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THE MOSUL STRATEGY OF LORD CURZON

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Abstract

When Mosul was occupied by British forces ten days after the Mudros Armistice was signed on November 30, 1918, Turkish Forces couldnt resist this unfair occupation since the armistice was signed Mosul was still under the control of Turkish Ottoman Army. Afterwards, Turkish army was busy with the National War of Liberation in Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal Pasha addressed that Mosul was the part of Turkish Republic according to National Pact. After winning the independence war, Turkey was determined to solve the problem for the sake of their own interest as the Great Britain was very stubborn to hold Mosul as a part of Iraq state which was the mandate of Great Britain. From this point, Turkey and Great Britain handled the issues from the view of own interests and followed very strategic diplomacy prior to and during the Lasuanne Peace Conference. The head of the delegation of Turkey, İsmet Pasha presented some thesis about Mosul and the head of delegation of Great Britain, Lord Curzon responded İsmet Pasha's thesis with the counter thesis. In this study, I am going to handle Lord Curzon's thesis which come from British documents that was handled in Cabinet and the memorandum which was presented by Colonial Office, Middle East Department and Air Ministry who were the responsible for the defence of Iraq about Mosul question.

Key Words: Mosul, Britanya, Curzon, İsmet Pasha, Lozan Peace Conference.

Lord Curzon'un Musul Stratejisi

Öz

Musul Mondros ateşkes antlaşmasının 30 Ekim 1918 tarihinde imzalanmasından tam 10 gün sonra İngilizler tarafından işgal edilmişti. Antlaşmanın imzalandığı tarihte Musul halen Osmanlı ordusunun kontrolünde olmasına

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karşın, Türk kuvvetleri bu haksız işgale direnememişti. Daha sonra Türk ordusu uzun bir süre kurtuluş savaşı için mücadele vermiş, Mustafa Kemal Paşa Misak-ı Milli'ye atfen Musul'un Türkiye'nin bir parçası olduğunu söylemişti. Kurtuluş savaşının kazanılmasından sonra, Türkiye problemi kendi lehine çözmek konusunda kararlığını göstermesinin yanın, İngiltere'de mandaterliğini yaptığı Irak'ın bir parçası olarak gördüğü Musul'u tutma konusunda inataçtı. Bu noktadan sonra, Türkiye ve İngiltere konuyu kendi açılarından ele alarak Lozan barış görüşmeleri öncesinde ve esnasında çok stratejik bir diplomasi izlemişlerdir. Barış görüşmelerinde Türk delegasyonu başkanı İsmet Paşa Türk tezini ortaya koymuş, İngiltere delegasyonu başkanı Lord Curzon İsmet Paşa'nın tezine karşı karşı tezler öne sürmüştür. Bu çalışmada, Lord Curzon'un Lozan Barış görüşmeleri öncesinde ve esnasında izlediği tezine dayank noktası oluşturan Kabine görüşmeleri ve Kabineye Sömürgeler Ofisi, Orta Doğu Departmanı ve o dönem Irak'ın savunulmasından sorumlu Sömürgeler Ofisinin sunduğu memorandumlardan hareketle, Lord Curzon'un Musul stratejisinin üzerinde durulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Musul, İngiltere, Curzon, İsmet Paşa, Lozan Barış Konferansı.

Introduction

First World War ended up with the victory of Allied Powers and then firstly signing Armistices, later peace agreements came to the point. The provisions which were required by the Ottomans to finish the war were;

1. The Turks would have owned a independent state
2. İstanbul would have been left to Ottoman Empire
3. Ottoman Empire would have been supported financially
4. The capitulations would have been abolished¹.

Against these claims, The British requested;

1. Sea traffic would have been allowed to all nations in Istanbul and Dardanelle Straits.
2. Mesopotamia (Baghdad and Basra provinces), Arabia and Armenians would have been given to autonomy.
3. Palestine and Syria would have been independent states.

As opposed to these requests of the Britain, The Turks didnt intend to give Mosul in which had rich oil fields to Britain. As a matter of fact, share of the lands of Ottoman was started at the beginning of 19 century by the western states. With the begining of the war, these divisions were ratified by the secret agreements².

¹ David Fromkin, **Barışa Son Veren Barış**, Ppsilon Pbl., İstanbul, 2004, p.331.

² Rifat Uçarol, **Siyasi Tarih (1789-2014)**, DER Pbl., İstanbul 2015, p.801.

Surprisingly, The Turks defended the Dardanelles unprecedentedly in history and the strategy of allied powers collapsed. This defeat resulted in lasting the war two years more and so, the delays of arriving the supports to Russians, which upset the balance of war. All these events and the domestic problems in Russia triggered the outbreak of revolution. It was called "Bolshevik" revolution and thus, Czarist Russia retreated from the war. After this revolution, the Bolsheviks revealed all the secret agreements which were made by Czarist Russia³.

These agreements were subject to sharing Ottomans;

1. First of the agreements was Istanbul agreement which were signed firstly between Czarist Russia and The Great Britain in 12 March 1915. With this agreement, Russian's requests on straits and the demands of lands for East Anatolia were accepted by Britain.

2. Second one was signed between France, Great Britain in 10 April 1920 which was called Istanbul agreement.

3. Third one was signed between France, Great Britain and Italy in 26 April 1915. It was called London Agreement and it was accepted to look after Italy's interests and give dodacanese and determined lands in Asia Minor to Italy.

4. Fourth one was Sykes Picot Agreement which was signed between Great Britain and France in October 1916. According to this agreement, France would have owned Syria and North Iraq including Mosul while Great Britain would have owned the territory between Palestine and Iran.

5. When Italy learned Sykes-Picot agreement, she requested to review the privileges that she have gained via London agreement. Thus, with the agreement which was made in San Jeanne De Maurine in 19 April, Antalya, Aydın, Konya and İzmir provinces were promised to Italy⁴.

Ottoman was left from First World War as defeated and she had to sign Moudros armistice which had very aggravated circumstances for Ottoman Empires. In fact This armistice was the implementation of the partitions which was mentioned above. Moudros Armistice indeed was a document of manifestation of annihilation of Ottoman Empire⁵. British troops had been 30 km south of Mosul when the armistice was signed. After then They acted to capture Mosul very rapidly⁶. British wanted to prevail the region against the Turks. Although According to Sykes-Picot Agreement, The Great Britain even had promised to leave Mosul to France. In fact Britain didnt intend to do this. Mosul had vital impor-

³ Uçarol, *Ibid.*, p.805.

⁴ Ayhan Aydın, *Musul Meselesi (1900-1926)*, Turan Pbl., İstanbul 1995, pp. 22-24.

⁵Resul YAVUZ, *Mondros Ateşkes Antlaşması'ndan Sevr Barış Antlaşması'na Giden Süreçte Türk Diplomasisi*, Atatürk İlke ve İnkılapları Enstitüsü, (Dokuz Eylül University Unpublished Doctorate Thesis), İzmir 2016, p.130.

⁶ Aydın, *Ibid.*, p.26.

tance in view of petroleum and the frontiers of Syria- Iraq and mandatory agreements must have been made due to regarding Mosul. Mosul and Palestine had been very important issues for British which must have been agreed with French⁷.

Lausanne Conference opened on 20 November 1922. Initially, Mosul, Turkey and Iraq frontier issues had been outside the agenda of conference. It was just discussed mutually. Looking for a solution maintained with the bilateral negotiations until 23 January 1923, but no result was gained. Mosul question was handled in the session of the State and Military Commission on 23 January 1923. In this session, Ismet Pasha explained the reasons for which Turkey didnt want to give Mosul to another state's rule in terms of ethnic, politic, history, military and economic and also he tried to bring forward the inadequacies of the thesis of Britain for Mosul. Lord Curzon opposed to Ismet Pasha's thesis completely and he preferred the solution which would be given by the decision of League of Nations. In this sense Curzon's and Britain's strategy worked and Mosul was left to Iraq under the mandate of Great Britain. In this study, I will handle the sequence of events and the strategies which were followed by Lord Curzon about Mosul question before and during to Lausanne Conference.

1. Begining of Mosul Question

As Ottoman Empire signed the Moudros Armistice, British Forces were deployed to 30 km far from the South of Mosul. They immediately took action to capture this city, which had rich oil fields and fertile lands. In spite of the fact that Mosul had been allocated to France according to Sykes Picot Agreement which enabled to share Middle East between Britain and France but Britain broke her promise by bringing forward the idea of the changes of conditions in the region. The main factors which pushed Britain to follow this politics at the cost of annoyance to her allied French were the common ideas of prominent intelligence officers and the civil commisarars who were like T.E Lawrence ve A.T Wilson thinking Mosul couldnt have been as valuable as shared and left to another state. In this direction, General Marshall who was the commader of regiments in Basra started to occupy strategic points in Mosul. Moreover, Ali İhsan Pasha tried to hamper this occupation. British put forward to apply Moudros Armistice, article 7, in order to capture the region in a short span of time. They claimed that Turks would have created pressure on the Armenians living in Mosul and that would have made them left the city. General Marshall even didnt stop himself to complain Ali İhsan to Istanbul about this subject. Britain's aims

⁷ Martin William Gibson, **British Strategy and Oil (1919-1923)** Unpublished Doctorate Thesis in Glasgow University, 2012, p.138.

were not to lose the advantages that they owned in the current situation in case that Peace settlement last long and the upset the balance of the states.

As opposed to British claims about Moudros armistice, article 7, Ali Ihsan Pasha emphasized that since Moudros Armistice was signed at 31 October, it wasnt involved in Mosul. Therefore, Ali Ihsan Pasha offered that the region which was left between two sides as neutral zone⁸. In 7 November, General Marshall requested from Ali Ihsan Pasha to retreat Turkish troops from Mosul untill 15 November, otherwise, he expressed that he wouldnt have been responsible for the approaching conflicts and bloodshed. Ultimately, Turkish troops began to retreat from Mosul on 8 November and same day, Bristish flag was raised on government Office in Mosul. Evacuation of the city and province at 15 November, 6 December were completed respectively. Throughout the occupation of Mosul, it was a big role that Ali Ihsan Pasha holded the big part of his troops in "Geyyare region" under the name of Tigris Grup for which Mosul couldnt be defended. Ali İhsan Pasha rented a german war pilot by giving amount of money and gold to make communication between Dicle Group and Geyyare Region and he requested the pilot to convey the order to the group. German pilot said that he accomplished the mission but he didnt release the order from air and therefore, Pasha couldnt retreat the group. If the group had been retreated since the armistice signing would have been made after a couple of days, It would have been possible to defend Mosul Mustafa Kemal Paşa accused of Ali Ihsan Pasha by showing the reason, whic was a report that had been sent by Ali Ihsan Pasha's aid-de-camp lieutenant colonel Halit Bey on 22 January 1922. M.Kemal Pasha emphasized in his accusation " *Hereby, If the instruction which was retreating to Geyyare region was given to group, British would neither have captured the group nor defeated them*⁹.

2. The Evaluation of Colonial Office, Middle East Department About Mosul

In 11 November 1922, Britain Colonial Office Middle East Department informed the Britain Cabinet for the forthcoming peace conference about Mosul, it was stated that " *I circulate to my colleagues a note prepared in the Middle East Department on the question of Mosul. In view of the forthcoming peace conference, it is essential that we should decide without delay upon the policy to be adopted.*" Colonial Office explained the importance of Mosul and this explanation was also benefited from Lord Curzon as main strategy for Mosul throughout Lausanne Peace Conference. Later on the report was that " *Recent telegram from Paris make it quite clear, if indeed there was ever any doubt, that the Turks intend to demand the restoration*

⁸ F. Şayan Şahin, "Musul'un İşgali ve Ali İhsan Paşa", **Türk Kültürü Dergisi**, İstanbul, 2014, No: 402, p. 596.

⁹ Şahin, **Ibid.**, p. 598.

of Mosul (Which has always figured in the "National Pact") as part of peace settlement . It has therefore become a matter of immediate urgency that His Majesty's Government should decide what attitude they are to adopt towards this demand"¹⁰

"... It is not altogether clear whether the Turkish demand refers only to the town of Mosul or the whole of the Mosul Vilayet of pre-war days. Probably the latter is meant. Geographically, Mosul towns lies near the northern limit of the vilayet, and no doubt a boundary line could be found separating it from the distiricts further South. But, politically, this would scarcely be practicable. Mosul itself is a prodominantly Arab Town. The plains country is also Arab. On the other hand, the hill country to the east is entirely Kurdish, while along the foothills runs a line of towns (Erbil, Kirkuk, Kifri) whose population is almost entirely Turcoman (speaking a dialect of Turkish) All these towns lie South of Mosul, the last named (Kifri) being only some 50 miles from the northern border of the Baghdad vilayet and less than 150 miles from Baghdad itself. It is certain that, if the Arab town of Mosul goes back to the Turks, the permanent retention of the Turcomon towns further South will be quite impracticable. In other words, if the town of Mosul goes, the whole vilayet goes, and we shall have the Turks with in easy distance of capital of Iraq"¹¹.

"...It is understood that the Air Ministry (Who were then responsible for the defence of Iraq) consider that this position would be untenable on strategic grounds, and that if Mosul passes to the Turks, it will be impossible to hold Baghdad"¹².

As it is clearly understood that Air Ministry recommended to Britain Cabinet to make as much as anything to hold Mosul for the sake of securing Baghdad for forthcoming peace conference. It was evaluated by Colonial Office, Mosul was a strategic point in which is not only for the point of having oil field and fertile lands but also for securing whole of Iraq. Sir Percy Cox's report which was sent 27 October 1922 and his thoughts about the subject was also taken part in the report that "... From the political point of view, "he said, "the contingency of our spontenously restoring Mosul to the Turks has always been regarded by me as an unthinkable act of bad faith, and it would be so regarded by Feisal and the people of Iraq, especially now that the treaty of Alliance has been signed"¹³

Sir Percy Cox thought that Britain signed a allince agreement with Feisal and this aggrement was the continuation of the aggrement which was made with Sherif Husein and the Arab World, he also emphasized that if Great Britain didnt become dominant about Mosul, the whole Arab community could be disappointed with Britain because so far Britain made good efforts to make Iraq

¹⁰ C.P., No: 4303, 11 st Nov 1922: Cabinet Paper, Doc. No: 4303, p.1.

¹¹ C.P., No: 4303, p.3., 11 st Nov 1922.

¹² C.P., No: 4303, p.4., 11 st Nov 1922.

¹³ C.P., No: 4303, p.4., 11 st Nov 1922.

community to accept the authority of Feisal, the details of his evaluation in the report was that;

“...it is not easy to dispute Sir Percy Cox’s view. The whole of the Mosul vilayet lies with the area within which, in the course of the rather inconclusive correspondence with King Hussein in 1915, We undertook “to recognize and the support the independence of the Arabs.” It has been administered as a part of Iraq since the end of the war. On Feisal’s electin to Iraq throne. We allowed him to visit Mosul as King and to receive the alegiance of the inhabitants. His reception there was enthusiastic. With in the last few weeks we hava concluded a treaty with Iraq State, which, if it made no spesific mention of Mosul, was clearly understood by both contracting parties to apply to the whole area at present administered from Baghdad. To lop off a large portion of his Kingdom would be a fatal blow to Feisal’s prestige. It is a blow from which we could hardly expect him to recover. It must always be remembered that, though Feisal has done much to make good at Baghdad, he is not a native of a country, has ruled over it for less than a year and a half, and has had a desperately short time in which to foster and develop very fragile plant of Iraq nationality. His subjects consist not only of comparatively civilised townspeople, but of turbulent tribesmen living on the confines of the desert and unaccustomed to obey any central authority or to respect any laws but their own. Feisal has prevailed so far because he has enjoyed our support. If we withdraw our support, or if we flout him in the face of the world by giving away Mosul, the whole structure will inevitably collapse. Retirement from Mosul would be universally regarded as a prelude retirement from Baghdad. The Iraqis would conclude that the British connection was about to disappear, and woud hasten to make terms with the Turks while there was yet time¹⁴.”

Up to now, situation was handled from the view of political and strategic aspects, the evaluations were going on with economic and wealthy aspects in the report that

“ ...Apart from these considerations, the severance of Mosul would be a serious economic loss to the Iraq State. The vilayet contains some of the most fertile land and practically the whole of the wheat-growing area in the country. It also contains oil-bearing districts essential to the general development of the Iraq oil fields, upon which the future prosperity of the country so largely depends. Further, the population of the vilayet contains a large Christian element numbering nearly 60.000 in all. These people, it maybe taken for granted, would not stay behind to be massacred by the Turks, but would follow the British line of withdrawal and add to other difficulties the problem of a large body of indigent refugees. The Mosul Christian include a section that has very special claim upon us, viz., some 20.000 “Assyrians” who were expelled from their homes during the war as a consequence of taking the Allied side, and have been living in Iraq ever since. The Archbishop of Canterbury takes a special interest in these people. Arrangements were made last year, with an infinity of trouble, for establishing the Assyrians on a self-supporting basis in the neighbourhood of Amadiyah.

¹⁴ C.P., No: 4303, p.4., 11 st Nov 1922.

Large numbers of them serve in Iraq levies, where they are doing very well. They certainly will not stay behind and trust themselves to the tender mercies of the Turk¹⁵.”

It can be easily understood that Great Britain's Mosul strategy were affiliated to the whole Iraq policy of her. They took the issue into consideration from the large aspects and especially they handled the issue from the prestige of Great Britain and their efforts of maintaining their status quo in Iraq, British Administration was aware of the ethnic diversity in Iraq. This diversity brought about some troubles which they had to manage and they experienced this trouble with the rebellion in 1920¹⁶. Their thesis was to maintain their status quo was to support the Feisal and if Great Britain had given up Mosul, They would have lost their prestige in the world and they would also have damaged the prestige of Feisal. They acclaimed if the Mosul had abandoned they would have been accepted to leave Iraq and the victory of Turks. In the continuation of the report, Middle East Department intensely were trying to persuade the Cabinet not to leave Mosul to Turks with using very interesting examples and evaluations that;

“...The point that it is desired to make is not only that an immediate decision is necessary with regard to Mosul, but that this decision really involves the question of maintaining our position in Iraq as a whole. Our policy in Iraq has been severely criticised in many quarters. It is, of course, arguable that we had better never gone there, and that having gone there we should seize the first opportunity to getting away. But, even if that argument is accepted, the opportunity must at least be one that enables us to leave with some degree of credit and dignity. To leave now, at the dictation of the victorious Kemalists, a few weeks after parading before the world (in the form of our treaty with Feisal) our determination to stay, would be an act of pusillanimity quite alien to British Traditions. It would reduce our prestige in the East beyond vanishing point, and would delight our enemies and humiliate our friends all over the world. It is a lesser consideration, but still one of force, that we should sacrifice all prospect of securing a return on the very large sums that we have spent upon the country¹⁷.”

In that report Middle East Department emphasized that Most of the population of Mosul was Arab. They called Mosul “Arab town” They evaluated that Mosul couldnt be seperated from Baghdad from the view of economic and ethnic.

“... Vis-a-vis the Turks we must take our stand on the general ground that Mosul itself is and always has been a mainly Arab town; that the low-lying parts of the vilayet are also Arab, while the country to the east and south east, which

¹⁵ C.P., No: 4303, p.4., 11 st Nov 1922.

¹⁶ Mim Kemal Öke, *Musul Meselesi Kronolojisi (1918-1926)*, (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı,1991), p.10.

¹⁷ C.P., No: 4303, p. 4., 11 st Nov 1922.

contains other elements, finds it economic outlet in Baghdad and could not be seperated from the adjoining territory without serious disadvantage to itself. It might be possible also to argue that, in view of their policy of removing all Christians from Asia minor, The Turks cannot reasonably claim an area in which there is a large Christian population; nor can we, in the light of recent experince, leave that population at their mercy. A further argument, for what is worth, is that, when sir Arnold Wilson's¹⁸ plebiscite was taken in 1919, the whole country was agreed that, whatever form of government might be set up in Iraq (as to which there was a wide divergence of opinion), Mosul should not be seperated from the remainder of Iraq¹⁹

Untill here, Middle East Department mainly focused on Mosul issue and recommended to the Cabinet the importance of Mosul in view of whole Iraq strategy, later they also advised if Turks put some thesis and acquisitions which contain violance of Moudros Armistice, How British delegation would respond that kinds of accusations, British Officers were very aware of having violated armistice and they prepared their defence in case The Turks put forward the issue, the thesis of them were in the report that *"....One argument likely to be advanced by the Turks is that Mosul was in their occupation at the time of the armistice of 1918. The facts are that, at the moment the armistice was signed, active hostilities were in the progress not for South of Mosul. The British force, having defeated the Turks, was advancing upon the town; but the actual occupation did not take place untill a few days after the armistice was signed. Under the terms of armistice the status quo was to be maintained, further advance of our troops being permissible only in so far as it might be necessary for the purpose of safeguarding our existing military position. The Turks may therefore argue that, while the occupation of the town may have been justified, its retention is not. As against this argument it would be possible to produce instances in which the Turks themselves have violated to armistice terms, particularly in Southern Kurdistan. But the better answer appears to be general one that conditions have changed since 1918; that an independent Arab State has been set up, of which Mosul forms an integral part; and that it would be impossible to disturb this arrangement without gross injustice to the people concerned*²⁰.

The other concern which The Department focused on if the Turks acclaim the compensation from Britain in response to renounce their claims, What would Great Britain response that kinds of claims were that *".... In any case it is a good*

¹⁸ Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson was the leader of the civil administration in Baghdad, the First Civil Commissioner of the newly created colony of Iraq. An Army officer from India, and previously the deputy to the British Political Officer to the region during the First World War, Wilson was very familiar with the issues facing the Empire in the region. He strongly argued that the three provinces of Iraq were too different to be united under one flag and felt that the Kurds would never accept Arab rule. Prime Minster Lloyd George's enthusiasm to retain Iraq as a single colony contradicted Wilson's concerns about uniting the provinces, and forced him to establish British administrative control over the three provinces. Brian P. Sharp, **British Colonization of Iraq, 1918-1932**, Virginia University, Virginia, 2008, pp. 38-43.

¹⁹ C.P., No: 4303, p.4., 11 st Nov 1922.

²⁰ C.P., No: 4303, p.4., 11 st Nov 1922.

argument that Mosul belongs, not to Great Britain, but to the Iraq State and that we are not bound to compensate Turkey for not giving her what is not ours to give²¹. "

The department led the cabinet to make equivoque if Turks demand any compensation in case they renounce their claims sappily. At the same time they also directed the cabinet what Iraq State offer against to possible Turkish claims;

1. The Turks might be offered participation in the oil development of Iraq.
2. Turkish subject might be treated in Iraq as foreigners with special priveleges, provided that capitulatory rights are extended to Iraqis in Turkey.
3. The Iraq Government might undertake to recognize the spiritual suzerainty of Caliph.
4. King Feisal might agree, under article 5 of the recent treaty, to receive a Turkish envoy at Baghdad and to send his own represantitive to Constantinople²².

At the end of the report, British interests were summarized with the suggestions of Colonial Office official that;

"... None of these suggetions is free from objection. In particular the admission of the Turkish ineterests into our oil projects would further complicate an already complicated question, and would increase the difficulty that is already being experienced in securing an equitable division of interest between the various parties concerned. Any amount allotted to tyhe Turks would presumably have to be taken in the main from the British share. As to the other points, the future both of the Caliphate and of the Capitulations is still uncertain, and it is presumed that His Majesty's Government intend to take a firm attitude with regard to the latter. The point for immediate decision is whether we are to insist at all costs on the retention of Mosul and, consequentially, on the maintenance of our position in Iraq²³.

3. The Great Britain analysed every possibilities of losing Mosul

That report which was mentioned below became the milestone of Great Britain about Mosul strategy in Lausanne Conference which was presented to Cabinet as a memorandum and the other memorandum which was presented in 16 November 1922 by Air Ministry who was the responsible for the defence of Iraq. The subject of the memorandum was political aspects of possibility of evacuation and restoration of Mosul to Turks. Air Ministry considered that This idea couldnt be untenable and if Mosul passes to the Turks, it would mean leaving Baghdad²⁴. Evacuation possibility of Mosul was evaluated in the report that;

²¹ C.P., No: 4303, p.4., 11 st Nov 1922.

²² C.P., No: 4303, p.5., 11 st Nov 1922.

²³ C.P., No: 4303, p.6., 11 st Nov 1922.

²⁴ C.P., No: 4309, p.1., 16 th Nov 1922.

"... 1. The withdrawal from Mosul could be effected without immediate risk of military disaster as the garrison is small and the full power of the air squadrons at Baghdad would be available to cover the movement.

2. The Military situation would be unfavourably affected through the unrest and the lack of confidence thereby created in the country generally. The withdrawal would have to be carried out by stages beginning with the withdrawal of the posts north of Mosul held by levies. In view of the nature of the Turkish demands and the manner in which they are put forward, the withdrawal will be taken through the length and the breadth of Iraq as a sign of weakness and proof of indecision on the whole policy of occupation.

3. The Military problem will be complicated by the large number of Christian refugees who, as the Colonial Office point out, would come on our hands if the Mosul vilayet is given back to Turks"²⁵.

4. Lord Curzon shaped his strategy which was followed in Lausanne Peace Conference

Untill now, it is understood from British documents which were given to Cabinet by Colonial Office, Air Ministry. Mosul was considered as indispensable red line in view of political, strategical and economical aspects for Great Britain and all these evaluations from the officials mentioned below were consisted of Curzon's Mosul strategy in Lausanne Conference.

Mosul issue was discussed before having handled in Lausanne Conference. First, Turkish and British Delegates had been talked mutually. İsmet Pasha also sent a letter to Lord Curzon, in his letter, İsmet Pasha emphasized the importance of Mosul for Turks and he handled the issue from the view of ethnographic, historical, political, economical and National Pact. But Lord Curzon severely opposed to İsmet Pasha's thesis with the letter which was sent to İsmet Pasha on 26 December 1922. In his letter he sequenced his thesis in various captions²⁶. The remarkable points of his letter that

"...Dear İsmet Pasha, I have given careful study to the detailed statement which you sent me on the 23rd December with regard to the Mosul Vilayet; and I must be permitted to say that while the greater part of the arguments contained in my memorandum of the 14th December remain- even after your prolonged examination of them- untouched and unanswered, the reasons which you now adduce, and which I should be quite willing to submit to the public judgement, do but confirm my opinion that no case whatever can be made out- even on the grounds which have been selected by your Excellency- for the surrender by the British Government of the Mosul Vilayet²⁷.

²⁵ C.P., No: 4309, p.1., 16 th Nov 1922.

²⁶ Ayhan Aydın, *Ibid.*, Turan Pbl., İstanbul, 1995, p. 51.

²⁷ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.1.

Will you allow me, however, to put the case before you apart from those particular arguments- in a way which will admit of no further misunderstanding? The British Government which had been forced into war with the Turkish Government by the unprovoked action of the latter in 1914, ultimately defeated the Turkish forces and expelled them from the entire area of Iraq and for beyond. Those territories have ever since been occupied by British forces, and were for sometime administered by British officials. In the course of the war the British Government entered into a definite and honorable pledge to the Arab inhabitants of those regions to free them from Turkish rule and the earliest possible date they took steps to inaugurate an Arab Administration. They accepted at San Remo in April 1920 a definite mandate under the League of Nations (Which the Turkish Government has now intimated its intention to join) and in accordance with article 22 of the Covenant, formed the Iraq State. As regards the Kurds, in particular the draft mandate for Iraq, which has been published, stipulates that "nothing in this mandate shall prevent the mandatory from establishing a system of local autonomy for predominantly Kurdish areas in Iraq as he may consider suitable. "I have not found anything in the statement of the Turkish delegation that would lead me to think that your government contemplates any more liberal regime for the Kurdish populations still remaining in Turkey²⁸.

Later of the report Lord Curzon referred to a treaty which was signed between Great Britain and Feisal as King of Iraq and he emphasized that no territory of Iraq should be ceded or leased or any way placed under the control of any foreign power²⁹. In addition to this evaluation, in same report he took part in the subject from the view of counter reply to the memorandum of Turkish Delegation about Mosul question in some captions which are racial, political, historical, geographical, economic, strategic and the national pact³⁰. From racial aspects, British thesis was that "...Although Turkish Government ruled the Mosul Vilayet for many centuries, no correct Turkish map of the vilayet exists, nor, so far as the British delegation is aware, are there any pre-war statistics on a racial basis collected by the Turkish Government. On the other hand, British officers during the last few years have made accurate maps of the whole area and have visited every corner of it. The British delegatin has, therefore, good reason for thinking that its statistics are more likely to be accurate than those of the Turkish delegation, which, it may be noted, bear no date. The British figures for Kurds dont include those Persian Kurds who simply pass part of their time in Iraq. As to the nomad and semi-nomad Arab tribes, the area to which they belong is perfectly well known. Only Arabs of Mosul Vilayet are included in the British statistics³¹."

²⁸ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.2.

²⁹ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.2.

³⁰ Özgür YILDIRIM, "Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye'nin Dış Siyaset İllkeleri ve bu bağlamda Ortadoğu Politikası", **Atatürk Haftası Armağanı Dergisi**, ATASE Pbl., No:44, November 2017, p.147.

³¹ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.3.

As it is understood by Curzon's mentions. He acclaimed that Turkish statistics couldnt be reflected the realities, İsmet Pasha'a statistics which were given to British delegation;

Racial	Kurds	Turks	Arabs	Non-Mus-lims
Suleyma-niah	62.000	32.000	7.000	-
Kirkuk	97.000	79.000	8.000	-
Mosul	104.000	35.000	28.000	31.000
Total	263.000	146.000	43.000	31.000

Lord Curzon opposed to Ismet Pasha's statistics for which he didnt reflect the realities and he presented his statistics that,

Racial	Kurds	Turks	Arabs	Non-Mus-lims
Suleyma-niah	153.000	1.000	-	1.000
Kirkuk	45.000	35.000	10.000	20.000
Mosul	180.000	15.000	171.000	67.000
Irbil	77.000	15.000	5.000	9.000
Total	455.000	66.000	186.000	97.000

Lord Curzon opposed to İsmet Pasha's thesis about the fact that Turks and Kurds come from same ethnicity³², but, Curzon acclaimed that these two community would be separated from each other and so, "... *The British delegation therefore maintains the claim put forward in its previous memorandum, that the only element of the population of the Mosul Vilayet which can be said to be connected with the population of Anatolia by racial affinity is the Turcoman, which numbers only one-twelfth of the total population*³³.

The problem secondly was handled from the view of political, Lord Curzon acclaimed that Except for Turkish Minority in Mosul Vilayet, the other elements of which were consisted Mosul Vilayet were not willing to live under the rule of Turkish Government. He especially approached the issue from the view of Kurds who lived in Southern Anatolia, he impressed the position of Turkish Government who were the lack of authority to control the Kurds in the region, he explained the issue with that words that "... *Turkish Government was rarely or never in effective control of Southern Kurdistan, and that the Kurds of Southern Kurdistan gave the Turkish Government no help during the great world war. If such general considerations as those now adduced by the Turkish delegation are to be admitted, it is legitimate to recall that the Turkish Government had constant trouble with the Kurds in the Dersim and the others areas; that in 1914 there was a serious Kurdish revolution in Bitlis which was put down with difficulty; and that many Kurdish chiefs and their sons were exiled to Constantinople for years at a time lest the spirit of Kurdish Nationalism should concentrate around them and break out in revolt against Turkish rule*³⁴.

Lord Curzon didnt hesitate to play Kurdish Cards to İsmet Pasha, it can be concluded from the passage very easily, he was very aware of the potential of the ethnical fragility in the region from the view of Kurdish and he acclaimed that British Government could give guaranty about autonomy and sovereignty to Kurdish tribes in the region.

The other counter respond of Lord Curzon to the issue was historical, İsmet Pasha acclaimed that Mosul had been ruled by Turks for 11 centuries, and there were very deep connection between Anatolia and Mosul, but, Lord Curzon responded that Although Turks ruled the region for 11 centuries, Majority of the region was Arab and the Kurds and although this was a very long time, Turks neither dominate the region nor assimilate them, either in race or language. He emphasized that it would be so hard to find any artificial character of the connection of the Mosul Vilayet with Turks³⁵.

³² Kemal Melek, **İngiliz Belgeleriyle Musul Sorunu (1890-1926)**, Tasvir Gazetecilik ve Matbaacılık Comp., İstanbul, 1983, p.34.

³³ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.4.

³⁴ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.5.

³⁵ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.5.

Fourth approach to the problem with geographical, he denied the allegations of Ismet Pasha that The Mosul plain, with its long, hot, rainless summer, its snowless winter, and only 13 inches of rain in the year differs more from Anatolia³⁶.

Fifth approach to the problem with economic, he acclaimed that Mosul was essential for the food supply of Baghdad, additionally Mosul was a key element for the economic relations of Iraq with Syria and Palestine and very important gate for Iraq to advance to Mediterranean trade routes. Curzon emphasized that transfer of Mosul would cut it off not only from Iraq, but Syria as well, and would interfere seriously with communications in general between Syria on the one side and Iraq and Persia on the other. Three countries would be affected very negatively in order to give unimportant economic advantage to Turks³⁷.

Sixth approach to the problem with strategic, Lord Curzon thought that It was unclear why the possession of Mosul should be necessary for Turkey's defence, he evaluated that Current boundary between Turkey and Iraq State was a very eligible military obstacle for Turkey and he thought that there was no concern for Turkey to worry about it. He also added if Mosul was given Turkey, Turk would be so closed which means 60 km far from Baghdad, and this situation would be more handicapped for Iraq State³⁸

CONCLUSION

Prior the Lausanne Peace Conference, Turkey and Great Britain delegations couldnt agree with each other, and the issue was handled in conference officially due to failing in private negotiations, the Mosul Question was brought to the agenda of the Territorial Committee at the Lausanne Conference on January 23, 1923 by Lord Curzon. He claimed that the Mosul Question was an issue of determining a frontier line. Turkish delegations. İsmet Pasha offered to solve the issue with applying plebiscite but Lord Curzon severely opposed this offer and he offered that the problem would be taken to League of Nations and to threaten Turkey while doing because Turkey was not the member of the League of Nations at that time and this could be handicapped for Turkey³⁹.

On the morning of 31st January the draft treaty, which had been prepared by Lord Curzon, was officially handed to the Turks. In this version of the draft, Mosul was not mentioned. In Article 3, it was just referred that the boundary between Turkey and Iraq state would be drawn according to the decision taken

³⁶ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.5.

³⁷ Petroleum Department, POWE:33-200, p.6.

³⁸ Mim Kemal Öke, **Musul Meselesi Kronolojisi (1918-1926)**, (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı,1991),p11.

³⁹ Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, **Mondros'tan Musul'a Türk-İngiliz İlişkileri**, İmaj Pbl., Ankara, 2006, p.351.

by the League of Nations. On February 4, Ismet Pasha accepted the postponement of the Mosul Question for a year. In his response, he stated: "*... for ensuring that peace is not impeded and for the purpose of solving the problem in one year through direct negotiations between Turkey and Great Britain, we think that it will be appropriate to take this issue off the conference program*⁴⁰."

On February 7, 1923, Ankara led Ismet Pasha to refuse to sign the treaty because it reflected Curzon's belief, and GNA thought that The issue would be dealt with and solved between in two countries not by the League of Nations. The first phase of the Lausanne Conference adjourned on 7 February. Lord Curzon returned to London on 4 February. When Ismet Pasha returned to Turkey, in GNA the problem was discussed and İsmet Pasha gave a very encapsulated report what his delegation made in Lausanne, He impressed his idea about Mosul that it could be postponed for one year that couldnt mean givin up Mosul, He also emphasized they could determine priorities what would they handle and follow in second phase of conference, aboloshing capitulations and making more effort for it were more important for Turkey than Mosul for then.

On April 7, it was accepted that the conference would resume in Lausanne on April 23, 1923. At that time Horace Rumbold, British Ambassador to Germany was representing Britain instead of Lord Curzon. On July 24, 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed. The Mosul Question was left to direct negotiations between the two parties. At the end, the final decision on the issue was stated in the 3rd article and the second paragraph of the Treaty of Lausanne;

The boundary between Turkey and Iraq, nine months later after the taking effet of this peace agreement will be determined with a friendly solution which will be find out with two parties. In case two government couldnt be agreed about solution in determined time, the disagreement would be taken to Leauge of Nations⁴¹.

Great Britain and Turkey couldnt agree after determined time which was nine months, and the issue was taken to Leauge of Nations. Leauge of Nations decided in favor of Great Britain and left Mosul to Iraq State. It was also the starategy of Lord Curzon and it worked for Great Britain.

⁴⁰ Alev Dilek Aydın, **Mosul Question (1918-1926)**, The Department of International Relations Bilkent University, Master Degree Thesis, Ankara, 2004, p.47.

⁴¹ Kemal Melek, *Ibid.*, p.44.

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