break the will of the local population, cut down the date palm trees (which were the locals' primary livelihood). Instead, it inspired more insurgency.

Meanwhile, in Constantinople, the Turkish leaders were looking for a way to expand the war and capture land. Enver Paşa decided in December to attack Russia. The Ottoman Empire had lost considerable territory in the Caucasus to Russia in previous wars. The Ottomans saw the new war as an opportunity to retake lost territory. The region was an ethnic hodgepodge of Turks, Russians, Kurds, Georgians, and Armenians. Enver's great ambition was to unite all Turkic peoples in a new empire. This pan-Turkic sentiment was not unusual, a Turkish professor wrote "for the Turks, the fatherland is neither Turkey nor Turkestan; their fatherland is a great and eternal land: Turan" (Strachan 109). Turan was a concept, not a reality. It would have been an empire of all Turkish peoples in central Asia. Many Turks were even willing to let the non-Turkish parts of the Empire go in favor of Turan. Turkish nationalism in many ways was slowly fracturing the Empire, and it inspired other nationalistic movements among Ottoman subjects like the Arabs. The existence of Turks in the disputed region would allow Enver to not only portray his army as liberators, but also as holy Jihadists, fighting for the cause of Islam. Enver decided on a campaign in which the Third Army would cross the Allahuekberd Mountains in winter and surround the Russians at Sarikamiş, despite German advisers' advice. German staff

Officer Felix Guse warned “in December, there are heavy falls of snow, which last three to seven days, and which leave behind snow one to two meters deep in the valleys and three to four meters deep on the mountains, totally blocking the many roads” (Strachan 110). Guse told Enver to take a series of short trips to reach his destination, rather than a long march. Enver refused to be swayed and personally took command of the expedition. Rather than proceed with caution, Enver preferred a speedy overland trek without rest to Sarikamiş. He planned to encircle the Russians on Christmas Day, 1914. Enver attempted to use Jihad to whip the Turks into a battle-frenzy. He proclaimed “300 million Muslims are sighing under their chains, and all our former fellow countrymen pray for our victory and success, happy is he who falls for religion and fatherland, forward, always forward for victory, fame, martyrdom and paradise” (Wallace 2004). At first, they were successful and drove the Russians back, but then the weather took a turn for the worse. The weather, climate, and terrain killed 25,000 Turks before they had a chance to engage the enemy (Wallace 2004).

The expedition was a travesty; the warmest temperature during the entire crossing was negative 30°C (Strachan 111). Enver’s soldiers had a shortage of boots and blankets. In some places the snow was so deep the officers told their men to leave their coats and packs behind, so that they could move easier in the snow. Enver’s words, “I see you are without shoes or coats, but the enemy is afraid of you,” did little to inspire the men (Wallace 2004). Köprülülü Şerif, an officer, wrote in his memoirs, “the snow was so deep, soldiers got lost at night, some tried to light fires, but many fell asleep never to wake again. We realized in the morning that half the division had frozen to death” (Wallace 2004). Many soldiers deserted. During the trek, they were periodically attacked by Armenians who had volunteered to help the Russians. As Orthodox Christians, the Armenians had long seen the Russians as their saviors and had no

desire to be controlled by the Turks again. The Ottoman Expedition ran out of supplies on Christmas, and the Russian armies trounced them. “Soldiers...would throw down their weapons and flee at the first encounter with the enemy; the army was no longer an organized force” (Akçam 198). Of the 118,660 (Erickson 57) troops in Enver’s army, between 60,000-90,000 were lost mostly due to the extreme cold and horrid weather (Akçam 125, Strachan 111). “The defeat extinguished their Turanist and Islamist dreams” (Akçam 125). They retreated in January 1915. The defeat had unforeseen and terrible results. Enver blamed an Armenian “treacherous deception, a conspiracy of murderous criminals, [against] our fighting units” (Akçam 125). Armenians were forced to march to concentration camps in the Syrian Desert, many died along the way. The Armenian Genocide claimed roughly one million people (Akçam 2). After Enver left the front lines, the Turks made progress against the Russians in the Caucasus. The Russians, alarmed by the renewed Ottoman attacks, insisted that the British and French take the pressure off, by opening another front against the Turks. Churchill used this plea to revive his Gallipoli idea.

The most important British possession in the Middle East was the Suez Canal. It provided Britain with a faster route to its colonies, especially India. It was a vital artery of the British Empire, and the Central Powers wanted it cut. The German Army did not have enough men to attack it themselves, so they asked the Ottomans to do it. If the Turks took the Suez Canal, the British Empire would be cut in half. They saw an opportunity to retake territory that had once been theirs. The chief planners were Turkish Minister of the Marine Djemal Paşa and German Lieutenant-Colonel Kress von Kressenstein. They faced several challenges. The only possible route to the canal was to cross the Sinai Desert. They needed to establish a reliable supply chain and sources of water across the desert. The Sinai has only a brief wet season,

lasting roughly two months, meaning that the expedition had to be rushed. They also needed to get across the canal and establish a strong beachhead. The expedition was to begin at Beersheba, and cross the Sinai with 25,000 men (firstworldwar.com). Djemal chose the city of Ismailia, a railway junction, as the target, with several diversionary attacks along the length of the canal. He and von Kressenstein counted on the Egyptians rebelling against the British once the Turks arrived. German engineers dug a series of wells across the Sinai desert in preparation for a long, 130 mile trek by the Ottoman Army. The British, also realizing the canal's strategic importance, sent 30,000 Indian troops to the Sinai, as well as a naval group, and a small air reconnaissance unit (firstworldwar.com). They knew Ismailia was an obvious target and planned accordingly. The Turks needed surprise for their gambit to pay off and often traveled at night. One Turkish officer, Cemal Paşa wrote in his diary "We marched at night and only by moonlight. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy, mingled with great hope of success at the sound of the song the red flag flies over Cairo, to the accompaniment of which the advancing battalions forged ahead over the endless waste of desert, feebly illuminated by the pale light of the waxing moon" (Wallace 2004). The Ottoman expedition lost the element of surprise when it was spotted by British aircraft three days before the assault.

Kressenstein's army arrived on the eastern side of the canal on the night of February 3, 1915 (Gilbert 128). The next day they attacked the British on the other side of the canal. Three pontoon bridges were erected to cross the canal and sixty Ottoman soldiers reached the other side. The battle then went horribly wrong. Kressenstein later wrote "a sentry noticed our attack and fired. The shots created panic. The English then blasted the banks with machine gun fire" (Wallace 2004). They were driven back by Indian infantry, British naval support, and fire from an armored train. They had sent 25,000 men across the Sinai, into Egypt, but failed to take the

canal. Their loss in the First Suez Offensive also meant that the Egyptians would not rise against the British. Two hundred Turks died in the battle and another seven hundred were captured (Gilbert 128). The Turks would never again try to take the Suez Canal, but their one attack on it in early 1915 tied up an exorbitant number of British military for future defense. The Turks retreated, exhausted and thirsty across the Sinai, back to Beersheba.

Meanwhile, the Russians continued pressuring the British to attack the Ottomans. The attack at Sarikamiş had spooked the Russians, and they were unable to break through into Turkey. They asked the British to open another front against the Turks, which could relieve pressure on the Eastern Front. War Secretary Kitchener was interested only if the Dardanelles were the primary target because “reports could be spread at that the same time that Constantinople was threatened” (Strachan 115). Churchill had been eager from the start to attack Constantinople. He knew that “it is no longer possible to force the Dardanelles, and nobody should expose a modern fleet to such peril” (Strachan 117). The only option was a naval landing of infantry. He continually pushed his case, that there “are alternatives [to] sending our armies to chew barbed wire in Flanders” (Gilbert 121). The idea began to spread through British leadership, which developed a desire to “bring Germany down by knocking the props from under her” (Gilbert 121). The British military success against the Dardanelles fortress the previous year led to a great deal of contempt for the Turks. The British knew that they were taking a great gamble because “there would be a grave risk of a reverse, which might have serious effect on the Mohammedan world” (Strachan 116). Regardless, the British saw enormous payoffs in the form of potential new colonies, and an early end to the war. On January 2, 1915, Kitchener told the Russians, “steps will be taken to make a demonstration against the Turks” (Gilbert 121).

The Gallipoli Campaign began with a naval assault on the Dardanelles on February 19, 1915 (Fewster 52). Churchill had spent months in political maneuvering to secure a campaign in the Dardanelles. For nearly a decade the British had believed that a strictly naval assault on the Dardanelles would be the most difficult way to attack Constantinople. Churchill impatiently decided to ignore the warnings. He ordered the naval commander in the Mediterranean to formulate a plan to ‘force the Narrows’ (the Narrows being the extremely narrow Dardanelles Strait). The Turks had substantially reinforced their already formidable defense of the narrows since the previous year. The Narrows were only 1.6 kilometers across and overlooked by cliffs, which boasted heavily armed fortresses. In addition to the forts, there were also extensive trench networks on the shore and several densely laid minefields throughout the strait. The British planned to first destroy the outer guns with long range naval artillery fire. Then the fleet could move into the Narrows and destroy the shore artillery batteries, while minesweepers would clear the minefields. The British then would be able to steam to Constantinople and knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war. The operation was a dismal failure. The minefields could not be cleared and the naval guns were not built for the trajectories necessary to hit the Turkish fortifications. British marines only managed to take the outermost fortresses, barely accomplishing one of the three necessary steps for British victory.

The Battle of the Dardanelles was renewed on March 18 (Fewster 53). With only the first stage of the British plan accomplished, Churchill ordered Admiral Carden to capture the Narrows. Carden, so consumed with stress, collapsed from “nervous exhaustion” (firstworldwar.com). He was replaced by Admiral de Robeck. Sixteen combined British and French battleships sailed into the Dardanelles, supported by many smaller warships. The attack was a critical failure, mostly due to a new minefield the Turks had placed ten days before. Five

allied ships were sunk and 700 Allied sailors died; a stunning victory for the Turks (Fewster 55).

Noted British journalist Henry Nevinson described the battle,

Most of the ships suffered, and as the *Bouvet* moved down channel with her companion ships, she was struck by three big shells in quick succession. The blows were immediately followed by a vast explosion. It is disputed whether this was due to a shell bursting in her magazine, or to a torpedo fired from the Asiatic coast, or, as the Admiralty report said, to a mine drifting down the current. In two or three minutes she sank in deep water just north of Erenkeui, carrying nearly the whole of her crew to the bottom. The cries of the men dragged down with her, or struggling in the water as they were swept downstream, sounded over the strait (*Source Records of the Great War, Vol. III*, ed. Charles F. Horne, *National Alumni* 1923).

Admiral de Robeck refused to continue the attack until the British dispatched infantry to seize the high ground over the Narrows. He defied his superiors, including Churchill. Churchill was fired for misuse of forces. The first Turkish defense of the straits and consequently Constantinople had been a complete success and they still had sufficient supplies to continue defending the Narrows. The British decided that it was time to send an expeditionary force to land on the Gallipoli Peninsula to capture the Narrows, which would allow the fleet to attack Constantinople.

The British were unable to spare men from the Western Front, so they decided to use Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, better known as ANZACs. The British concocted an ill conceived plan to land on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The British leadership expected the Turkish defenders to turn and run. The British did not plan for any contingencies for after the ANZAC landing. The Allies set the date for invasion at April 25, 1915; they faced 65,000 Ottoman defenders under General Liman von Sanders (Ornek 2005). They landed the under cover of darkness, but were confused and disorganized. They quickly overwhelmed a small Turkish patrol but were unable to advance because they had accidentally landed on a narrow beach, facing sheer cliffs. The survivors of the Turkish patrol escaped to raise the alarm. The

Turks were initially caught off guard because they had not expected anyone to be foolish enough to attack the daunting cliffs.

The British and French also landed forces further south, generally facing less resistance, with one exception. The key position of the battle was V Beach, defended only by one heavily entrenched Turkish battalion. One British survivor, Guy Nightingale later wrote, “As the boats approached the shore, snipers shot down the oarsmen and the boats then began to drift and machine gun fire was turned onto them. You could see the men dropping anywhere. Of the first boatload of forty men, only three reached the shore. The place was a regular deathtrap” (Ornak 2005). The Turks quickly repelled the attack on V Beach in fifteen minutes, the survivors huddled on the beach, pinned down. The British continued attempting to land troops, only to have their men slaughtered by the formidable Turkish defenses. Turkish Major Mahmud Savre wrote, “not one of our soldiers’ bullets was fired in vain, in fact, in many cases, one bullet counted for several of the enemy” (Ornak 2005). Three of every five men who landed were shot. The Turks fought effectively and ferociously, “ready to defend their homeland” (Fewster 61).

By early morning, 8,000 Australians had landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula (Ornek 2005). Both forces raced to seize strategic high ground. The Ottoman defensive line was led by two officers, one of which was wounded and forcibly evacuated, but not before ordering his soldiers to fight to the last man. They began to wither under Australian fire. One man recalled, “we were slowly being wiped out. Our firing line gradually disappeared, there were only forty to fifty rifles still firing the time had come to send a messenger to let them know we were all about to die here” (Ornek 2005). As the Ottoman lines were about to collapse, Lieutenant-Colonel Mustafa Kemal arrived with his reinforcements and took control of the Turkish defenses. Kemal



knew that failure meant the eventual loss of Constantinople and the war itself. He messaged his subordinate officers, “I don’t order you to fight, I order you to die” (Ornek 2005). To his own men he shouted, “You cannot run away from the enemy! If you have no ammunition you have your bayonets” (Fewster 67). His men rallied and drove the ANZAC forces back to the beaches. By the end of the day, 4,000 Turkish troops, led by Kemal, had defeated a force three times their size (Fewster 69). Both sides dug a trench system, and the Gallipoli Campaign began to look like the Western Front. Kemal, later known as Atatürk, had saved the day.

The British brought in reinforcements of French and Indians, while the Turks were reinforced from Constantinople. Both sides constantly and relentlessly attacked and counterattacked, gaining little ground in the process. The Ottoman troops often screamed ‘Allah, Allah’ as they attacked. They were fighting to drive the invading infidel from their homeland. British commanding officer Major General Hunter Weston sent repeated unsuccessful wave attacks against Turkish trenches. When other British officers took over, they continued the same pattern. In three days, the Turks had lost only a third of what the British forces lost. The British government, facing multiple fronts, was unable to properly reinforce and resupply the men at Gallipoli. The British press blamed the government for the fiasco. Despite the Turks’ successful defense, the mood in Constantinople was tense because the enemy was on their home soil, near the capital. A lieutenant, named Mustafa, wrote in Constantinople before he was sent to the front lines, “Most of those that went to Gallipoli were reported dead almost immediately, so those getting ready to leave, kissed and embraced their families with great affection. They showed their love and care for each other, probably for the last time. I kissed my mother the same way, and she cried constantly as I left her” (Ornek 2005).

Conditions in the trenches were horrendous for both sides. The rotting bodies in No Man's Land drew swarms of flies, which spread disease among the living, and dysentery became rampant. One Turk remarked "One of the things that disgusted us most, was the flies. My God, what annoying creatures. Thousands of flies attack the food on our forks while we tried to eat, we couldn't swat them away" (Ornek 2005). A German officer recalled, "The inside of the tent walls were black with them. Despite eating with care one would always get some flies into the mouth with every bite" (Fewster 94). The flies landing on soldiers' food had already landed on dead bodies and quickly spread disease, thousands died of illness. Men collapsed where they stood, some falling into makeshift latrines and drowning. During a ceasefire after a massive failed Turkish attack, both sides buried their dead, and then resumed fighting. During the ceasefire, both sides saw the effects of modern war and became aware of the enemy's humanity. The British nicknamed the Turks, Jacko and Johnny Turk, having gained respect for the defenders. Despite the fraternization, both sides were extremely brutal, and generally took no prisoners. Each side took roughly seventy prisoners throughout the entire campaign (Fewster 90). Both sides began subterranean warfare in addition to the fighting raging on the surface. Both sides dug tunnels across No Man's Land to explode mines underneath one another's trenches. A network of tunnels quickly grew throughout the peninsula, but little advance was made on either side. As summer dragged on, the ANZACs began facing water shortages. The Turks enjoyed much better conditions than the Allies. They had unlimited land for latrines, and many wells with fresh drinking water. The few Australian P.O.W.s noted "lived in the best of houses...we commenced living on bacon and eggs, sausages etc. Turkish soldiers treat us with respect and kindness" (Fewster 91). The Turkish morale was surprisingly high throughout the campaign. They remained in good spirits because they still managed to keep the homeland safe.

Few soldiers could write, but those that could wrote letters constantly. The Ottomans had special couriers who brought presents and medicine to soldiers from their home villages. The couriers brought news from soldiers' hometowns and messages from friends, family, and wives. This courier system had significant impact in creating high morale, a definite edge in battle.

In August, the British forces launched a massive attack. Australians made it into Turkish trenches, where underground hand to hand fighting ensued. In some places, the first line of Ottoman trenches was taken, but the Ottomans quickly pushed back, winning the day. The Battle of Lone Pine was the bloodiest battle of the Gallipoli Campaign. Several more pointless battles followed. Liman von Sanders left, leaving Mustafa Kemal the leader of the entire defense. Kemal repeatedly repulsed the Allies. He launched a nighttime attack against the British defenses at Chunuk Bair, killing 2,000 British soldiers (Ornek 2005). Kemal noted that when the Ottomans reached the high ground at Chunuk Bair the "the enemy unleashed hell on the hill with an intense naval and artillery bombardment. Chunuk Bair was completely covered with flames and smoke, everyone just waited for their end to come next. There were dead and wounded piled up all around us" (Ornek 2005). He managed to hold Chunuk Bair, and the Allies fell back.

With winter coming, and the press outraged, British politicians and generals debated whether to maintain their tenuous beachheads in Gallipoli, or evacuate the men. The press demanded the cessation of the Gallipoli Campaign. While the debate raged in London, a storm flooded the Allied trenches in Gallipoli and drowned countless soldiers. Snow began falling the next day. It was the beginning of the worst winter Turkey had had in decades. Thousands of Allied soldiers were evacuated because of frostbite. After six weeks of stalling, the British

government decided to pull the troops out of Gallipoli. The ANZACs were redeployed to Europe and Palestine. The Ottomans defeated an entire British campaign. The successful defense of the Dardanelles kept Russia cut off from Britain and France, and the lower flank of the Central Powers well defended and intact. The lack of support for the Russians led to continued decline in Russian morale and ability to wage war. Later, the ill equipped and war-weary Russians would sue for peace, a major coup for the Central Powers. The Ottomans contributed to the Russian Revolution by defeating the British and continuing strangling the Russian war effort. Meanwhile, in the Caucasus campaign, the Ottomans were holding their own against Russian attacks in Malazgirt, in the Van Region. The success at Gallipoli, thanks largely to Mustafa Kemal's leadership, proved to the British that the Ottoman Empire was a force to reckon with, and a strong ally of Germany. The Ottomans, despite previous setbacks, were clearly holding up their end of the Central Powers' war effort.

In Mesopotamia, the British were facing a serious crisis at Kut. Until this point, the Anglo-Indian force had met with wild successes throughout 1915. The constant victories masked the extreme problems facing the British and Indian attackers. The British force faced drought, flooding, disease, mirages, and hostile tribesmen. Their supply lines were stretched beyond the brink, resulting in constant thirst. Sir John Nixon had taken control of the Mesopotamian Campaign, and like his predecessors, was unhappy with British High Command's strategy of limited engagement. Since the troops were Indians, the Indian government had more clout in deciding strategy. Nixon and the Indian leadership wanted to wage a highly aggressive war against the Ottomans, for whom they had little respect. Throughout 1915, while the Ottomans held the British back at Gallipoli, the British were constantly gaining ground in Mesopotamia. The constant success in places like Shaiba, Amara, and Nasiriyeh made the

British and Indians overconfident. They continued deeper into the region, taking the fortress at Kut-al-Amara. Nixon then set his sights on Baghdad.

After losing the fortress at Kut, the Ottomans retreated to Ctesiphon, where they were heavily entrenched to defend Baghdad. Nixon and the Indian government wanted Baghdad. The city had little strategic significance except as a trophy. As one of the Four Holy Cities of Islam, capturing Baghdad would be a major coup for the British, and demoralizing for the Ottomans. Nixon ordered General Townshend to move north and continue engaging the Turks, and to take Baghdad. Townshend, feeling the British were spread too thin, protested, but to no avail. He advanced north with the aid of naval forces. Hoping to catch the Ottomans by surprise as he had in the past, Townshend ordered a night march. His troops became lost and disorganized, losing the element of surprise. The Ottomans had extensive shore batteries and minefields in the river, which kept the British gunboat from supporting the infantry. Both sides suffered heavy losses, but the Turkish commander, Nur-Ud-Din advanced on the British. Nur-Ud-Din had a steady supply of reserve forces from Baghdad. When Townshend's reconnaissance aircraft reported the Ottoman advance, he retreated. His forces were harassed the entire way back to Kut by both Turks and marsh Arabs, unfriendly, non-aligned local tribes. The British Naval craft used in the attack on Ctesiphon were all sunk by shore batteries and mines. The Ottomans had turned back the British by December 3, 1915, just as the British were preparing to abandon Gallipoli. Despite heavy losses in Mesopotamia, the Ottomans finally had the upper hand on the British and Indian forces. The situation facing the retreating British was grisly. British Major Carter wrote:

I was standing on the bridge in the evening when the Medjidieh arrived. She had two steel barges, without any protection from against the rain as far as I remember. As this ship, with two

barges, came up, I saw that she was absolutely packed, and the barges, too with men...it looked as if she were festooned with ropes. The stench when she was close was quite definite, and I found that what I mistook for ropes were dried stalactites of human feces. The patients were so huddled and crowded together on the ship...Then we found a mass of men huddled up anyhow—some with blankets and some without. They were lying in a pool of dysentery. [One] man had a fractured thigh and his thigh was perforated in five or six places. He had apparently been writhing about on the deck of the ship. Many cases were almost as bad...I found men with their limbs splinted with wood strips from 'Johnny Walker' whisky boxes (Wilcox 69).

The British forces had overextended themselves past the breaking point. The Turks seized the opportunity, and counterattacked.

The British barricaded themselves inside the fortress at Kut, hoping to hold the vital location and wait for reinforcements. Townshend had 25,000 men to defend Kut against 80,000 Ottoman Turks (Gilbert 213). The British War Cabinet messaged Townshend, telling him to retreat, but due to the delay in communications, Townshend was already under siege when he received the message. The Ottoman forces were led by German Field Marshall Colmar von der Goltz. In his seventies, von der Goltz had a terse relationship with the Young Turks, hence his posting in backwater Mesopotamia. His job as Enver had told him was “to prepare for an independent war against India” (Strachan 125) and keep the route open from Constantinople to Afghanistan and Persia. The Germans and Ottomans still hoped to incite Jihad in India and Afghanistan against the British. Fearing a loss of Kut and hold of all of Mesopotamia, the British were desperate to save Townshend’s forces. There were several relief missions sent by the British to save Kut; the four attempts resulted in 23,000 casualties for the British (Strachan 125). The Russians also sent an army south to link up with the British and sever the Ottomans in Mesopotamia, but were stopped by Khalil Paşa’s army.

The siege lasted for 145 days from December 5, 1915 to April 29, 1916 (Gilbert 213). There was constant skirmishing between both sides, as well as Turkish battles with British relief

forces. Disease, starvation and thirst became endemic in the British camp. Men who fell wounded between the lines remained there until they bled to death or died of thirst. When the food ran out, they butchered the horses for food. The Ottoman army managed to destroy all British attempts to relieve Kut. On April 29, 1916, Townshend surrendered the remaining 13,000 British troops to the Ottomans (Strachan 125). Most of the captured troops died in marches to Prisoner of War Camps. Von der Goltz died of typhus ten days before the surrender, although some rumors abounded that he was poisoned by the Young Turks who disliked him for political reasons. The surrender at Kut was the worst military defeat in the history of the British Military, worse than the Surrender at Yorktown in 1781, and it had been dealt to them by the Ottoman Empire.

The Turks had driven back two major British campaigns, tied down an inordinate number of resources by threatening the Suez Canal, and performed well against the Russians. The year 1915 had seen two more fronts added to the Turkish war effort; the Sinai/Palestinian and Gallipoli. By the early months of 1916, the Ottomans had been fighting the war on four fronts, and due to Enver's reforms, they performed spectacularly. "The British badly needed a victory *somewhere* in the world...Gallipoli was a hideous stalemate and there had been a singular lack of success in Mesopotamia" (Farwell 256). The Ottoman Empire denied them that victory. "The 'Sick Man of Europe,' was giving the British major problems in Gallipoli and Palestine. Germany's three allies were more than holding up their end of the table" (Mosier 193). By holding her own, the Empire was tying down Allied armies on four fronts and protecting the right flank of the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The Allies had dismissed the Empire as a "Sick Man," and yet had met only with crushing defeat. In the early years of the First World

War, the Ottoman Empire made a significant contribute to the Central Powers' war effort, and proved more than a match for the Allies.



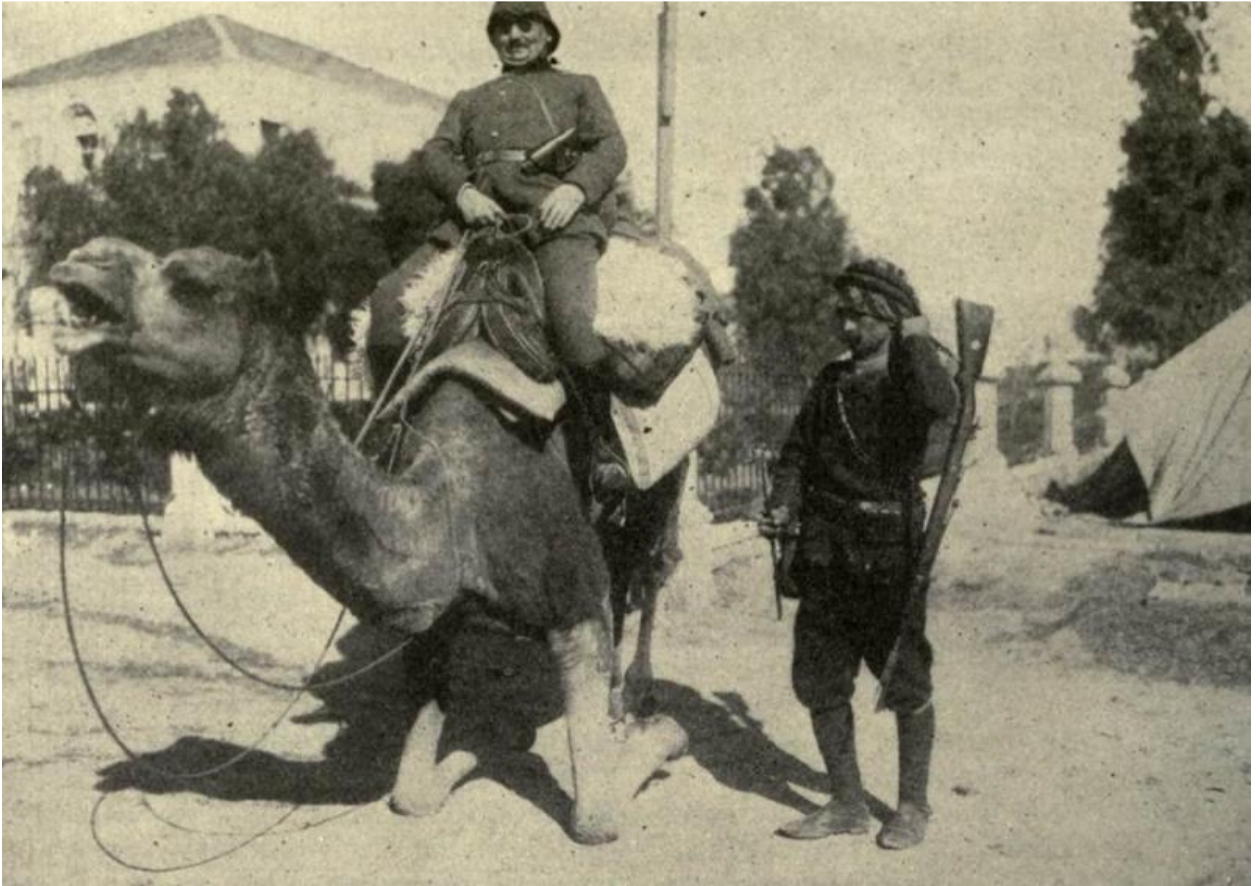
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Appendix:



A German officer and Turkish soldier in the field.



A British political cartoon, showing the fat, blind Turk, being led into trouble by a German Dachshund.



German propaganda, showing the leaders of each nation as united emperors.





Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at Gallipoli.





Mustafa Kemal Atatürk



Enver Paşa, the de facto dictator of the Ottoman Empire.



Ottoman soldiers marching in the desert.



ANZAC cove landing.



ANZAC wounded being evacuated.



Typical terrain on the Gallipoli Peninsula.



A Turkish medal, commemorating service at Gallipoli.