

PERIPHERAL CAMPAIGNS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR  
THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE 1914-1918

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## INTRODUCTION

This treatise evaluates the major peripheral campaigns of the British Empire during World War I in relation to the application of the principles of war. The conclusion finds that throughout the war, civilian and military strategists blatantly violated these basic principles (outlined below), which had been enunciated by military writers in the early 19th century and practiced by successful commanders for hundreds of years. Additionally, British commanders in the field are found to have won or lost campaigns due to the use or misuse of these principles. Lastly, the campaigns under examination are vindicated or condemned according to their effect or potential effect on the total war effort.

The campaigns examined include the Dardanelles (Gallipoli); Macedonia (or the Balkans); Egypt and Palestine; and Mesopotamia. British military efforts in East and West Africa, China, North and South Russia, and the Pacific Islands are excluded as they had little or no effect on the outcome of the war, and may in fact be considered peripheral colonial enterprises. Similarly, due attention is not paid to many extraneous factors such as the German U-boat campaign, the impact of disease, diplomatic surprises, etc. which may have affected a campaign, but which were beyond the control of the participants. The thrust of the inquiry, therefore, is what was accomplished, or could have been, by application of the principles of war.

In order to treat this subject topically, the principles of war, as found in the British Army's 1920 Field Service Regulations, (authored by Maj. Gen. J.F.C. Fuller) are utilized as chapter foci. The principles, which are elaborated in the text, include:

1. Co-operation--between the government and the military; between military arms and branches; and with allied governments and armies.
2. Objective--or concentrating on one objective at a time.
3. Offensive--which is necessary to subjugate the enemy.
4. Concentration--the massing of combat power at a decisive point.
5. Surprise--achieving a psychological victory over the enemy.
6. Security--protection against surprise, or the loss of information of friendly intentions.
7. Mobility--or freedom of action.
8. Economy of Force--using the smallest force capable of accomplishing the mission.

These principles do not include subsequent additions (particularly American ones) such as Simplicity and Unity of Command, although these are dealt with to some degree when appropriate to the study. For convenience, on the whole, general remarks have been put in terms of armies and their terminology.

As the principles are discussed in some detail in the chapters, no lengthy treatment of them will be presented here. However, as the

campaigns under examination deal perhaps more with the misuse of the principles than with their proper employment, it is illustrative to provide a brief example of a familiar campaign in which the principles were successfully applied. The World War II Allied invasion of Normandy (1944) serves this purpose.

Having learned, in part, from the experiences of World War I, Anglo-American leaders determined to not repeat the mistakes of that endeavor--particularly in the areas of coalition planning and amphibious operations. From the outset, American President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill were convinced that Co-operation was essential. To this end, they appointed a Supreme Allied Commander, and associated staff, to fully integrate Allied planning. Inter-service co-operation was achieved by the establishment of Combined Operations Headquarters, which worked out many of the technical details of the invasion. After a lengthy debate over how best to accomplish the Allied Grand Strategic Objective of the defeat of Germany, Allied leaders settled on a strategic objective of the invasion of France, to be accomplished by a limited-objective landing on the Normandy coast for the purpose of establishing a lodgement for the buildup of Allied forces. This would be, of course, a utilization of the Offensive to gain Allied initiative in Western Europe and open the "Second Front" advocated by the Soviet Union which, at the time, was engaged by the bulk of the German Army. The operation, considered under a variety of code names over a period of time, was finally launched in June of 1944, when the objective was realistically attainable. The invasion represented the greatest Concentration of Allied military power ever marshalled for a

single operation. Other theaters, such as the Mediterranean and the Pacific, temporarily adopted Economy of Force roles to allow sufficient concentration of critical resources, particularly landing craft, for Normandy. With the Mobility available to the Allies through air, naval and airborne forces, a strike could have been launched nearly anywhere on the coast of France. The Germans were thus obligated to disperse their forces to cover many likely landing areas. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, utilized Security to achieve Surprise by building a fictitious army around Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, regarded by the Germans as the man most apt to lead the invasion. The secrecy of the actual landing area was so well preserved and Patton's deception was so successful that the German high command refused to believe that the Normandy landing constituted the main Allied thrust until a significant beachhead had already been consolidated. As a result of the invasion, a "Second Front" was indeed opened by the Anglo-Americans, hastening the defeat of Germany within the next year. The Normandy landing must stand, at least in relation to World War I campaigns, as a model of the proper utilization of the principles of war.

In this study, application of the principles is considered on three levels: Grand Strategic, Strategic, and to a lesser extent, Tactical. Grand Strategy may be defined as the art of applying national power to achieve a desired result in war or peace. It is necessarily a blend of political policy and military strategy. Such decisions of statecraft as diplomacy, distribution of manpower and

supplies, and financial or economic concentration relate directly to national power, and therefore cannot be divorced from military planning. Strategy is the management of forces up to the time of contact with the enemy. As such, it is the province of higher echelon commanders, who take the resources placed at their disposal by the dictates of Grand Strategy and maneuver them within the theater of operations in order to accomplish their assigned mission. Tactics are the methods of employing forces in contact (i.e. battle) with the enemy. In the First World War, generals had little control over a battle tactically other than establishing doctrine and drawing up preliminary plans, because communications were unreliable or nonexistent once the fighting began. This study addresses Tactics only when the plans formulated by a commanding general affected the outcome of a campaign; which surprisingly, at least in the positive sense, was not often.<sup>1</sup> Before outlining the campaigns examined, there follows a brief discussion of the organization of British and opposing forces.

On the outbreak of war in 1914, Britain had the smallest army of any of the great powers. In contrast to the conscripted millions of the Continent, the British Regular Army numbered only 250,000 men, half of whom were scattered in colonial garrisons throughout the world. During the first six months of hostilities, most of these troops formed 11 Regular divisions of 18,000 men each. Ten of these divisions went to France while the remaining one, the 29th, figured prominently in the drama which surrounded the Dardanelles campaign. Exclusive of mounted troops, Britain's only other military force was the Territorial

Army of 14 divisions. This was an outgrowth of the various volunteer movements of the 19th century, which in 1908 became linked to the regular establishment by the reforms of War Secretary Richard Burdon Haldane. The Territorials were partially trained and underequipped. One of the few leaders to predict that the war would be a long one was Field Marshal Lord Kitchener (Secretary of State for War from 5 August 1914). He undertook the organization of 30 "New Army" divisions in 1914 with an eye toward their eventual employment within a year. These divisions were manned by patriotic civilians and officered by any military personnel available, including retired "dugouts", as they were called. The severe shortage of a large number of trained men and available divisions naturally led to opposing views among governmental and military leaders as to the employment of those forces at hand--a problem which features prominently in this study.

The higher direction of the British war effort was the responsibility of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Early in the war, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith decided that the majority of the Cabinet had neither the expertise nor the interest to direct war business. He formed a small inner circle known as the War Council to conduct Grand Strategy and, in effect, relieved the rest of the Cabinet of any responsibility for war matters. The War Council continued to meet from November 1914 to the end of the war, being called at various times the Dardanelles Committee (from May 1915), the War Committee (from November 1916), and the War Cabinet (from December 1916). For reference, the composition of the



War Council at various times is presented below.

WAR COUNCIL 4 AUG. 1914--25 MAY 1915

Herbert Asquith (Prime Minister from 5 April 1908)

Lord Kitchener (Secretary of State for War from 5 August 1914)

Winston Churchill (1st Lord of the Admiralty from 23 October 1911)

Lord Crewe (Secretary of State for India from 25 May 1911)

Sir Edward Grey (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 12 April 1908)

David Lloyd George (Chancellor of the Exchequer from 12 April 1908)

ex-officio:

Arthur Balfour

Maurice Hankey (secretary)

Lord Fisher (1st Sea Lord)--naval advisor

Sir James Wolfe-Murray (Chief of the Imperial General Staff)

WAR COUNCIL, COALITION GOVERNMENT 25 MAY 1915--6 DEC. 1916

Herbert Asquith (Prime Minister from 25 May 1915)

David Lloyd George (Minister of Munitions from 25 May 1915; Secretary of State for War from 6 July 1916)

Andrew Bonar Law (Leader of Conservative Party; Secretary of State for Colonies from 25 May 1915)

Sir Edward Carson (Attorney General from 25 May 1915)

Arthur Balfour (1st Lord of the Admiralty from 25 May 1915)

Reginald McKenna (Chancellor of the Exchequer from 25 May 1915)

Lord Kitchener (Secretary of State for War from 25 May 1915 until his death on 5 June 1916)

WAR CABINET, COALITION GOVERNMENT 6 DEC. 1916--11 NOV. 1918

David Lloyd George (Prime Minister from 6 December 1916)

Andrew Bonar Law (Chancellor of the Exchequer from 10 December 1916)

Lord Curzon (Lord President of the Council from 10 December 1916)

General Jan Christiaan Smuts (Minister without Portfolio from  
22 June 1917)

Arthur Henderson (Leader of the Labour Party; Minister without  
Portfolio from 10 December 1916 to 12 August 1917)

Lord Milner (Minister without Portfolio from 10 December 1916 to  
18 April 1918)

Austen Chamberlain (replaced Milner 18 April 1918)

ex-officio:

Arthur Balfour (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from  
10 December 1916)

Leopold Amery (expert on Far Eastern relations)

Mark Sykes (expert on Islamic affairs)

Lloyd George, Smuts, Bonar Law, Curzon, and Milner formed the Committee on War Policy in June of 1917. This was an attempt by Lloyd George to streamline his War Cabinet by establishing a nucleus within an inner circle.

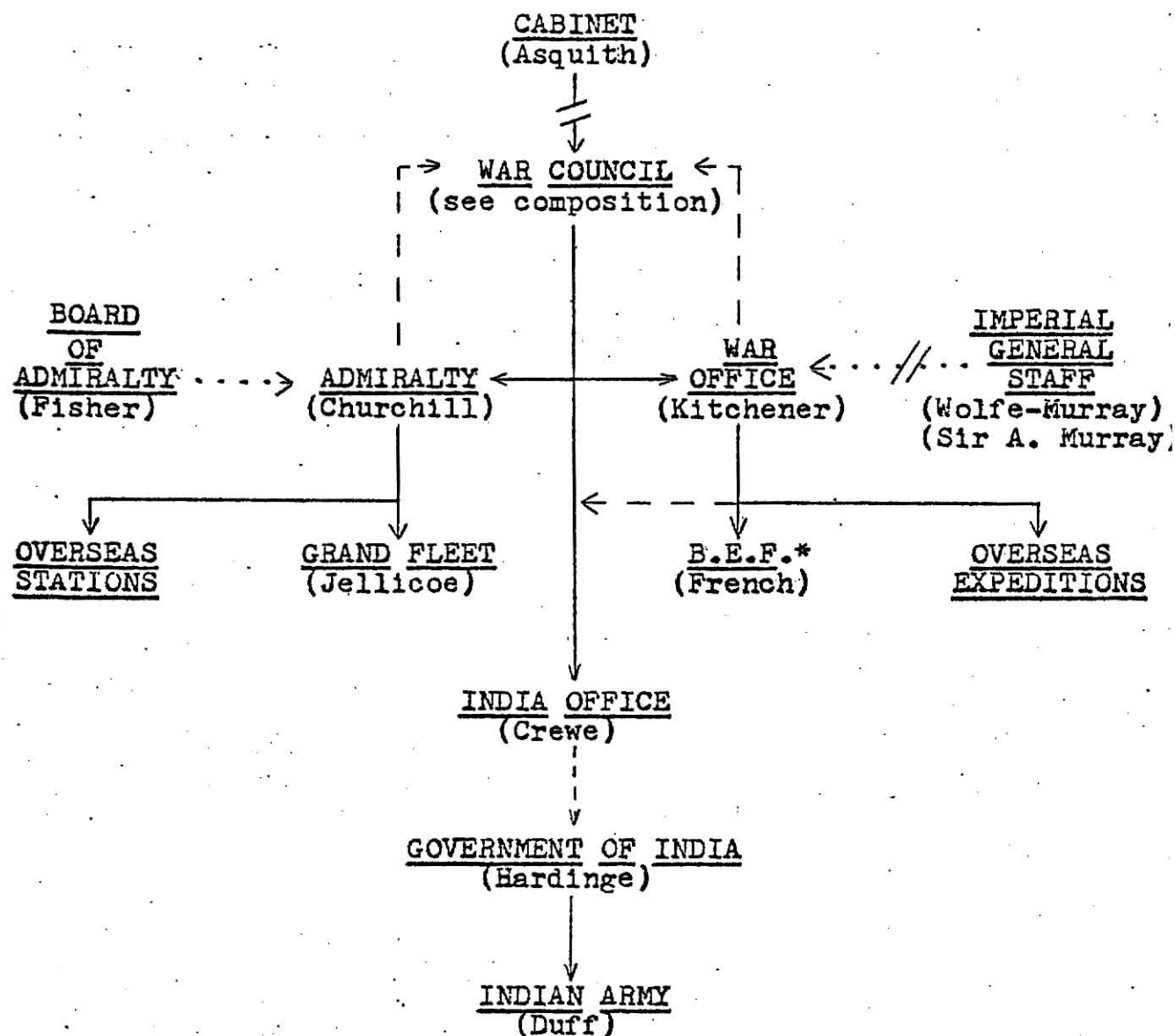
Brevity prohibits discussion of the theoretical foundations of the institutions which guided the British war effort. Suffice it to say that except for the Committee of Imperial Defence, Britain went to war in 1914 with no organization dedicated to co-ordinating an Empire-wide defense establishment. The Committee of Imperial Defence,

a standing committee of the Cabinet since 1904, was the only body to consider such problems in the decade before the war. As a fact-gathering committee, with essentially the same membership as the War Counsel, it quickly lapsed into inactivity at the war's outset. Asquith's War Council assumed executive responsibility for prosecution of the war.<sup>2</sup> The figures on the following two pages illustrate the working relationships which existed between the various governmental and military departments from 1914 to 1918. These are not theoretical flow charts, but are a realistic assessment of the leverage and power wielded by the personalities involved.

As the British Indian Army figures prominently in two of the four campaigns under examination, it's establishment must be treated briefly. Britain maintained native Indian troops since the 17th century. The Indian Army subsequently went through several reorganizations and was completely reformed by the British after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. From that time forward, a large British contingent formed an integral part of the Indian establishment, and manned nearly all of its artillery. By 1914, the Indian Army consisted of 76,000 British and 159,000 Indian other ranks, organized as 10 divisions with 8 cavalry and 4 infantry brigades in addition. In spite of Lord Kitchener's attempts to orient the Indian Army toward field operations during his tenure as Commander-in-Chief (1902-09), the Army in India Committee of 1912, under the guidance of Field Marshal Lord Nicholson, suggested a return to the primacy of internal security duties since the entente with Russia seemed to preclude any necessity to employ Indian troops against serious opposition in the foreseeable future. The Government of India eagerly

FIGURE 1

## WAR EFFORT HIGHER DIRECTION, LIBERAL GOVERNMENT 1914-15



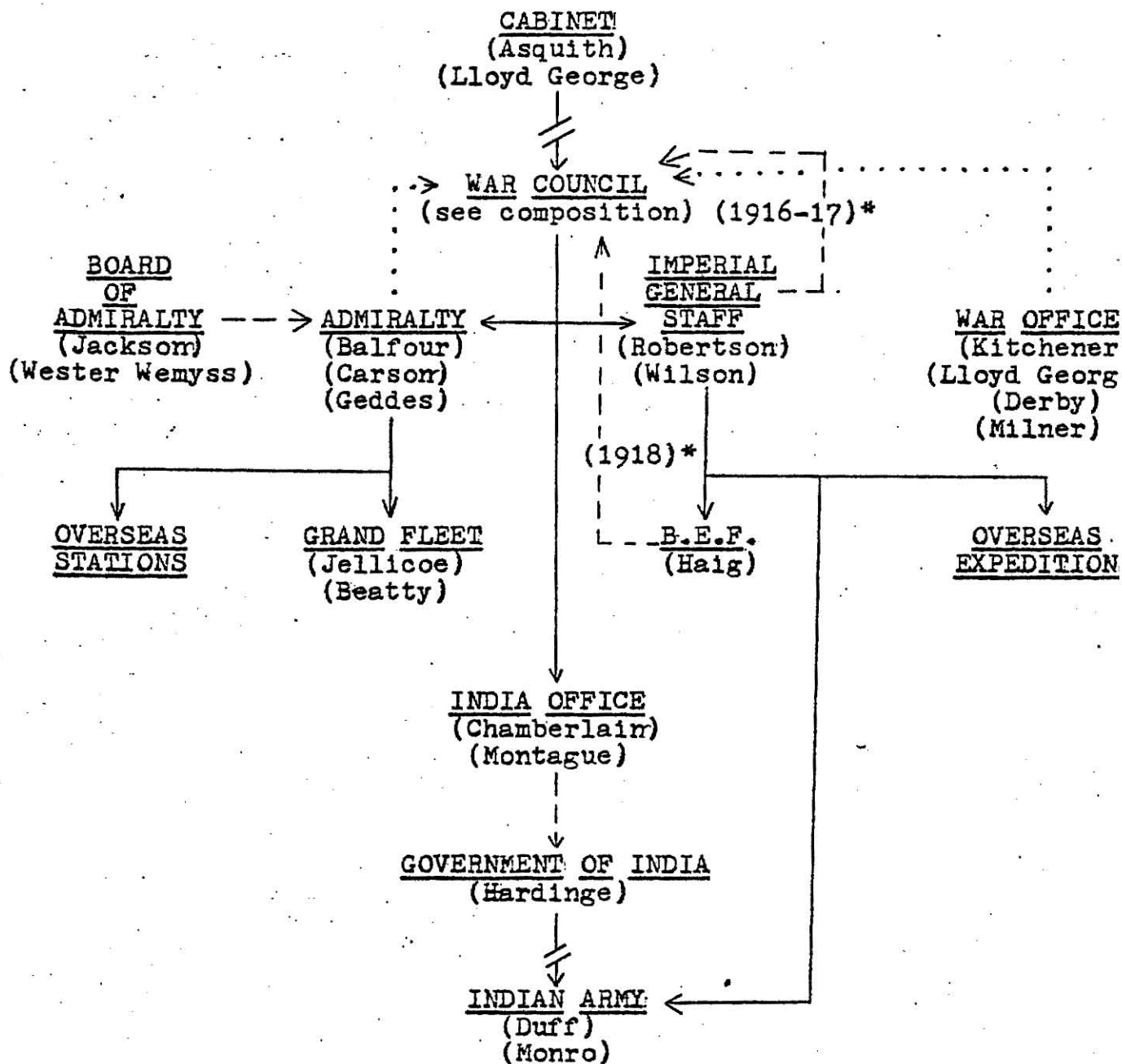
## KEY

- executive control
- - - - - authoritative policy guidance
- ..... advisory link
- // non-functioning

\* B.E.F.--British Expeditionary Force (in France)

FIGURE 2

## WAR EFFORT HIGHER DIRECTION, COALITION GOVERNMENTS 1916-18



\* Note. In 1918, Haig's influence superseded that of Wilson.

General Note. Office holders are shown in succession. For dates of tenure see text.

accepted the Committee's findings and embarked on a program of economy measures designed to reduce the Army in accordance with its redefined role. The result was that by 1914, only 6 divisions and 6 cavalry brigades were adequately equipped to defend India's North-West Frontier Province. These divisions had only 13,000 men instead of 18,000 as in the British Army, 30 field guns instead of 76, and no heavy artillery. Additionally, they were deficient in medical services and possessed no motor transport, aircraft, or "wireless" (radio). As early as 1911, Lieutenant-General Sir Douglas Haig, then Chief-of-Staff India, suggested that the sub-continent might contribute an expeditionary force to a general European war. The idea met with immediate disapproval from the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. Nevertheless, between 1911 and 1914 General Staff officers from Whitehall and Simla (Indian Army Headquarters) discussed the possibility. The Indian staff's assessment that perhaps two or three divisions might be made available reached London a few days after the outbreak of war.

In three of the four campaigns under study, Britain's enemy was the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. Long known as the "Sick Man of Europe", Turkey was not highly regarded by British military leaders. In fact, the Turks proved excellent soldiers, especially after the Young Turk Revolution when German Army advisors under General Liman von Sanders reformed Turkish training and administration at the invitation of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress in 1909. Notwithstanding Turkey's defeats at the hands of Italy and the

Balkan States in 1911 and 1912 respectively, its army matured under German guidance to the level of a respectable fighting force by 1914. German Generals Liman von Sanders and Kress von Kressenstein commanded Turkish Armies in the field, and were surpassed in brilliance only by Mustafa Kemal, the division commander who rose to the premiership of post-war Turkey under the name of Kemal Ataturk. Virtual dictator of Turkey's war policy was the energetic and capable Enver Pasha, War Minister since December 1913, who at 36 years of age in 1914 was one of the youngest statesmen of the era.<sup>4</sup> The pre-war standing army numbered over 240,000 men organized into 39 weak infantry divisions. Mobilization of reserves and further conscription provided another 31 divisions, for a total of 70. In all, 2,850,000 men served, but the maximum strength of the Army never exceeded 650,000 combatants, the total available in May of 1916. Similarly, no more<sup>5</sup> than 43 divisions were available at any given time.

In Macedonia, the Allies faced German and Austro-Hungarian formations, but the British were chiefly confronted by Bulgarian forces. From a peacetime army of 1 cavalry and 9 infantry divisions, Bulgaria expanded to a mobilized strength of 400,000 men in 15 divisions. With their associated reserve brigades these divisions were nearly twice the size of most of their European counterparts. Smarting from their reverses during the Second Balkan War of 1913 and encouraged by early victories against the Serbs and Rumanians, the Bulgars proved stout opposition in their mountain strongholds until 1918. Although none of their commanders were particularly inspired, they preformed well

under the general direction of Field Marshal von Falkenhayn, the German "front" commander in the Balkans.

For readers not thoroughly familiar with the chronology of each campaign, the following summaries are provided.

#### The Dardanelles:

On 2 January 1915, the Russians asked Britain to demonstrate against Turkey, a member of the Central Powers since November of 1914, in order to relieve pressure on the Russian Caucasus front. By the 13th, the War Council had ordered a naval demonstration against the Dardanelles. The Royal Navy began bombardment of the Dardanelles forts on 19 February, and continued the attack on 25 February, and 1, 7 and 18 March. No further naval attempts were made to force the straits, but a military expedition landed on 25 April to assist the fleet by securing the forts. The Turks counter-attacked on 1 May with a stalemate resulting. From 6 to 10 August, British reinforcements landed in the Suvla Bay area in conjunction with an offensive by forces in place. No appreciable gains resulted. On the advice of the military, the War Council ordered evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula in December. By 9 January 1916, the entire force had withdrawn and the campaign ended.

#### Macedonia:

In October of 1915, the combined forces of Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria overran Serbia, the original Ally. In a belated attempt



to aid Serbia, the French and British sent token forces to the port of Salonika in Greek Macedonia. The violation of Greek neutrality did little to preserve Serbia, but distracted enough Bulgarian troops to secure the escape of part of the Serbian Army. The Allies retired to their entrenched camp around the city and built up their forces. The Bulgars attacked in August 1916, preempting an Allied offensive. By November, a limited Allied attack captured Monastir in southern Serbia as the Central Powers were involved in the invasion and conquest of Rumania. The front remained more or less static through 1917. The Allied offensive of 1918 shattered Bulgarian morale and broke the front wide open. Bulgaria surrendered on 30 September, and by 1 November the Serbs had liberated Belgrade. Two days later, Austria concluded an armistice with the Allies, and the French and British contingents advanced into Hungary and Turkey respectively.

#### Palestine:

From the very start of the war, Britain reinforced its Egyptian garrison to insure the security of the Suez Canal. Except for skirmishes with Senussi tribesmen in the Western Desert, no fighting occurred within the theater during 1914. A Turkish expedition reached the canal on 3 February 1915 but retreated after an indecisive clash with British troops. In early June of 1916, Hussein, Sherif of Mecca, proclaimed the Arab Revolt and seized control of that city from the Turks. By the end of July, Arab guerrilla forces had captured the port of Medina. On 3 August, the Turks made one final

attempt to take the Suez Canal and suffered a decisive defeat at the hands of the British, who then proceeded to clear them out of the Sinai. During March and April of 1917, the British failed to dislodge the Turks from their entrenched positions at Gaza. Under a new commander, General Sir Edmund Allenby, British forces routed the Turks during the October/November battles of Beersheba and 3rd Gaza. The 1918 campaigning season brought equal success at the battle of Megiddo in September. By 1 October the British were in Damascus, and by the 26th in Aleppo too. The Turks sued for peace and concluded an armistice with the Allies on 31 October.

#### Mesopotamia:

In October of 1914, a small expedition from the British Indian Army landed at Bahrein Island in the Persian Gulf with orders to protect British oil interests in Persia should Turkey enter the war. When the Turks made common cause with Germany in November, the British occupied Basra at the head of the Gulf. During 1915, they enlarged their contingent to a corps and marched up the Tigris River toward Baghdad. The Turks checked the advance of the leading British division at Ctesiphon and encircled the survivors at Kut. Attempts to relieve the besieged British force failed, and the garrison surrendered on 29 April 1916 after 5 months of isolation. At last, adequately supplied and heavily reinforced, the British Mesopotamia Force took the offensive in 1917 against greatly depleted Turkish formations and occupied Baghdad on 11 March. During 1918 the

advance continued up the Tigris to Mosul, while splinter detachments proceeded to northern Persia and southern Russia to uphold British interests.

The following text is divided according to the principles of war. Some, such as Offensive or Objective, are more important or present more problems than others, and are accorded more attention. Similarly, the Dardanelles rates the lion's share of analysis as its potential for a quick decision was much greater than the other theaters. The reader will also note that some principles weighed much more heavily in one campaign than in another. At the end of each chapter, a recapitulation is provided to summarize the positive or negative applications of the subject principle. These summations are tied together in the Conclusion, where they are depicted in a chart format in Figure 5.

CO-OPERATION

"Only by effective co-operation can the component parts of the fighting forces of a nation develop fully their inherent power, and act efficiently towards success."

6  
--Field Service Regulations 1920

Co-operation involves leaders at every level of command. Statesmen must coordinate the activities of their service chiefs and insure the compatibility of military plans with national policy (Grand Strategy). In coalition warfare, they must also reach working agreements with allied leaders. Military commanders on the strategic level must consider the employment of sea and air forces, in addition to ground components. On the battlefield, co-operation between arms (in World War I, infantry, cavalry, and artillery) is necessary to achieve maximum results efficiently. Needless to say, it is important to have wartime leaders cognizant of the necessity for regular and effective co-operation, and a higher direction establishment organized to expedite co-operation and fix responsibility for military decisions. In 1914 Britain was blessed with neither of these.

Much of the blame for haphazard co-operation must be laid at the feet of the Prime Minister, Asquith, and his service secretaries, Churchill and Kitchener. At the highest level, Asquith allowed the functions of the Committee of Imperial Defence to lapse, and virtually excluded the Cabinet from the decision-making process. In similar fashion, Churchill and Kitchener took steps to deprive the War Council of the advice of military leaders whose professional expertise should have been considered during the formulation of war policy. At the

Admiralty, Churchill seldom met with the complete Board, preferring to see what he called the "War Staff Group" which consisted of himself, Lord Fisher (1st Sea Lord), Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Oliver (Chief-of-Staff), Commodore Charles de Bartolome (Churchill's secretary), and Sir William Graham Greene (Secretary to the Board). Occasionally senior serving admirals such as Sir Arthur Wilson and Sir Henry Jackson would attend the group's meetings. Further ignoring the other Sea Lords, Churchill brought only Fisher to meetings of the War Council, at which the old Admiral remained uniformly reticent. At the War Office the situation was worse. Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War and late empire builder of popular acclaim, tried to run the war effort as he would a colonial campaign. He posted most of the experienced senior officers of the General Staff to France and surrounded himself with spineless lackeys, such as Lieutenant-General Sir James Wolfe-Murray (Chief of the Imperial General Staff), whose advice he neither solicited nor accepted. It would not only be fair to say that Kitchener spoke for the War Office; Kitchener was the War Office. <sup>7</sup>

#### THE DARDANELLES--

The idea of striking a blow at Turkey through the Dardanelles was not new to Britain in 1914. During the Napoleonic Wars, Admiral Duckworth had forced the Straits in 1807 and proceeded with his fleet to Constantinople. A potential lesson lost on the British statesmen of the 20th century was that the French General Marmont and his

engineers quickly emplaced 1000 guns overlooking the Straits and succeeded in driving off Duckworth, who sustained 250 casualties and appreciable damage to his warships.<sup>8</sup> The General Staff at the War Office drew up an appreciation of the Dardanelles in December of 1906. Commenting on operations against the Gallipoli Peninsula the report concluded that ". . . the General Staff, in view of the risks involved, are not prepared to recommend its being attempted."<sup>9</sup> Fisher reached essentially the same conclusion at the same time when he commanded the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet. With the onset of war in 1914, the possibility of Turkey becoming a belligerent moved Churchill to arrange a conference between the Naval and Military staffs to consider plans for seizing Gallipoli utilizing the Royal Navy and Greek troops. They estimated that 60,000 men would be adequate for the undertaking. This meeting, held in September, was the only time that the service staffs were called upon to co-operate<sup>10</sup> in planning for operations against the Dardanelles. Strangely, the Dardanelles were considered seriously by the War Council only after the Russian Commander-in-Chief, Grand Duke Nicholas, appealed to Britain on 2 January 1915 for a demonstration against the Turks to divert their forces from the Caucasus. The irony of the situation was that the British had been offered the use of three Greek divisions for the venture by Premier Eleutherios Venizelos, but the Russians refused to countenance Greeks anywhere near Constantinople. As the Foreign Office, under Sir Edward Grey, had previously acknowledged that Constantinople should be a Russian preserve, the project lapsed

in deference to the Tsar's pronouncement. This failure of Allied co-operation led directly to the fall of the Venizelos government in Greece and its replacement by a pro-German ministry. Indirectly it led to Russia's own downfall as the Straits would never be as vulnerable to attack again.<sup>11</sup>

In the War Council, Churchill presented a plan not only to demonstrate against the Turks, but to force the Straits themselves utilizing obsolete battleships. Most members favored a combined military and naval expedition, but Kitchener announced that no troops were available so the naval plan prevailed. An elementary staff study would have indicated that troops were indeed available, but no one questioned Kitchener or asked for a staff appreciation. Fisher and Wolfe-Murray, who had misgivings about a purely naval effort and were in attendance when it was discussed, offered no comment at all. Neither Asquith nor Churchill canvassed their opinions as would be appropriate to a discussion of such an undertaking.<sup>12</sup> Thus, at the very inception of the campaign, high-level co-operation--both diplomatic and inter-service--was non-existent.

Within the Army itself, conflicting opinions and declarations present a picture of confusion. In September of 1914, Major-General Sir Charles Callwell (Director of Military Operations and author of Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance, 1905) studied the feasibility of an attack on the Dardanelles and concluded that such an operation would be hazardous and impractical. He believed that this was the War Office view, but no one asked him for his opinion.<sup>13</sup> Kitchener told the War Council in January of 1915 that the Dardanelles

would be a suitable military objective for 150,000 men, but they were not available.<sup>14</sup> Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood (Commander, Australian and New Zealand Army Corps--ANZAC) made a shipboard reconnaissance of Gallipoli on 1 March 1915 and reported that the Dardanelles defenses would have to be taken by a strong combined operation. No evidence suggests that his report was taken seriously at the time.<sup>15</sup> As it was apparent that even if the fleet forced the Straits, the Army would at least have to occupy Constantinople, Churchill became apprehensive of a military breakdown. He knew that practically no staff planning was being done at the War Office, so he arranged an interview with Kitchener in Asquith's presence where the former accepted responsibility for any military operations which might take place.<sup>16</sup>

Co-operation suffered again in the handling of the Army's 29th Division, the key to any military part of the operation. The last regular division to be formed from overseas garrisons, it was reputedly the best unit in the Army.<sup>17</sup> The War Council earmarked this formation for use against the Dardanelles forts should the fleet require assistance. Kitchener, concerned about the Western Front and pressed by Field Marshal Sir John French (Commander-in-Chief, British Expeditionary Force) and Marshal Joffre (Commander-in-Chief, French Army) to commit the 29th to France, vacillated and refused to send the division anywhere. He informed the Navy's transport authorities that no ships would be required for the 29th, without informing Churchill, who had assembled the necessary vessels so that the division could reach the Dardanelles by 17 March, the day before the major



naval assault on the forts. The result was a three-week delay in the division's deployment when Kitchener finally released it, as transports<sup>18</sup> had to be reassembled from various bases. Additionally, when Kitchener permitted the 29th to sail (10 March) neither he nor the General Staff issued any instructions as to how to load the division aboard its transports with an eye toward its eventual disembarkation under combat conditions. Consequently, it sailed with all ammunition in one ship, transport vehicles in another, horse harness in yet another, etc. Even machine guns occupied the bottom of holds.<sup>19</sup> When the division arrived at the British advanced base at Mudros harbor on the Island of Lemnos, these mistakes could not be rectified, as adequate loading equipment was not available. General Sir Ian Hamilton (Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) therefore sent the 29th to Alexandria to be unloaded and reloaded in "combat" order, entailing another two-week delay in the divisions's availability.

Kitchener named Sir Ian Hamilton to command British land forces operating in conjunction with the Navy on 12 March. Hamilton was an officer of wide experience who had made a name for himself in the Boer War (1899-1902) and as British Observer with the Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. When appointed to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force he was commander of the Central Force garrisoning Great Britain. Kitchener's verbal instructions to Hamilton stressed only that a major military undertaking should not be attempted unless the Navy exhausted every possible resource and still failed to force the Straits. In a short interview Kitchener provided Hamilton with

a 1912 handbook on the Turkish Army, a pre-war Admiralty report on the Dardanelles defenses, and an innaccurate map of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Thus, Hamilton departed for his new command with no military appreciation<sup>20</sup> of the situation and no plan of campaign.

If Hamilton had been the victim of bad co-operation to that point, he did nothing to alleviate the situation upon reaching the theater of operations. When he and Vice-Admiral de Robeck (Commander, Mediterranean Detached Fleet) decided on a joint operation after the failure of the naval attack on 18 March, neither took steps to insure that their staffs co-operated on such important matters as adequate communications between<sup>21</sup> attacking infantry and supporting guns of the fleet. Furthermore (as detailed under Offensive), Hamilton delegated responsibility as well as authority to his subordinates, chiefly Major-General Hunter-Weston (Commander, 29th Division) and later Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Stopford (Commander, IX Corps), but failed to intervene in their<sup>22</sup> operations when they proved unequal to the task. Co-operation failed twice more during the campaign, both times at highest level. Between 19 March and 14 May, that is between the failure of the naval attack and the commitment of troops to an opposed landing, Asquith refused to convene the War Council. This being the case, the military operation was never discussed or approved by that body. Kitchener, reassuring Asquith, unilaterally accepted responsibility for the Army and issued<sup>23</sup> the necessary orders. Three weeks after the initial landing, Hamilton submitted a bleak appreciation of the military situation and a request for reinforcements to the government. As Asquith was involved in reforming the Cabinet, the report, forwarded on 17 May, was not considered

by the War Council until 7 June, ultimately delaying the dispatch of reinforcements by six weeks.

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If a lesson can be drawn about co-operation from the Dardanelles experience, it is the necessity for joint service staffs at all echelons of command to consider combined operations and advise policy makers and commanders.

#### MACEDONIA--

The Macedonian campaign, always considered a "side show" by the British, is a story of Allied non-cooperation. From the onset of the war British foreign policy, under the direction of Sir Edward Grey, was ambiguous and equivocal. Grey, unrealistically attempting to appeal to mutually inimical Balkan states, time and again rebuffed Britain's only friend, Premier Venizelos of Greece. Venizelos, working against the pro-German sympathies of Greece's King Constantine (the Kaiser's son-in-law), could never rally enough support to bring Greece into the war because Grey refused to guarantee the Greek border with Bulgaria. Grey continued to alienate Greece under the illusion that Bulgarian friendship or neutrality could be secured up until the Bulgarian invasion of Greece.

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In late 1915, Serbia was hard pressed by a combined attack of the Austrians, Germans, and later the Bulgarians. France wished to keep the Balkan Front open by military aid to Serbia. The Italians, Russians and Serbs enthusiastically endorsed the idea, leaving Britain alone in isolation. Alarmed by this show of Allied solidarity, the War Council authorized the transfer of some of the Gallipoli divisions to the port of Salonika, occupied

under protest from Greece on 5 October 1915. Attempts at co-operation between the various Allied contingents led to the nomination of the French commander, General Sarrail, as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Army of the Orient at a conference in Rome during January of 1917.

British Prime Minister David Lloyd George agreed that Sarrail should have the authority to give orders to British forces under General Milne, who retained the right of reference to the British government. <sup>26</sup>

During the Allied offensives of spring 1917 most of the Allied national commanders grew to distrust Sarrail, and criticized the autocratic general for his callous handling of their troops. General Sir William Robertson (Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 23 Dec. 1915 to 17 Feb. 1918) recommended evacuation of British forces except for a token division. Lloyd George rejected the idea on the grounds that the Serbs would then cease to trust the Allies. Under Sarrail's successors, Generals Guillaumat and Franchet d'Esperey, a better working relationship existed between Allied commanders. The absence of Sarrail's high-handed method of command was probably as responsible for this as anything. <sup>27</sup> Macedonia is an excellent example of the necessity for combined inter-allied staffs where national prejudices give way to effective co-operation.

#### PALESTINE--

The campaigns in Egypt and Palestine developed out of the defense of the Suez Canal. Co-operation presented no problems until British forces took the offensive in 1916. Under Lieutenant-General

Sir Archibald Murray (Commander-in-Chief Egypt, 1916-17) British Headquarters could hardly enforce co-operation or even affect adequate tactical control from its location in Cairo, 250 miles away from the fighting front at Gaza. Murray's successor, General Sir Edmund Allenby, rectified this deficiency by moving the Headquarters up to a few miles behind the lines. Throughout the remainder of the campaign, lack of co-operation ceased to be a problem for the British. This may be attributed to Allenby's methodical nature and the fact that he carried the designation "p.s.c." (passed staff college) after his name. Staff colleges were not particularly popular in the pre-war British Army, and consequently many senior officers lacked formal training in the handling of large bodies of men. Most of Allenby's efforts at co-ordination are treated under Surprise, but one deserves mention here. During the great advance of September 1918, Allenby had his Desert Mounted Corps and the 7th Division secure advanced bases of supply by the capture of Haifa (23 September), Beirut (8 October), and Tripoli (18 October), working in close co-operation with the Royal Navy for mine removal and harbor clearance. This is the first example in history of cavalry operations depending on co-operation with naval forces.

#### MESOPOTAMIA--

Problems of co-operation in Mesopotamia stemmed from a pre-war agreement between the General Staff at the War Office and the General Staff of the Indian Army. This arrangement divided areas of responsibility for the collection of information on the Middle East between the two establishments. The Indian Army assumed responsibility

for the Persian Gulf, Basra, and part of Arabia, while the War Office coordinated activities relating to the rest of Arabia and Mesopotamia. The strong inference that this agreement extended into the realm of operations caused the Indian Staff to neglect any pre-war planning involving the use of Indian troops in Mesopotamia. In fact, several years before the war a hypothetical exercise at the Indian Army Staff College involving Mesopotamia prompted the faculty to comment that the lack of important objectives and the poor communications of the area would preclude its becoming an important theater of war.<sup>30</sup>

Customarily, expeditions raised in India were controlled by the Government of India, with any guidance from the War Office coming through the Secretary of State for India. By October of 1914 the War Office had its hands full elsewhere and welcomed the Viceroy's offer to conduct operations to secure Britain's interests in the Persian Gulf.<sup>31</sup> To this end, the War Council telegraphed instructions to the Indian Government to dispatch a brigade to the Shatt al Arab (the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates). The Indian Government replied by asking for further instructions and inquiring as to the mission of the force. Lord Crewe (Secretary of State for India) responded from Whitehall that the force would insure the safety of British oil interests and provide a show of force for the local Arabs. He continued, "Should Turkey become a belligerent, management of expedition will devolve on you, but instructions as to scope of operations will of course come from me."<sup>32</sup> Most of the problems (discussed under Objective) in the subsequent campaign were linked to these early divisions of responsibility.

Within the Indian Army, co-operation between the military operations

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and military supply departments broke down. Used to operating in isolation, these sections never coordinated efficiently throughout the entire war.<sup>33</sup> For want of this co-operation, Indian troops suffered heavily in Mesopotamia. As at the Dardanelles, if the Commander-in-Chief (General Sir John Nixon) had been the victim of non-cooperation at home he did nothing to ease his plight. Nixon's staff in Mesopotamia simply did not coordinate. Often his administrative staff would not be informed of impending operations in time to make adequate preparations.<sup>34</sup> Nixon was further plagued by a lack of inter-theater coordination, especially regarding intelligence data, which on one occasion caused quite a panic when the Egyptian Headquarters sent him an erroneous report that the Turkish IV Corps was enroute to Mesopotamia when, in fact, it was not.<sup>35</sup> Most co-operation problems disappeared when, on 16 February 1916, at the request of the Secretary of State for India, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff assumed control of the campaign. Before this occurred however, a major tragedy befell the British forces. Major-General Sir Charles Townshend's 6th Indian Division, advancing on Baghdad, suffered a severe reverse at Ctesiphon and retired to an entrenched position at Kut al Amara where it was besieged for five months before surrendering. A Parliamentary Commission investigated the disaster, the worst defeat for British arms since Yorktown in 1781, to establish responsibility. In light of the complex policy and command relationships which existed, this was not an easy task. Although the debacle is covered in more detail under Objective, it is instructive to note here the web of "co-operation" involved. Responsibility lay with the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge), the Commander-in-Chief India (General Sir Beauchamp Duff) and



the Military Secretary of the India Office (Major-General Sir Edmund Barrow). Virtual responsibility must be accorded to Asquith and the War Council who wanted the advance and authorized it, the Commander-in-Chief Mesopotamia (Nixon), and the divisional commander (Townshend). The lack of coordination between Nixon and his subordinate, Townshend, is interesting. Advancing to Kut, Townshend reported to Nixon that Turkish strength required that he be reinforced with a Corps before advancing on Baghdad. He did not get it, but over the next four months he received several brigades. Townshend argued that, having stated his requirements to Nixon, it was up to the Commander-in-Chief to take proper action. As he did not receive the Corps or new orders, he assumed that Nixon thought that his force was adequate. As the capture of Baghdad was generally desired, he thought it his duty to advance without further delay. Naturally Nixon replied that since Townshend<sup>36</sup> decided to go on, he assumed responsibility.

The Mesopotamia Commission, of course, found that the division of responsibility between the India Office (policy) and the Government of India (administration) was a mistake. The Commissioners also concluded that many of the failures of co-operation could have been avoided had the Commander-in-Chief India or his representatives visited Mesopotamia from time to time in order to appreciate the difficulties of the<sup>37</sup> campaign. In fact, the entire Indian General Staff remained at Simla and never even visited the port of Bombay from which the expedition was supplied. If the old adage "Too many cooks spoil the broth" has any application, it certainly does here.

## CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, during the Dardanelles campaign co-operation suffered in every sphere of endeavor with the possible exception of the tactical level naval operation, which witnessed the combined, if unsuccessful, efforts of the British and French fleets to run the Straits. Similarly, the Macedonian theater, bereft of any serious co-operation at higher levels, only saw the fruition of limited Allied tactical coordination in the final 1918 offensive. In Palestine, co-operation finally flourished during the 1917 and 1918 campaigns through a combination of Lloyd George's assertiveness and Allenby's thoroughness. The Mesopotamia campaign, in 1915 and 1916, serves as a model of administrative muddle and ill-defined command relationships. As such, co-operation was de facto doomed from the outset. Only during the last two years of war, after the assumption of responsibility for the theater by the Imperial General Staff, did proper co-operation exist at all echelons.

OBJECTIVE

"In every operation of war an objective is essential; without it there can be no definite plan or co-ordination of effort. The ultimate military objective in war is the destruction of the enemy's main forces on the battlefield, and this objective must always be held in view."

38  
--Field Service Regulations 1920

In terms of grand strategy, the objective in war is usually the complete defeat of the enemy. It may also be to make the enemy sue for peace on favorable terms, or to cause an aggressor to abandon the purpose for which he initiated hostilities. These may be obtained by overcoming the will of the enemy population which, in turn, is normally obtained by the defeat of opposing armed forces. The definition above is heavily "Western Front" in this regard. That is to say, that the majority of Britain's senior officers believed that the war would be won or lost by battles with the main German forces in France. Opposed to these Westerners were a few generals and civilian politicians, who believed the war could be won elsewhere and thus were known as the Easterners. In any case, certain guidelines must be kept in mind.

First, the political objective of the war governs the choice of military, naval, and air objectives. The political objective, however, must be within the capabilities of the armed forces. If possible, military, naval and air objectives should be concentric. Additionally, the choice of military objectives should take into account the nature

of national power--in Britain's case, maritime power. Each military operation must be tested by its bearing on the attainment of the national political objective. Finally, there must be only one main military objective at any one time. <sup>39</sup> Any of these guidelines may be abused or taken out of context. For example, Robertson (Chief of the Imperial General Staff) and Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig (Commander-in-Chief B.E.F., from Dec. 1915) acknowledged no objective other than the military defeat of German forces on the battlefield. They cared little about the political objectives of the war. While the British government declared that the war was to end German militarism, Robertson and Haig saw no need to demilitarize Germany <sup>40</sup> or alter its constitution once a victory was achieved.

#### THE DARDANELLES--

Of the three campaigns in the Middle East, only the Dardanelles struck at the heart of the Turkish Empire and offered the possibility of a quick decision. Forcing the Straits could have led to: 1) the stopping of German supplies to Turkey, 2) the opening of an Allied supply route to Russia, 3) the collapse of the Turkish government, 4) the settlement of the Balkan States in favor of the Allies, 5) the opening of an enlarged Balkan front against Austria-Hungary, and 6) the closing of other fronts such as Palestine and Mesopotamia. After considering the Russian appeal for a demonstration against the Turks, the War Council realized that a stronger expedition might secure the benefits listed above. As Kitchener offered no troops for the

enterprise, the War Council approved Churchill's naval plan and on 13 January 1915, resolved that, "The Admiralty should prepare for a naval expedition in February to bombard and take the Gallipoli Peninsula with Constantinople as its objective."<sup>41</sup> This imprecise wording assured that no two members of the Council carried away the same impression of what had been resolved. Furthermore, "taking" the peninsula or Constantinople would require troops.

The War Council had considered other areas of operations against Turkey and summarily dismissed ideas of landing at Smyrna, Alexandretta, or along the Syrian coast. They reasoned that such moves were not as likely to draw appreciable Turkish forces away from the Caucasus as would a direct threat to Constantinople.<sup>42</sup> Had this not been a consideration, the Gulf of Alexandretta might have been a viable alternative. Both Enver Pasha and Field Marshal von Hindenburg (German Commander-in-Chief West, 1916-18) wrote after the war that this vulnerable point had caused them anxiety. In fact, during February 1915, Birdwood's Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) trained in Egypt to undertake an Alexandretta landing. This training stopped on 16 February when the War Council decided that the Corps would support operations in the Dardanelles. Birdwood tried to resurrect the idea after Gallipoli but the War Council, involved with Salonika and Mesopotamia, and disenchanted with amphibious ventures, rejected it.<sup>43</sup> In any case, had Alexandretta become the focal point of a major British effort it would virtually have had to have been rebuilt to handle the increased cargo requirements.

Certainly a successful lodgement there would have cut off supplies to Turkish forces in Palestine and Mesopotamia, but would not have removed Turkey as a belligerent without a tough overland campaign through Anatolia.

Lord Kitchener thought that if the fleet broke through to Constantinople there would be a revolution in Turkey. That this indeed might have occurred has been confirmed by the U.S. Ambassador there, Henry Morgenthau, who observed at the time that a revolt was a possibility,<sup>44</sup> given the unpopularity of the regime. In the event, the fleet never broke through. Vice-Admiral de Robeck failed to renew the naval attack after 18 March. In the words of British military historian J. F. C. Fuller, "Had the Admirals risked their battleships as many a lieutenant-commander risked his submarine, there is little doubt that the Narrows could at a cost have been forced any time between April 25 and August 7."<sup>45</sup> Unknown to the British at the time, the Turks had fired most of their heavy ammunition on the 18th and had only a few rounds, and no mines, left. The Turks had prepared to evacuate the Sultan and the Government to the interior, and to abandon Turkey's only munitions factories, located in Constantinople.<sup>46</sup> Churchill's original plan envisioned the fleet breaking off in the face of failure and abandonment of further operations. The start of the naval attack had aroused such interest among the Balkan States, however, that the War Council believed that British credibility would suffer irreparably if the enterprise ended in defeat. Asquith and Kitchener, in permitting the commitment of troops, did not stop to review the altered situation on

the Peninsula or consider the cost if Hamilton's force should prove too weak to accomplish the task.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, when Kitchener accepted responsibility on behalf of the Army for seizing Gallipoli, it did not occur to him that his previous cancellation of the 29th Division's movement orders would result in weeks of agonizing delay before a landing could be effected.<sup>48</sup>

Given the mission of aiding the Royal Navy in passage of the Straits, and giving no thought to the true purpose of the expedition, Ian Hamilton believed he had little choice of objectives for the military landing. The Bulair isthmus was too far away from the forts to be of any use to the fleet, and by the time the 29th Division was available, Bulair had been re-inforced with two Turkish divisions by Liman von Sanders. Similarly the Suvla Bay area offered no prospect of aiding the fleet because of its distance from the forts. The Asiatic side of the Straits was dominated by guns on the higher European side, could be flanked, and offered few roads to the interior. Only by landing at the toe of the Peninsula could Hamilton place his troops in proximity to the forts and direct the guns of the Royal Navy by establishing observation posts on the dominant terrain feature, Achi Baba Hill.<sup>49</sup>

The initial landings on 25 April failed to carry Achi Baba (see Offensive). To seize the hill, Hamilton launched his troops against the village of Krithia. His battle orders designated the objective as an arbitrary line on the map. As a result, the attacking brigade veered off in the direction of Turkish trenches which were at least identifiable, but not intended, objectives. Throughout the rest of the campaign changes

in plan and direction of attack continually caused confusion.<sup>50</sup> Prior to the second amphibious assault on 6 August, Hamilton stressed to Stopford, commanding the landing force, that his main object was to secure Suvla Bay. This error cost the campaign, as Suvla Bay provided only the means to an end--isolation of Turkish forces south of the Narrows. Combined with Stopford's inertia, this "guidance" sealed the fate of the Suvla operation. For two days, Stopford's Corps "secured" the beaches and<sup>51</sup> missed the chance to cut off the main Turkish army on the Peninsula.

Hamilton's failure to gain his objectives and the mounting roll of casualties from Gallipoli convinced the War Council that the campaign should terminate. Kitchener feared that a withdrawal would have serious repercussions in India and Egypt among Britain's Muslim subjects. In the event, Britain's evacuation of the Dardanelles in January 1916<sup>52</sup> passed unnoticed in the East. In part, the failure of the Dardanelles can certainly be attributed to the fact that Britain had two main military objectives in 1915 instead of one. The first stemmed from France's urgings to push the Germans farther away from Paris and resulted in the Battle of Loos. The second was to drive the Turks from the Gallipoli Peninsula to enable the fleet to reach Constantinople. Given Britain's slender military resources in 1915, the Gallipoli venture could have succeeded only at the expense of the offensive on the Western Front. The failure to maintain one objective in this instance led not only to the Dardanelles disaster, but indirectly to a premature advance on Baghdad<sup>53</sup> with the resulting debacle at Kut in order to restore British prestige. Whether the Russian Revolution could have been forestalled by Allied



supplies is conjectural, but most certainly had the enterprise succeeded Turkey's days as an active belligerent would have been numbered and Bulgaria would not have joined the Central Powers.

#### MACEDONIA--

The idea of a British campaign in the Balkans first came to the attention of the War Council in January of 1915, when Lloyd George and Maurice Hankey (Secretary to the War Council) circulated memorandums proposing a combined Allied effort to aid Serbia and threaten Austria's southern flank. Most senior British officers, being Westerners, decried the project as fantasy, citing the difficulties of transportation through the Balkan Peninsula and the limited capacity of the only major port, <sup>54</sup> Salonika. By the end of the year the imminent collapse of Serbia and Allied diplomatic pressure rekindled the idea of a Balkan effort, but the few British divisions sent under General Milne took up subsidiary duties guarding the base at Salonika.

The French wanted to launch an offensive in 1916 with the object of bringing Rumania into the war on the Allied side. The Rumanians agreed to enter the war and were promptly invaded by Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria. The objective of the Allied offensive, thenceforth, became diversion of the forces of the Central Powers from the Rumanian Front. To some extent this was accomplished, but Rumania collapsed <sup>55</sup> anyway. The following year, the Allied Commander-in-Chief, Sarraill, assigned the British an important secondary objective calculated to attract Bulgarian forces to the British sector. This was the Lake

Doiran area which carried the symbolism of a Verdun for the Bulgarians, who had seized it during the Balkan Wars of 1912/13. A stout Bulgarian resistance, coupled with the cancellation of the main Allied attack, doomed the British assault.<sup>56</sup> Lloyd George consistently refused the demands of the Army to withdraw British forces from Macedonia, maintaining that definite political advantages accrued from their retention. Not only would British presence figure prominently in the post-war settlements in the Balkans, but more immediately, Milne's troops were the closest Allied army to Constantinople. Bulgaria's collapse in 1918, after several Allied offensives in which the British played a secondary role, freed Milne to pursue Lloyd George's objective of forcing Turkish capitulation. The threat to Constantinople succeeded and the Turks concluded an armistice before the British reached their border.<sup>57</sup> During most of the campaign, British forces received their objectives from French Commanders-in-Chief. As such, the last phase of the war offered the only opportunity for an independent mission with a British political objective.

#### PALESTINE--

The original objective of British forces in Egypt was the protection of the Suez Canal. The eventual advance overland which took Aleppo stemmed from Political motives which developed after 1914. Amphibious operations against the Levant were not undertaken early in the war simply because the Dardanelles appeared a much more promising objective for a

knockout blow. Alexandretta and Beirut were not assaulted because of their unsatisfactory harbors, Haifa had no port facilities, and Jaffa, the only real port, was only an open roadstead with constant surf and strong currents.  
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Under Major-General Sir John Maxwell, British forces in 1914 and 1915 conducted a successful defense of the Canal. Maxwell's successor, Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Murray, extended operations into the Sinai in order to economize the defense effort. The War Council, cheered by his efforts in driving the Turks back to Gaza (March 1917), instructed Murray that his "immediate objective should be the defeat of the Turkish forces south of Jerusalem and the occupation of that town."  
59 Murray's failure to dislodge the Turks at the second battle of Gaza did not diminish the Council's enthusiasm, and to the end of the war they insisted on the complete defeat of the Turks in Palestine and Syria. Unfortunately, their demands were not always followed up with the requisite supplies, but at least Murray's successor, Allenby, initially got three more divisions--twice Murray's combat power--to accomplish the task.

In the Hedjaz, the Arab Revolt stalled in front of Medina. Major T. E. Lawrence (Arab Bureau) persuaded Feisal (Hussein's third son) to change the objective and the strategy of the Revolt to make best use of the Bedouin's natural abilities. He recommended a guerrilla strategy of hit-and-run raids coupled with a propaganda offensive. The objective would not be to destroy Turkish garrisons, but rather to deplete their limited material resources by letting the garrisons hang

on at the end of a tenuous supply line. This program, adopted in  
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 January of 1917, proved highly successful.

For the campaign of 1917, Lloyd George demanded that Allenby give the British people Jerusalem as a Christmas present. Aside from this obvious moral boost to the home front, there were important reasons for both the objective and the timing of the attack. British troops were in Baghdad, and the Turks were assembling the so-called Yilderim Army Group to retake the city. If the threat to Jerusalem could be made before the dispatch of the Yilderim force, not only would the threat to Baghdad be lifted, but virtually the last Turkish manpower reserves would be tied down in Palestine. The moral significance of the capture of Jerusalem would further degrade Turkish prestige in the eyes of the Islamic world, as Mecca and Baghdad had already fallen to the Allies. Finally, it would give fresh impetus to the Arab Revolt. Allenby's victory in the battles of Beersheba and Third Gaza (detailed under Concentration and Surprise) brought the fall of Jerusalem and the  
 61  
 realization of all the rationales for its capture.

Allenby's plan for the 1918 offensive did not place much emphasis on geographical objectives except as a means to achieve his main purpose-- the destruction of the Turkish 7th and 8th Armies. His Battle of Megiddo in September accomplished this by the insertion of mounted troops on the Turkish line of retreat (see Concentration and Mobility). In retrospect, Allenby achieved all of his tactical objectives but the theater as a whole did not force the collapse of Turkey as the Government had wished. The final surrender stemmed from the collapse of Bulgaria on 30 September 1918 and the subsequent march of Milne's British Salonika Army on Constantinople, although Allenby's seizure of Damascus on 1 November certainly confirmed

defeat in the minds of the Turks. Throughout the campaign, while Allenby's use of the objective and his clear orders to subordinates aided the attainment of victory in Palestine, they cannot be considered as important as his methods of surprise and concentration.

#### MESOPOTAMIA--

One of the chief complaints of the Mesopotamia Commission, which investigated the Kut disaster, was that the objective of the campaign was never sufficiently defined in advance by the responsible authorities.<sup>63</sup> In this regard, Mesopotamia represents the worst failure of the principle of the objective outside the Western Front. Major-General Sir Edmund Barrow (Military Secretary of the India Office) may be credited with conceiving the Mesopotamia campaign. In a memorandum dated 26 September 1914, he advocated an expedition to the head of the Persian Gulf because: "1.) It would checkmate Turkish intrigues and demonstrate our ability to strike. 2.) It would encourage the Arabs to rally to us, and confirm the Sheiks of Mohammerah and Koweit in their allegiance. 3.) It would safeguard Egypt, and without Arab support, a Turkish invasion is impossible.<sup>64</sup> 4.) It would effectually protect the oil installation at Abadan."

On inspection, the first point is meaningless, the second trivial, the third a doubtful exaggeration, and the fourth valid but not of high priority. It refers to the interests of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company which consisted of an oil field at Maidan-i-Naftun connected to a refinery on Abadan Island in the Shatt al Arab by 140 miles of pipeline. This could be considered a legitimate strategic concern as Britain's latest class of battleships, the Queen Elizabeths, utilized oil fuel instead of coal. In this regard, Winston Churchill, First

Lord of the Admiralty and champion of the oil-fired warship, had minuted in September, "There is little likelihood of any troops being available for this purpose. Indian forces must be used at the decisive point. We shall have to buy oil elsewhere. The Turk can best be dealt with at the centre."<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the War Council, through the Secretary of State for India (Lord Crewe), authorized the advanced elements of the 6th Indian Division to occupy the port of Basra to secure the oil installations. The expedition, under Major-General Sir Arthur Barrett, accomplished this on 22 November. The next day, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox (Chief Political Officer, Mesopotamia) forwarded a suggestion to advance on Baghdad because of the propaganda value which would accrue from its capture. Both Barrett and Crewe rejected the idea as militarily unsound, but Crewe did authorize an advance up river to Qurna in order to consolidate the Basra position.<sup>66</sup> At this point the ostensible objective of the campaign, security of the oil installations, had been achieved. Additionally, British prestige with the local Arabs stood high.

In early 1915, to counter a buildup of Turkish forces, the Indian government reinforced the expedition with another infantry division and a cavalry division, forming the 2nd Indian Corps under General Sir John Nixon. General Sir Beauchamp Duff (Commander-in-Chief, India) had instructed Nixon to secure the Basra District and to submit plans for an eventual advance to Baghdad, which Duff believed a prudent contingency.<sup>67</sup> In April, Nixon defeated a Turkish counter-offensive and once again, the objective seemed secure. Nixon did not think so however. He advised the Indian Government that he wished to advance to Amara in order to control the Beni-Lam Arabs who were menacing the oil fields,

even though by doing so he would be stretching his resources. While Nixon undertook this move in May and June, the Indian General Staff determined that an advance on Baghdad would be practical if Nixon could be reinforced with one cavalry and two infantry brigades. The Staff considered such a move desirable for morale reasons and further predicted its success based on the apparent demoralization of Turkish troops in the area, the strong Russian position in the Caucasus, and the general Turkish preoccupation with the Dardanelles.<sup>68</sup> In the meantime, Nixon extended his covering force plan to include Kut, which he ordered the 6th Indian Division (under Townshend) to occupy during September, citing the deteriorating political situation in Persia as his reason.<sup>69</sup> This placed British forces within 100 miles of Baghdad.

During August and September, Austen Chamberlain (who had replaced Crewe in the India Office) and the Viceroy exchanged telegrams on the subject of Mesopotamia. Chamberlain wanted to get the 1st Indian Corps out of France before winter, and Hardinge suggested that, in that case, they could be used to advantage in Mesopotamia. Influenced by Nixon's optimistic appreciation of 30 August 1915, Hardinge further intimated that, as it was apparent that the Dardanelles campaign was failing, Baghdad might serve to compensate for the blow to British prestige. The War Council, beset by troubles in the Dardanelles and the imminent collapse of Serbia, saw Mesopotamia as a bright spot in the midst of an otherwise dark picture. After all, Nixon was the only successful general in the field at that time. In a short debate on



23 October, the War Council made its decision and informed the Indian Government, "Nixon may march on Baghdad."<sup>70</sup> Only Kitchener had opposed the move, but since Gallipoli no one would listen to him. Shortly afterward, the 3rd and 7th Indian Divisions departed the Western Front.

By this time however, Nixon's Corps was depleted by disease and dispersed along a lengthy and vulnerable line of communications. Furthermore, its transport establishment was inadequate and no replacements had been sent out from India since the beginning of the campaign. In addition, intelligence indicated that the Turks were assembling troops from other theaters in Baghdad in order to restore their position.<sup>71</sup> If there was a chance of taking Baghdad, there was certainly no chance of ever holding it under these circumstances. Nevertheless, Townshend pressed on with his 6th Division in spite of the fact that he had no orders to enter Baghdad. Nixon's last instructions had been issued on 23 August and had stated: "Your mission is the destruction and dispersal of the enemy, who, according to the intelligence already furnished you, are prepared to dispute your advance; and the occupation of Kut al Amara, thereby consolidating our control of the Basra Vilayet (District)."<sup>72</sup>

On 22 November, Townshend attacked four Turkish divisions in prepared positions at Ctesiphon and suffered a bloody repulse. He retired to his supply base at Kut where, on 6 December he sent his wounded down stream and prepared to block any Turkish advance. Nixon agreed with his decision and ordered him to stand his ground.<sup>73</sup> Heavy rain and inadequate supply hampered relief columns with the result that



Townshend had to surrender on 29 April 1916. The lure of Baghdad--the misuse of the objective--at all levels of command had ordained the disaster.

Under Nixon's successor, General Sir Stanley Maude, a properly organized, sufficiently large, and well supplied force took the offensive in 1916-17. He entered Baghdad on 11 March 1917 and subsequently died of cholera there eight months later. Baghdad may have been worth the effort politically, but hardly militarily. The Turks did not even oppose Maude's initial entrance into the city. It is instructive to note that during the final offensive of 1918 (under Maude's replacement, General Marshall) the objective became the destruction of the Turkish 6th Army, not the occupation of Mosul which was associated with the attack. Like Allenby in Palestine, Marshall concentrated on pinning the Turks and then cutting off their retreat with cavalry.<sup>74</sup> At the cost of 1,861 British casualties, over 11,000 Turkish prisoners were captured. By fighting to destroy the 6th Army Marshall achieved his objective, and of that army not one man escaped.

#### CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

On the whole, we have observed that the British higher direction failed to focus the efforts of the Empire on one main objective at a time. Such a policy would have allowed the successive closure of the peripheral fronts in an orderly and economical manner. Winston Churchill must be applauded for seeing the Grand Strategic value of taking Constantinople--a worthy objective which would have realized a plethora of Allied goals. The subsequent naval and military campaigns, as

managed by Asquith's higher direction and the inept theater commanders, violated the principle of the objective in every instance, however. Lack of strategic grasp by the higher direction prevented any coherent pursuit of Allied objectives in Macedonia until the final offensive. Within the theater, the meager resources of the British contingent allowed it to pursue the very limited secondary objectives perforce allotted to it by the Allied command. Throughout the war, the Palestine front exemplified the ability of Britain to set realistic objectives and attain them. Unfortunately the impact of success in that theater was, for the most part, minimal, compared to the potential for attainment of decisive objectives elsewhere. Mesopotamia must rank, with Gallipoli, as one of the worst examples of the application of the objective in British military history. Only in Marshall's operations do we see a proper utilization of this principle, too late to influence Turkey's war effort.

OFFENSIVE

"Victory can only be won as a result of offensive action."

75

--Field Service Regulations 1920

In war, one must carry the fight to the enemy in order to accomplish anything beside the avoidance of defeat. The ultimate aim of commanders, therefore, becomes the seizure of the initiative for the purpose of conducting a successful offensive. Timing is critical. An army may not possess the numerical strength to undertake the offensive without a preliminary period of defensive activity. As in World War I, a force may not have a tactical doctrine which would secure victory through the offense even if numerical superiority is assured. A successful offensive is much more difficult to achieve and much more demanding on the troops involved than simple defense in place. It requires a higher degree of training and the accumulation of supplies and ammunition on a large scale to overcome the advantages inherent in the defense. Therefore, offensive actions may not be undertaken lightly, but must be preceded by intensive planning efforts during which all of the other principles of war must be brought into perspective. Additionally, offensive plans must be simple enough and flexible enough to withstand the shock of the unexpected. Any plan which depends upon everything going according to plan is bound to fail. The commander's problem during the offensive often comes down to that moment when he must decide, based on available information and intuition, to either call the attack off or press forward vigorously. The wrong decision may lead to appalling losses or the missed opportunity for victory. Due to the primitive communications on World War I battlefields, this decision often had to be made with no accurate knowledge

of the tactical situation. In this manner, the great attritional battles of the Western Front developed from offensives during which the armies demonstrated a remarkable ability to kill enemy soldiers, but an equal inability to achieve a decision.

#### THE DARDANELLES--

The first British offensive against the Dardanelles involved a purely naval attack. The plan, devised by de Robeck's predecessor (Admiral Carden, invalided home before 18 March), envisioned the methodical reduction of the Dardanelles forts by gunfire from obsolete battleships. Preliminary operations succeeded in silencing the outer forts, setting the stage for a grand naval assault on the Narrows on 18 March 1915. One modern British battlecruiser took part in the attack, along with four French and 11 British pre-dreadnought battleships. Turkish gunfire failed to stop any of the attackers, but a line of mines, missed by the civilian crews of the fleet's improvised sweeping force, caused damage to the battlecruiser requiring six weeks of repair, and the sinking of one French and two British pre-dreadnoughts. De Robeck advised the Admiralty that "Though the squadron had to retire without accomplishing its task, it was by no means a defeated force, and the withdrawal was only necessitated owing to the mine menace, all ranks being anxious to renew the attack." <sup>76</sup> The British lost less than 40 men in the attack. Two additional British battleships had stayed in reserve during the battle and were available to replace the losses. Two more were already enroute to the Mediterranean, and on the 19th the Admiralty dispatched another two and the French one. <sup>77</sup> The naval attack could therefore be continued with increased strength. At the Mudros base, eight British destroyers refitted as fast minesweepers to join 10 other British and 12 French vessels in a rejuvenated sweeping

force. They would be ready to commence operations on 4 April.<sup>78</sup>

On 22 March, de Robeck and Hamilton conferred about forthcoming operations. At this meeting they decided that the naval attack should be cancelled in favor of a general assault by the army, and that Hamilton's force should retire to Alexandria to prepare for this. Thus, at a stroke, both commanders decided to go against their original instructions. No excuse can be found for this behavior, which lost the advantage of surprise, already badly eroded by premature attacks. Churchill had even telegraphed to de Robeck on 11 March that, "We shall support you in well-conceived action for forcing a decision, even if regrettable losses are entailed."<sup>79</sup> Similarly, Lord Kitchener's orders to Hamilton had specified that, "The employment of military forces on any large scale for land operations at this juncture is only contemplated in the event of the Fleet failing to get through after every effort has been exhausted."<sup>80</sup> What occurred at the meeting is disputed. Hamilton said that the Navy had already decided to abandon the attack when he sat down. De Robeck maintained that his decision was based on consultation with the Army. According to Churchill, what probably happened was that on the night of the 21st de Robeck learned that Hamilton's force would be made available to him for other than occupational duties under the proper circumstances, so he decided in his own mind simply to give up.<sup>81</sup> In terms of loss of life, the effort of the 18th had been negligible. The sinking of three old battleships, destined for the scrap heap anyway, could not be considered an unmitigated disaster. The only explanation for de Robeck's lack of resolve is that he suffered a psychological shock at the destruction of ships with which he had literally grown up in the Navy. In any case, he advised the Admiralty

that he was not prepared to continue, on the bogus pretexts that gunfire from the undestroyed batteries would cut him off from his base of supply should he continue through the Straits and that the channel at the Narrows might have been made impassable by block ships (a physical impossibility as the channel there was 40 fathoms deep).<sup>82</sup> Additionally, Hamilton, who arrived at the Dardanelles just in time to see the sinking of the battleships, wired Kitchener that he believed the Navy could not do the job alone.

Until this time, the consensus at Whitehall had been to press on. After the discouraging telegrams from de Robeck and Hamilton, however, the naval staff turned on Churchill and loudly demanded that the issue not be pressed. Perhaps remembering how Churchill's long-range management of Craddock's squadron ended in the destruction of that force by von Spee at Coronel in 1914, they stood as one man in supporting the decision of the commander on the spot. With no support issuing from his own department, and Asquith unwilling to commit himself to override Fisher and the admirals, Churchill had no choice but to inform the War Council that the renewal of the naval attack was postponed indefinitely.<sup>83</sup> Failure to adhere to the offensive in this instance lost for Britain her cheapest chance to take the Dardanelles. Even the Turkish official historian asserted later that the Allies were so close to success when they broke off the naval attack that they should have accepted the risks of further advance, no matter how high, because of the stakes involved.<sup>84</sup> Of course he was privy to the knowledge that the Turks had virtually run out of artillery ammunition and literally run out of replacement mines. Even excluding this knowledge, the realization of any one of the objects

expected from the forcing of the Straits would easily have been worth a dozen old battleships, of which Britain had two dozen to spare. Another point worthy of reflection is that had a second naval attempt failed miserably it is possible that no one would have countenanced landing troops, thus sparing Britain the casualties of the debacle which followed.

It was at this point that Kitchener shouldered the burden of the Dardanelles by assuring Asquith that the Army would see things through. Unfortunately the belated continuance of the offensive under military auspices on 25 April suffered from inadequate prior preparation. The Imperial General Staff had no prepared plan for operations against Turkey at the outbreak of the war, even though this area was of traditional concern to the British Empire. Once Turkey manifested pro-German behavior, the General Staff still did not prepare operational contingency plans. When the possibility of military action became a probability with Ian Hamilton's assignment to the Mediterranean, Kitchener allowed him to leave with neither a plan nor adequate maps, and knowing the lack of preparations and the potential difficulties of the mission, the Staff allowed this to pass without comment.<sup>85</sup> If the War Office thus left Hamilton ill-prepared to assume the offensive, he did nothing except exaggerate his plight. In "preparation" for the military campaign, Hamilton left his administrative staff in Egypt. Among the numerous calamities resulting from this misguided policy was the oversight of Hamilton's General Headquarters in failing to coordinate with his Director of Medical Services for the evacuation of casualties!<sup>86</sup>

Against slender but tenacious Turkish opposition the amphibious assault of 25 April ground to a halt, partly because of Hamilton's refusal



to override the obvious mistakes of his subordinates, of which he had timely knowledge and the means to rectify the errors. As the situation on the Peninsula stalemated, the War Council authorized the dispatch of two New Army divisions to Hamilton as reinforcements. He devised an ambitious and intricate plan for their use, involving a heavy attack by the ANZAC Corps in order to pin Turkish troops while the new divisions (the 10th and 11th) undertook a night amphibious landing farther up the coast at Suvla Bay.

The failure of the offensive in this operation sealed the fate of the campaign. On 7 August the ANZACs lost the opportunity to seize the high ground of the key Chunuk Bar position because of the lethargy of a single column commander. Up the coast at Suvla, the new IX Corps wasted 48 hours as its 20,000 men faced only 1,500 Turks. Although the Corps was in an excellent position to outflank the Turks engaged at Anzac Cove, and there were no Turkish reinforcements for 30 miles, the generals uniformly refused to take the initiative and instead, "consolidated" their positions.<sup>87</sup> The Dardanelles Commission, in its investigation, cited Hamilton for committing unseasoned troops to the most difficult part of a complex operation. They further condemned the conduct of the 11th Division commander, Major-General Hammersley, and his leading brigade commander, Brigadier-General Sitwell, for not showing the energy or decision required by the situation. The Commissioners also found fault with the corps commander, Stopford, and with Hamilton, for failing to intervene and speed things up.<sup>88</sup> After the war, Liman von Sanders wrote that, had the British appointed a young and energetic general to lead the enterprise, they could have placed the entire Turkish



force on the Peninsula in an untenable position any time during the first 24 hours of the landing.<sup>89</sup> It should be noted that during the entire operation at Suvla, Hamilton never once went ashore. Perhaps the only success of Gallipoli as an offensive operation, and a negative one at that, was that it denied the Turks the chance to take the initiative against the Suez Canal in 1915, as most of the Turkish 4th Army redeployed<sup>90</sup> to the Constantinople area during the campaign.

#### MACEDONIA--

If the forces at Gallipoli could make no headway on the offensive, those in Macedonia had even less chance to do so. The first formation to arrive at Salonika, the 10th Division, late of the Dardanelles, came without howitzers or transport and with only a few field batteries. It was an ominous portent of the shortages which would plague the British in this theater.<sup>91</sup>

Perhaps the best time to initiate an offensive in the Balkans would have been in February of 1915, when a still vigorous Serbia could indeed have been saved. Had a combined Allied force landed then, instead of eight months later, the Balkan Front would have taxed Austria to the limit, and have discouraged Bulgarian participation. In the event, the only Allied offensive in 1915 was that of Sarraill's French contingent which, during November, engaged 24 Bulgarian battalions, thus allowing the remnants of Serbia's exhausted army to retreat to the Adriatic coast. Thereafter, the Allied withdrawal to the environs of Salonika prompted the wags of the Central Powers to dub the perimeter "the greatest internment camp in Europe."<sup>92</sup> Sarraill's 1916 offensive, designed to bring the Rumanians into the war, got off to a shaky start in September because of

an unexpected Bulgarian spoiling attack. Milne's two British corps had the unspectacular mission of pinning down Bulgarians to prevent their redeployment to the area of the main Allied drive. Thanks to Robertson they could not even achieve this task, and the Bulgarians shifted five regiments from their sector opposite the British lines. To support his program of maximum concentration on the Western Front, Robertson had denied the Salonika Army artillery, mules, and mountain-warfare equipment. Further, he subordinated the theater's logistics to Egypt in order to assure that Milne would not have the requisite supplies to attempt an offensive. The obvious problem was that Sarraill, as Allied Commander-in-Chief, had secured the political support for the attack, and Milne's embarrassment at not being able to hold up his end reflected back on the British government.

After another disheartening season of mounting secondary efforts to aid the French contingent in 1917, Milne was determined to retrieve British honor during the 1918 offensive. All of his efforts to secure men and shells for the Allied attack met with entrenched opposition by the Westerners at home. Finally, the new French Commander-in-Chief, Franchet d'Esperey, telegraphed to Paris to ask for the personal intercession of Premier Clemenceau with the British government to get Milne the required ammunition. Twenty-four hours before the start of the offensive, one<sup>93</sup> fifth of the shells requested finally reached Milne's army. Predictably, the September 1918 attack went no better for the British than previous ones. The lack of material doomed the assault to high casualties and and no appreciable gains. Nevertheless, the effort was sufficient this time to prevent any Bulgarian units from transferring to the French sector.

By 20 September the French had broken through in enough force that the Bulgarians opposite Milne had to retreat in order to maintain a line. An air patrol from No. 47 Squadron, Royal Air Force (R.A.F.) notified Milne of the Bulgarian movements and he hastily organized a pursuit. During the ensuing weeks, what the British could not accomplish in the trenches due to a parsimonious General Staff, they achieved from the air against the fleeing Bulgarian columns. Packed into the narrow defiles of mountain passes, Bulgarian troops and supply columns made excellent targets for R.A.F. fighters and bombers which mercilessly harassed them. The retreat turned into a rout.<sup>94</sup>

Franchet d'Esperey's offensive succeeded in knocking Bulgaria out of the war. The immediate consequences were that Turkey sued for peace, the Austrians withdrew from the Italian Front, and Ludendorff (German Chief-of-Staff)<sup>95</sup> advised the Kaiser to seek a negotiated peace. If this was possible in 1918, could it have been in 1916? Milne thought so, and had argued for a resolute Allied offensive for nearly two years. He correctly surmised that since the Bulgarians were in the war strictly for territorial aggrandizement, they would lose the enthusiasm to continue once they were dislodged from Macedonia. Additionally, if the Allies could have penetrated to Bulgaria, Rumania might have been kept active and a land route opened to Russia. Turkey would have been isolated from German munitions supply, and the Austrian Empire, under the pacific Emperor Karl, might have had second thoughts about continuing the war. Had Britain's War Council and General Staff participated whole-heartedly in the support of Allied offensives in Macedonia, the course of the war may have taken an early turn in favor of the Allies.

PALESTINE--

After nearly 15 months of an essentially static defense of the Suez Canal, British forces in Egypt under Sir Archibald Murray undertook a phase of what can be described as the "offensive defensive". Murray considered it desirable to advance into the Sinai in order to shorten his defensive line and deny the Turks access to strategic wells along the invasion routes to the Canal. He advanced a standard gauge railroad and a water pipeline across the desert to El Arish, but had no intention of invading Palestine. En route, Murray repulsed a major Turkish expedition at Romani in August of 1916, but failed to pursue because his headquarters were located too far behind the lines to exercise effective control, and there were too few aircraft in the theater (16) to give him timely notice of the enemy rout.<sup>96</sup> The outbreak of the Arab Revolt in June had momentarily captured the attention of the War Council, which then encouraged Murray to press on for the purpose of stimulating the uprising. By December the Council asked Robertson and Murray about the feasibility of an offensive against Palestine. Murray said the enterprise would require two extra divisions and Robertson agreed. However, Robertson persuaded the War Council that any available forces had to be committed to France in support of the upcoming offensive by French General Nivelle. The result was that Robertson took one division away from Murray prior to the advance into Palestine. Nevertheless, the War Council, encouraged by Murray's success in clearing Sinai, authorized his continued advance across the border into Palestine. At Gaza, on 26 March, Murray attacked the Turks and nearly broke their position. In fact, Cairo had intercepted a Turkish radio transmission to Constantinople which announced the Gaza commander's intention to surrender. Through staff error and the distance

between Headquarters and the Army, this intelligence never reached the field. At the precise moment when the Turks were contemplating surrender, Murray called off the attack on the grounds that fatigue and scarcity of water would soon tell on the troops. Murray's dispatch to the authorities at home was so enthusiastic that it escaped nearly everyone in Whitehall that a complete victory had not been achieved. Robertson, without any guidance from the War Council, ordered Murray to exploit his success and pursue the Turks to Jerusalem. Thereupon Murray renewed his attack on the Gaza positions, now greatly reinforced, during late April and suffered a decisive repulse. After Murray's defeat at Second Gaza, the War Council replaced him with Robertson's choice, General Sir Edmund Allenby.<sup>97</sup>

"The Bull", as Allenby was known to his troops, attributed much of his success in the campaigns of 1917 and 1918 to Murray's extension of the railroad and pipeline through the Sinai.<sup>98</sup> The decision of the War Council to reinforce Palestine after Second Gaza also had the effect of de facto acknowledging Allenby's theater as the most important one outside of France. Lloyd George pledged to support Allenby in every way possible as long as he could take Jerusalem by Christmas. Allenby's first dramatic success, Beersheba, proved that under proper guidance, seasoned troops could take positions considered impregnable on the Western Front. Of course, the lack of high casualties in Palestine, due to the lower intensity of combat, assured Allenby of having many more well-trained troops survive to use their experience another day. This situation never graced the generals who presided over the "mincing machine" in the trenches of France and Flanders. Allenby's successful "one-two" punch during the double battle of Beersheba/Third Gaza was a simple product of

careful preparation, deception, and adequate measures for the supply of water. He drove the Turks into open country from their prime defense line and pursued them with mounted troops until they reorganized behind the screen of a German-inspired counterattack. After the pursuit, Allenby could do little until the standard gauge railway caught up with his forces. During this interlude, the General Staff took his 52nd and 74th Divisions for the Western Front and replaced British units in the 10th, 53rd, 60th, and 75th with newly raised Indian battalions. With only one division, the 54th, retaining its original composition, Allenby had to absorb and train new personnel in preparation for the 1918 campaign season. Fortunately his cavalry divisions, essential for a mobile victory, and of little use on the Western Front, remained intact.

On his own initiative, Allenby caught the Turks off guard again at Megiddo on 18 September 1918. After Lawrence led the Arab Northern Army in a spectacular feint to draw the Turks' attention inland, Allenby struck along the coast, destroying two armies and netting over 100,000 prisoners. During the pursuit, Allenby's cavalry proved that it could successfully charge unbroken infantry, in the absence of barbed wire, and win. During September and October, on ten out of twelve occasions the cavalry conducted mounted attacks on infantry in defensive positions and routed the enemy. Employing the reverse of a Napoleonic maxim, Allenby's cavalry commanders marched united and then divided into small, mutually supporting units to close with the Turks at high speed. Thus, this campaign marks the last use of large formations of horse cavalry for offensive purposes.

Allenby's use of the offensive always brought decisive results.

His methodical preparations and scrupulous adherence to the principles of war (see especially the chapter on Surprise) did a lot toward reducing the chance of a reverse. Additionally, he always had the good sense to abandon an attack promptly when the objective ceased to be worth the risk or the cost.<sup>101</sup> His campaigns must be accorded the honor of being the most tactically effective and manpower efficient in a war primarily known for gains of yards at the cost of thousands.

#### MESOPOTAMIA--

In tracing the roots of the Kut disaster, the Mesopotamia Commission cited the lack of preparedness of the pre-war Indian Army for an offensive role. When General Sir O'Moore Creagh succeeded Kitchener as Commander-in-Chief of India on 9 September 1909, he brought a strong economy policy into effect with the blessings of both Whitehall and the Government of India. All establishments suffered, especially the medical service. On the outbreak of war the situation immediately worsened when Britain, India's source of heavy munitions and trained officers, rerouted these commodities to the Western Front.<sup>102</sup>

Indian military authorities demonstrated little concern over the obvious shortcomings of their army during the ensuing campaign in Mesopotamia. In testimony given before the Commission, Major-General Sir Stanley von Donop (Master-General of the Ordnance) stated that it was not until December of 1915, that is after Ctesiphon, that any requests reached him from India for heavy guns for Mesopotamia. The Indian Staff did not provide a list of complete requirements until 26 May 1916, after an inquiry by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. During this period, Townshend's force had to attack Turkish trenches without heavy



gun support, and Sir Fenton Aylmer's Kut relief column suffered from the same deficiency. If India did not have the capacity to produce heavy weapons (or the inclination to ask for them), the Commission found it inexcusable that neither Duff nor Hardinge initiated any program for the sub-continent to supply the forces in Mesopotamia with other necessary materials within its capabilities. As of mid-1916 the Expeditionary Force was deficient in wire-cutters, telephones, water carts, flare pistols, tents, mosquito nets, sun helmets, handgrenades, and medical supplies of all kinds, which the Indian economy could have produced with a minimum of disruption.<sup>103</sup>

If low budgets, no heavy guns, and general lack of supply hampered operations in Mesopotamia, transport problems made them impossible altogether. Both the India Office in Britain and the Indian Government failed to realize that offensive operations in Mesopotamia were dependent on the capacity of the port of Basra. Its primitive unloading facilities, especially during the years 1915 and 1916, limited ships to discharging cargos only at a painfully slow rate. Additionally, Duff and his staff visited neither Basra nor Bombay, the Indian terminus of the supply route,<sup>104</sup> in order to appreciate the transport situation. Similarly, Nixon underrated the difficulties of getting reinforcements up the Tigris, the only line of communications, given his lack of river transport.

Given the material deficiencies of the forces in Mesopotamia, it comes as no surprise that Townshend's division could not maintain an offensive against a superior Turkish army at Ctesiphon. The failure of this offensive, and the ensuing siege and surrender of Townshend's force, allowed the Turks to transfer their XIII Corps northward into



Persia to foil a Russian expedition in September of 1916. <sup>105</sup> After the Kut debacle, Robertson wished only to stabilize the front at Amara. The War Council and Nixon's replacement, Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude (Robertson's choice), wanted to renew the advance on Baghdad. On 28 September the War Council authorized the building of a railroad to support offensive operations in Mesopotamia. Their intention, at last <sup>106</sup> revealed, was to extend British influence in this part of the world.

Maude, not wanting to contradict Robertson's wishes, made several cautious advances beginning in December. With a five-to-one superiority over the Turks he methodically worked his way up to Kut by February of 1917. Grand Duke Nicholas, Russian Commander-in-Chief, informed the British that he would "co-operate" by launching an offensive aimed at Baghdad. This communication had the effect of bringing Robertson over to the side of the War Council. He urged Maude to reach the city before <sup>107</sup> the Russians did, regardless of casualties. He need not have worried. With four infantry divisions and one cavalry division in the attack, and another division plus one brigade securing his line of communications, Maude expeditiously, if ponderously, moved to occupy Baghdad in March. His campaign was akin to swatting a flea with a sledgehammer--and missing. The main Turkish force, barely over 15,000 strong, avoided decisive engagement and escaped, according to their commander, because <sup>108</sup> of the slowness of the British.

Under Marshall, Maude's successor, the weakened Turks fell victim to Allenby's tactics of the mobile battle. By 30 October 1918, Marshall had completed the encirclement of the Turkish army and forced its surrender. In this backwater of empire, the final success of the offensive seems almost an anticlimax. The misapplication of the

offensive during the campaign of 1915 is the most captivating aspect of the theater. While the successive advances from Basra to Qurna, Amara, and even Kut could be construed as "defensive" consolidation of an objective already achieved, the march on Baghdad was unmistakably offensive in nature. It was based on faulty political and military assessments, and was attempted with tired and numerically insufficient forces. The only result was the loss of a reinforced infantry division and an additional 23,000 casualties among the relieving forces.<sup>109</sup>

#### CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

In a war remembered for the mismanagement of the offensive, the secondary theaters offer few exceptions to the dismal norm. The War Council's initial enthusiasm for the naval attack on the Dardanelles constituted the most promising moment of the campaign. The subsequent failure of the naval and military commanders to energetically maintain the initiative produced the costliest failure and the greatest "lost opportunity" of the peripheral fronts. In Macedonia, the higher direction threw away another chance for decisive results by denying the British Salonika Army the resources to participate in Allied offensives. Throughout the war there seemed to be no appreciation in Whitehall for the tremendous potential of a serious offensive in the Balkans. To Milne's credit, he vigorously pursued the Bulgarians in the aftermath of the French breakthrough in 1918. The Palestine front, often denied essential resources also, nevertheless provides the most dramatic examples of successful offensive combat in World War I. It is interesting to speculate the results which might have been attained on more decisive

peripheral fronts under the leadership of the enlightened and methodical Allenby. If offensive timidity was responsible for the failure at the Dardanelles, then the Mesopotamian debacle can be attributed to offensive precipitousness. Townshend's ill-considered advance up the Tigris contrasts sharply with the orderly offensives of Maude and Marshall which, although successful, were relatively inconsequential in terms of British Grand Strategy.

CONCENTRATION

"Concentration of superior force, moral, and material, at the decisive time and place, and its ruthless employment in the battle are essential for the achievement of success."

110

--Field Service Regulations 1920

Perhaps the most important part of this definition is ". . . at the decisive time and place . . . ." This implied to Robertson, Wilson, French, Haig, etc., that there could be only one decisive time and place. For them, this was the Western Front. The time was variable, but usually meant whenever they considered that enough men and munitions were at hand to launch an offensive. This narrow Clausewitzian interpretation virtually insured the continuance of the trench stalemate, given the primacy of defensive weapons at the time. With millions of men concentrated on a 400 mile front from the North Sea to Switzerland, no progress could be made until a solution to the trinity of barbed wire, the machinegun, and the trench line was discovered. Heavy artillery and more men did not break the stalemate. It was not until the British introduction of the tank and the German adoption of infiltration tactics that the Western Front could be altered more than a few miles in either direction. All through the war, the Westerners cried for an end to the wasteful secondary efforts outside France and Flanders so that proper concentration could be achieved on the Western Front. In studying the attritional battles of the First World War, one is continually drawn to the description of a Western Front planning conference so ably penned by C. S. Forester in his novel, The General: "In some ways it was like the debate of a group

of savages as to how to extract a screw from a piece of wood. Accustomed only to nails, they had made one effort to pull out the screw by main force, and now that it had failed they were devising methods of applying more force still, of obtaining more efficient pincers, of using levers and fulcrums so that more men could bring their strength to bear. They could hardly be blamed for not guessing that by rotating the screw it would come out after the exertion of far less effort; it would be a notion so different from anything they had ever encountered that they would laugh at the man who suggested it."<sup>111</sup>

Until the advent of the tank and infiltration tactics, the only alternative to the slaughter of the Western Front was to fight somewhere else. The Westerners looked upon such notions as wasteful dissipation of effort and a violation of concentration. Winston Churchill was one of the first leaders to appreciate that concentration is a relative quality, and described it as such in his own list of military maxims which he drafted at the beginning of the war:

- "1. The Decisive theatre is the theatre where a vital decision may be obtained at any given time. The Main theatre is that in which the main armies or fleets are stationed. This is not at all times the Decisive theatre.
2. If the fronts or centres of armies cannot be broken, their flanks should be turned. If these flanks rest on the seas, the manoeuvres to turn them must be amphibious and dependent on sea power.
3. The least-guarded strategic points should be selected for attack,<sup>112</sup> not those most strongly guarded."

This is what the British military theorist B. H. Liddell Hart would later

put forward as the Indirect Approach in war: grand strategically indirect in this case against Germany, but very direct against the Turks. Although Lloyd George's assertion that peripheral campaigns would "knock the props out from under Germany" was invalid because Turkey and Bulgaria depended much more on Germany than vice versa, it must be remembered that this was a coalition war in which Turkey and Bulgaria had not only considerable military forces, but considerable territorial claims which someone would have to prevent them from realizing. Remembering that it was the Royal Navy's blockade that bought ruin to Germany, and not Allied exertions on the Western Front, Britain's role in secondary theatres comes into clearer perspective. As a nation wedded to sea-power with a centuries-old tradition of maritime strategy as opposed to Continental involvement, Britain's most effective mission during the war could have been speedy elimination of the secondary theaters. It is unfortunate that more of the Empire's power could not have been concentrated in an effort to overwhelm Germany's peripheral allies one by one.

#### THE DARDANELLES--

Concern over concentration for the Dardanelles venture began with the naval plan. Lord Fisher, the First Sea Lord, disgruntled over the lukewarm reception accorded his Baltic invasion scheme by the War Council, expressed second thoughts about the dispersion of the Royal Navy in a letter to Churchill. The First Lord's reply included a carefully prepared appreciation which proved conclusively that British strength vis-à-vis Germany in the North Sea would not be diminished by the Dardanelles project. In fact, over and above the requirements necessary to insure a safe margin at home,

the British possessed 21 old battleships (exclusive of the newer semi-dreadnoughts Nelson and Agamemnon) complete with crews and their own ammunition.<sup>113</sup> As most of these ships were due to be scrapped shortly, they represented the most economical concentration of force for the mission.

After the demise of the naval operation, the lack of the application of the principle of concentration to the land effort contributed to its ultimate failure. At the highest level, the War Council, no decision was ever made as to the relative importance of the upcoming offensive by Sir John French on the Western Front as opposed to the attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula by Hamilton. In the event, both efforts failed for lack of resources, but whereas the forces employed at Gallipoli would not have turned the tide at Aubers Ridge, had a fraction of the power committed to that offensive been available to Hamilton, the Dardanelles would have been secured.<sup>114</sup> In fact, Sir Douglas Haig's Corps expended several times the amount of artillery ammunition in one day as Hamilton had available during the entire landing operation in April.

The Turkish official historian asserted that had the British invaded Gallipoli with six divisions, instead of four, Hamilton could have overwhelmed the defenders and perhaps opened the Straits.<sup>115</sup> Kitchener's pronouncements notwithstanding, as early as the beginning of February 1915, up to nine divisions were available for operations: the two divisions of the ANZAC Corps, the 29th Division, and the Royal Naval Division, all subsequently employed during the April landing; and four divisions of the Territorial Force.<sup>116</sup>

As noted previously, the naval and military staffs in London did not

meet jointly to participate in active planning for the Dardanelles campaign. Therefore, prior to the naval attack, the Imperial General Staff had no opportunity to voice opinions or objections to its sister service. Major-General Sir Charles Callwell, Director of Military Operations, had studied the problem of seizing the Dardanelles on three separate occasions and had definite ideas on the employment of ground forces during such an undertaking. In contrast to the plan finally adopted by Hamilton, Callwell favored a strong combined effort which would concentrate all troops in a broad front landing north of Gaba Tepe (i.e., the Anzac Cove area) for the purpose of quickly reaching the Narrows and isolating Turkish forces in the south.<sup>117</sup> This, from the standpoint of concentration, would have been a much better plan than Hamilton's, which dispersed two divisions to Anzac Cove, one to Cape Helles, and one to Bulair for a feint. Perhaps the worst aspect of Hamilton's plan was that it did not provide for the most common occurrence in war--partial success. He left himself no floating reserve with which he could decisively influence the action ashore once the situation had been developed by the assault waves.<sup>118</sup> Another sad feature of the landing operation was that the concentrated power of the Royal Navy's big guns (up to 15-inch caliber) proved almost useless in support of the Army. In the absence of perfected techniques of shore bombardment, the battleship guns, with flat trajectories and armor piercing ammunition, could not hit Turks in entrenched positions and lacked the high explosive effect necessary for antipersonnel work. During the landings, the fleet's guns also lacked accurate fire direction which could have been provided by aircraft or forward observers.



Any requests for fire originating from the Army took at least half an hour to reach the ships.<sup>119</sup>

After the initial failure of the expedition to move inland off the beaches, Hamilton, through Hunter-Weston at Helles, launched minor frontal attacks without adequate artillery preparation. These futile assaults, needless to say, made no appreciable gains and succeeded only in producing British casualties. Revealing his rationale for such conduct, Hamilton told the Dardanelles Commissioners that, "The vital thing was to make good, and to make good we ought to have had ample artillery, especially howitzers. We had not, and there was nothing for it but to try and get on, as you say, by a sacrifice of human life."<sup>120</sup> In spite of Hamilton's excuses about artillery in this chilling revelation, the Commission would not allow him the same out twice. Part of his explanation of the failure at Suvla included a lack of artillery when, in truth, the requisite guns were available in Egypt and at Mudros for the operation, but Hamilton simply did not utilize them.<sup>121</sup> Not only did Hamilton fail to provide the necessary concentration of firepower for his offensives, but he and his subordinates, chiefly Stopford, neglected the consequences of a high concentration of troops in a barren area. The IX Corps at Suvla had to ration water to the troops at the rate of one pint per day during the scorching heat of August simply due to lack of attention to the problem.<sup>122</sup>

Perhaps the only cognizance of concentration in regard to Gallipoli, and that in the negative sense, emanated from Robertson on his appointment as Chief of the Imperial General Staff. As the War Council discussed partial withdrawal from the Peninsula, Robertson demanded a total evacuation:

"Retention of Helles means dispersion, not concentration of effort." <sup>123</sup>

With the War Council chagrined over the whole campaign, Robertson used his newly acquired strength to press the Council into recording on 28 December 1915 that, "From the point of view of the British Empire, France and Flanders will remain the main theatre of operations." <sup>124</sup>

#### MACEDONIA--

Throughout the campaign in Macedonia, the British Salonika Army could never achieve effective concentration for offensive action. The Westerners treated the theater with thinly veiled contempt. In early 1916 not even the powerful Commander-in-Chief of France's armies, Marshal Joffre, could induce Robertson to reinforce Macedonia with as much as a battalion. He did convince Robertson to accept Sarraill as Allied Commander-in-Chief, but could not secure the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's consent to allow British forces to undertake offensive operations <sup>125</sup> ordered by Sarraill until six months later.

During September of 1916, Lloyd George (then at the War Office) became concerned about the imminent collapse of Rumania and wished to strengthen the British effort in the Balkans. Robertson maintained that concentration on the Western Front was critical, and forthcoming offensive operations there would surely take pressure off Rumania. In fact, actions on the Western Front did not divert any German units from the Balkans. Under pressure from Russia and France, Robertson finally released the 60th Division for deployment to Macedonia. It arrived in late December <sup>126</sup> in time for the fall of the Rumanian capital of Bucharest. The limited British offensives of 1916 lacked the reserves to secure even the meager

gains attained. Milne felt trapped. He did not have enough material to participate fully in the Allied offensives for the purpose of gaining a decision, and he did not have enough men to maintain the pace of attrition with the Bulgarians.<sup>127</sup>

Sarrail's 1917 offensive pitted 252 Allied battalions against 240 for the Central Powers. With a very slight numerical edge, he could only hope to make a breakthrough by deceiving the enemy as to his point of concentration through the use of simultaneous attacks at several places. The lack of British munitions prohibited this and Sarrail had to resort to consecutive assaults announced by several days of artillery preparation.<sup>128</sup> The resulting Allied gains were predictably small.

In London, the new War Cabinet reassessed the Balkan situation. General Smuts of South Africa (Minister without Portfolio) advised that Macedonia should receive either the highest priority or be left to die on the vine. He personally favored the latter as the theater required an inordinate amount of shipping to maintain. That July, Lloyd George withdrew one of Milne's divisions and most of his heavy artillery for use in Palestine. He argued to his French colleagues that this represented a depletion of only 3 per cent of the Allied force in Macedonia, while it meant an increase of 14 per cent to Allenby's army. The Allied Commander-in-Chief, Sarrail, became indignant at the withdrawal, and refused to cover the gap left by the departed division. Milne had to stretch his four remaining divisions to cover the 90 miles allotted to the British. After the fall of Jerusalem, Allenby shipped many of Milne's siege guns back to Macedonia in early 1918. This welcome reinforcement

however, was offset in June when the War Office withdrew 12 of Milne's infantry battalions for the Western Front. By the time of the final offensive in 1918, the British were actually outnumbered by the Bulgarians that they were expected to attack. In addition to the demands of the Western Front, Milne's army was further depleted by the ravages of malaria and influenza.<sup>129</sup> In sum, the Macedonian Front could never realize its full potential because the governmental and military leaders at home never allowed the British Salonika Army the concentration of men and resources comensurate with its Allied mission.

#### PALESTINE--

As noted under Offensive, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff robbed Murray of the chance of success at First and Second Gaza by not only failing to provide the extra two divisions he needed, but also talking one away from him as well. Allenby, with the support of Lloyd George, could muster the forces necessary to break the Gaza Line. His plan depended on concentration at two points, as this afforded the best chance of achieving the power necessary to rupture the defense. The Turks had one cavalry and nine infantry divisions (45,000 rifles, 1,500 sabers, 300 guns) distributed nearly evenly over their defensive frontage but with particular strength in the Gaza area. To strike the eastern flank at Beersheba, Allenby massed two mounted and four infantry divisions and two extra brigades (47,500 rifles, 11,000 sabers, 242 guns). For the "feint" on the western (Gaza) flank he assembled three infantry divisions and two brigades (35,000 rifles, 1,000 sabers, 218 guns). In between these widely separated forces he left only a small covering force of one

mounted division (5,000 sabers and 12 guns).<sup>130</sup> While the concentration opposite Beersheba provided an overwhelming superiority at one point, the concentration at Gaza was just as necessary. In order to insure the success of the Beersheba operation, Allenby had to distract the Turks toward Gaza. Only a strong attack supported by half his artillery could cause the Turks to divert their reserves. Thus the Gaza operation, a deep and costly advance in itself, proved a valuable distraction at the critical moment.<sup>131</sup> Of course none of this would have been possible had not Lloyd George, in turn, been able to concentrate the necessary resources in Palestine. This he could not achieve until he had successfully<sup>132</sup> engineered Robertson's resignation in February of 1918.

During the 1918 Megiddo campaign, Allenby accomplished similar feats of concentration. Against 15 miles of front, manned by 8,000 Turks with 103 guns, he massed 35,000 men and 383 guns with 12,000 cavalry in reserve for the pursuit. To cover the other 45 miles of the front, he left only 22,000 infantry and 157 guns.<sup>133</sup> Allenby's success in concentration must be viewed in light of the theater in which he operated. At that time Palestine had only rudimentary lines of communication and additionally only limited sources of water. That Allenby could mass men and resources under these conditions, far more primitive than on the Western Front, is a tribute to his meticulous planning and overall organizational ability. The rewards were undoubtedly worth the effort, however, as the same factors which hampered Allenby prevented the timely intervention of Turkish reserves during the great breakthrough battles.

MESOPOTAMIA--

During the 1915-16 campaign in Mesopotamia, the elements of Nixon's command were so dispersed, and the requirements for defense of the line of communications so excessive, that application of the principle of concentration was virtually impossible. In light of this situation, any attempt to find some military justification for Townshend's advance against Baghdad is useless. <sup>134</sup> Similarly, the various attempts of Sir Fenton Aylmer's force to relieve the besieged garrison at Kut disregarded concentration. Employing the excuse of limited time before Townshend would be forced to surrender, Nixon authorized piecemeal attacks by reinforcements to the theater which the Turks easily repulsed.

With the arrival of Maude, the subsequent British advance to Baghdad was conducted with proper attention to concentration. Here, as in Palestine, this was possible only after additional divisions reinforced the theater, and transportation lines improved sufficiently to handle the increased scale of the effort. Under Maude and Marshall, the British actually passed the optimum level of concentration. During 1917 and 1918, the British had more than enough infantry to deal with the reduced Turkish forces but not enough cavalry to complete their destruction through encirclement until the very end of the war. At the same time this situation prevailed, the General Staff was stripping Milne's British Salonika Army of its infantry. Had Mesopotamia been ordered to stand on the defensive and the excess forces been deployed to the Balkans, concentration would have been better served and perhaps the Bulgarians broken one year earlier.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The greatest "lost opportunity" from the standpoint of concentration

must remain the Dardanelles. Had half of the 13 divisions subsequently committed to Gallipoli been deployed on the first day of operations, the British could have seized the Straits. Although the Westerners condemned the Dardanelles as a waste of effort and a violation of concentration, their counterparts in the Central Powers thought otherwise. Chief of the German General Staff von Falkenhayn wrote, "If the straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea were not permanently closed to Entente traffic, all hope of a successful course of the war would be considerably diminished. Russia would have been freed from her significant isolation . . . which offered a safer guarantee than military successes that sooner or later a crippling of the forces of this Titan must take place automatically." <sup>135</sup>

Stated more succinctly by Admiral von Tirpitz (German Naval Minister) in his diary entry for 8 August 1915 (the Suvla landing), "Heavy fighting has been going on since yesterday at the Dardanelles . . . . The situation is obviously very critical. Should the Dardanelles fall, the world war <sup>136</sup> has been decided against us."

From the standpoint of potentially decisive results, the Macedonian campaign ranks second only to the Dardanelles. The myopic perspective of the Westerners however, not recognizing "relative" concentration, relegated the British Salonika Army to the status of a "non-starter" for all practical purposes. The unqualified success of British arms in Palestine during 1917 and 1918, on the other hand, was due in large measure to the proper, if modest, employment of concentration by the assertive Lloyd George/Allenby team. In Mesopotamia the tragic overextension of British forces, resulting in the Kut disaster, led to overcompensating concentration on a massive and unnecessary scale. The campaign stands as a "textbook" example of poor application of the principle of concentration.



### SURPRISE

"Surprise is the most effective and powerful weapon in war. Whether in attack or defence the first thought of a commander must be to outwit his adversary. All measures should therefore be taken to attain this end."

137

--Field Service Regulations 1920

There are several ways through which a commander can obtain surprise in war. One of the best methods is to prepare for upcoming operations with secrecy and rapidity. In the First World War this was almost impossible to achieve, especially on the Western Front, because of the large numbers of troops and mass of material employed on the offensive.

If secret and rapid preparations cannot be made, the next most desirable attainment is to deceive the enemy as to the true objective of the operation. Moreover, a commander may fool a complacent enemy by adopting a difficult or unexpected course of action. Through the use of mobility, an enemy can be kept in doubt as to where an army will strike. During 1914-1918, however, forces possessed insufficient mobility to achieve surprise except as part of an amphibious expedition or in the rare instances when cavalry could be employed effectively. But, just as a commander should strive to achieve surprise, he must also guard against being surprised. This reverse aspect of surprise--security--is treated later. Aside from taking adequate security precautions, the best way for a commander to avoid surprise is to be mentally prepared for the unexpected.

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In this chapter there is no section dealing with Mesopotamia because the restrictive nature of the terrain and communications, and the problems of security in this theater, surprise played no significant part in either



Turkish or British operations. Perhaps the only real surprise to the British was the fighting prowess and tenacity of the Anatolian Turk.<sup>139</sup>

Held in little regard by the senior officers of the pre-war British Army, the Turk proved a stubborn opponent on the defense. Although Turkish junior officers were generally of poor quality and senior officers, with notable exceptions, were mediocre at best, the Turkish soldier performed well under any leadership. The only detectable British use of surprise throughout the campaign occurred during Townshend's string of victories prior to Ctesiphon when his converging columns continually caught the Turks off guard from the desert flank.

#### THE DARDANELLES--

A recurring criticism of the Dardanelles campaign is that the British sacrificed surprise by the naval attacks of November 1914, and February and March 1915. It must be remembered, however, that this criticism is only valid in the context of a combined operation, which the War Council never seriously considered. The original plan called for the Royal Navy alone to force the Straits; the Army only became committed to a landing after the naval attacks terminated. As Churchill pointed out, if the fact that the Dardanelles constituted the jugular vein of the Ottoman Empire was obvious to the Allies, it was also appreciated by the Turks. As such, it was inevitable that the Turks would undertake to strengthen the defenses<sup>140</sup> of the Straits from the beginning of hostilities. In fact, however, between the bombardment of 3 November 1914 and that of 19 February 1915 the Turks did not appreciably increase the defenses. On the latter date Royal Marine landing parties experienced little difficulty in getting

ashore and destroying several gun emplacements. The real loss of surprise occurred when de Robeck failed to renew the naval attack after 18 March. This was correctly interpreted by the Turks as an indication that a land attack was in preparation.<sup>141</sup> It was at this moment that Liman von Sanders assumed command of the defenses and began feverish efforts to improvise strongpoints and, more important, roads to expedite the transfer of reserves. If troops had been landed immediately after the 18th, as Churchill, Asquith, Balfour, and Birdwood wanted, the Peninsula was ripe for capture. The weight of military opinion, however, sided with Hamilton's decision to go back to Egypt to sort out his army. According to Enver Pasha, ". . . their delay enabled us thoroughly to fortify the Peninsula, and in six weeks<sup>142</sup> time we had taken down there over 200 Austrian Skoda guns."

If Ian Hamilton had no choice of objectives on the Peninsula because of his mission to assist the navy, he certainly had a tactical choice of where to land. Unfortunately he picked all the obvious landing spots around Cape Helles and his leading brigades suffered as a consequence. Tactical surprise would have been achieved had he concentrated his efforts against less likely spots such as "Y" and "S" beaches where the troops landed entirely unopposed and in a position to encircle the Turks at the tip of the Peninsula.<sup>143</sup> According to British military theorist Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, Hamilton's best move would have been a surprise attack by a small holding force near Bulair to tie down Turkish reserves while the main force cleared the Straits defenses for the fleet. Should the main army meet with a sudden reverse, the entire expedition could re-embark while the holding force delayed the Turks. In view of

the benefits of victory, the risks of such a plan would have been worth-  
 144 while.

Hamilton's potentially finest hour was the Suvla landing in August. His plan for an amphibious assault, linked with a diversionary attack at Helles and a major coordinated offensive from Anzac, was brilliant in its conception and achieved complete surprise. It was however, an example of the success of one principle of war being wasted by inattention to the others. The plan miscarried because Hamilton entrusted the key landing to raw troops and inept subordinates and then failed personally to intervene to save the deteriorating situation.  
 145 The only coup of "surprise" during the Gallipoli campaign was the remarkable evacuation which is treated under Security.

#### MACEDONIA--

Because of the difficulties of security on the British front (see Security), most attempts to achieve any kind of surprise proved futile. The first Allied attempt to inject surprise into the campaign was the assault on the Bulgarian salient of Skra di Legen on 30 May 1918. Under General Guillaumat, the interim Allied Commander-in-Chief between Sarraill and Franchet d'Esperey, Allied artillery and patrol activity increased all along the front to deceive the Bulgarians as to the objective of the forthcoming attack. Bulgarian observation posts had monitored military activity but could not determine its focus. On the morning of 30 May, Greek troops advanced quickly from their trenches and scaled the mountainous Skra position, catching the Bulgarians completely by surprise. The only British contribution to the assault came from the howitzers of the  
 146 Royal Artillery.

Franchet d'Esperey's final offensive of 1918 is an excellent example of literally outwitting one's opponent. As early as August, the French Marshal increased security precautions behind the Allied lines to conceal the scale of his preparations. General von Scholtz, commanding the German 11th Army (composed chiefly of Bulgarians), noted the increased Allied activity in the Monastir sector and along the Vardar River, the two obvious invasion routes. Meanwhile Franchet d'Esperey secretly mounted Allied guns to cover the rugged Dobropolje sector, 20 miles east of Monastir. As September 15, the day of the attack, drew near, Allied artillery bombarded the entire front. Additionally, the British launched a diversionary attack along the Vardar which Scholtz had expected. The time seemed right and the Allied intent seemed clear--Scholtz transferred his reserve battalions to cover Monastir. The evening before the assault Allied gunners shifted the weight of their barrage to the Dobropolje and effectively isolated it by interdiction fire. Franchet d'Esperey had achieved his surprise.<sup>147</sup> The resulting Bulgarian collapse and surrender occurred within six weeks. As previously noted, the British participation in the 1918 offensive consisted of a costly diversion in which surprise was neither necessary nor desirable.

#### PALESTINE--

Allenby's campaign in Palestine is a paragon of the application of surprise in war. Until Allenby assumed command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, only the Arabs consciously utilized surprise in combat operations. In this regard, Lawrence's seizure of the port of Akaba by

a surprise attack from the land side after an arduous approach march  
148  
across desert, was a noteworthy achievement.

The spectacular gains made by Allenby's forces during 1917 and 1918 stemmed from battles which were based on concentration and surprise. The elements of Allenby's application of surprise, therefore, merit attention in some detail. Allenby never attempted to conceal the fact that an offensive would take place, as that would be impossible in any case. What he did was disguise the preparations in such a way that the weight and direction of the attack came as a complete surprise to the Turks. For the Battle of Beersheba, he constructed an elaborate ruse to convince the Turks that he intended to strike at Gaza on the opposite flank of the line. He kept the bulk of his forces opposite Gaza until the last possible minute before night marching them to attack positions. Similarly he delayed the accumulation of supplies and the advance of the water pipeline to avoid giving any clue of his intended point of concentration. Allenby's intelligence department prepared a dummy staff officer's notebook which "fell" into Turkish hands before the attack. The information in it led the Turks to believe that the British thought water acquisition problems precluded operations around Beersheba. So convincing was this assemblage of documents that the Turks disseminated the false intelligence to all their units with a warning about the consequences of losing classified material. Allenby also let misleading radio transmissions be sent in codes the Turks were capable of breaking. As time for the attack drew near, Allenby had the Royal Navy make conspicuous preparations for amphibious operations, and participate with the Army gunners in joint bombardments of Turkish coastal positions.

His new Bristol Fighters gained mastery of the air and prevented German observation of the final preparations. Last of all, his "feint" against Gaza was so strong that the Turks were entirely convinced that it was the main attack.<sup>149</sup> On the Beersheba flank constant cavalry demonstrations during the weeks preceeding the attack lulled the Turks into believing that the main assault, when it came, was simply another ineffectual cavalry demonstration.

The pursuit and subsequent operations provide further examples of how Allenby integrated surprise into planning whenever possible. When British forces faced a deadlock on the Jerusalem-Nablus Road, Allenby lulled the Turks by giving the appearance of continuing along that axis. He then suddenly shifted his forces south and struck the Turks astride the Jaffa-Jerusalem Road in a dawn surprise attack, during which British troops scaled steep ridges and caught the Turkish redoubt garrisons half asleep.<sup>150</sup> After the fall of Jerusalem, Allenby ordered the 52nd Division to secure lateral communications with Jaffa. This operation included seizing a bridgehead across the Auja River. Again the British lulled the Turks by shelling the positions on the opposite side of the river nightly as a form of harassment. On the night of the attack the 157th Brigade crossed the swollen river on rafts as the Turks sat out the "routine" bombardment. By the time the Turks resumed observation<sup>151</sup> in that sector the crossing had been effected.

For the Megiddo campaign of 1918, Allenby essentially used the Beersheba plan in reverse. Under cover of darkness he moved three divisions from the Jordan Valley and the Judaeen Hills to the coastal area. There they hid from air observation in olive woods and orange

groves or in already standing tentage north of Jaffa. On the east flank, the camps vacated by the transferred divisions were left standing and new ones constructed in addition. Allenby had 15,000 dummy horses made of canvas to fill the horse lines of the departed mounted units. Behind the front, mule-drawn sleighs raised clouds of dust to simulate training and activity. Each day several infantry battalions would march from Jerusalem to the bogus camps on the east flank and return to the city by night in trucks for a repeat performance the next day. The vacated headquarters kept up lively radio traffic for the Turks' benefit.

Lawrence sent Arab agents to Amman to bargain for large quantities of forage and staff officers made preparations for a Jerusalem Hotel to become the new "Headquarters" location right down to the laying of telephone lines!<sup>152</sup> These measures, along with strong air patrols to shield the real preparations, fooled the Turks completely. In fact, the deception was so successful that when an Indian deserter crossed to the Turkish lines on 17 September and warned them of the forthcoming attack, Liman von Sanders thought that the man had been planted by British Intelligence.<sup>153</sup> Thus in both the 1917 and 1918 campaigns, Allenby's adherence to the principle of surprise provided the key to successful offense.

#### CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

In the Dardanelles campaign, the theater commanders figuratively threw away the weapon of surprise. By consistently bad performance they squandered the potential to overwhelm the Turks when surprise had, in fact, been achieved. This phenomenon, it may be added, was to be

repeated by the Allies in the World War II Italian campaign at the battle of Anzio. It must be granted that geography and the conditions of British involvement left little scope for strategic (or even tactical) surprise in Macedonia and Mesopotamia. Understandably, little was accomplished in these theaters. Only in Allenby's Palestine campaigns of 1917-18 do we see systematic and decisive application of the element of surprise.



### SECURITY

"The security of a force and of its communications is the first responsibility of a commander. To guard against surprise; to prevent the enemy from obtaining information; to dispose his covering troops to allow his main forces to move and rest undisturbed; these are the considerations which must govern his actions in obtaining security. A force adequately protected retains its liberty of action and preserves its fighting efficiency against the day of battle."

154

--Field Service Regulations 1920

Security, in the broad sense, is national security and as such is not a purely military consideration. On the highest level both statesmen and commanders must be satisfied that the national security is provided for in any military plan. At the theater level, the commander-in-chief must monitor security and be the sole judge of when risks can be justified. <sup>155</sup> To prevent surprise, a commander must keep his covering force vigilant and undertake continuous reconnaissance. To deny information to the enemy, he must enforce measures of camouflage and deception, and provide policies for safeguarding critical documents. If he can successfully carry out these elements of security, the enemy will not be able to bring him to battle at a disadvantage.

### THE DARDANELLES--

The first failure of the British effort against the Dardanelles was linked to security. One of De Robeck's chief reasons, or excuses, for cancelling the naval attack was that if he forced the Straits his fleet

might be cut off from its base of supply. By this he presumably meant that "soft skinned" auxiliary ships would be more vulnerable to coastal artillery than his battleships. This worry seems excessive because the plan to force the Straits involved the methodical destruction of the forts on the way. In any event, if he reached Constantinople either the Turks would have collapsed very quickly, or he could have turned the fleet around and steamed back out. Any simple security problems could have been dealt with by the army, as under their original orders they were to provide such services. Of course after a delay of six weeks, and in the light of the "failure" of the naval attack, the army's mission became much more difficult. In this regard also, Kitchener's concern over the security of the Western Front caused him to delay the dispatch of the 29th Division. <sup>157</sup> This, too, seems to have been an excessive worry. Granted that the situation on the Western Front was vague, what concerned Kitchener was a massive redeployment of German troops from the East to the West. Not only was this an unlikely occurrence, but it would have taken many weeks to accomplish. In such a case, intelligence would give ample warning as units disappearing from the Russian Front were identified in France and Flanders. Even should such events have transpired, the presence of one division could hardly influence the campaign.

It appears that as late as seven months into hostilities the War Office lacked an appreciation of rudimentary document security. Members of Hamilton's staff in Alexandria received official correspondence from London through regular mail, addressed "Constantinople Field Force". <sup>158</sup> Additionally, Hamilton's choice of Alexandria as a staging area could not

have been worse. Technically still part of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt teemed with Turkish citizens and spies. If surprise for the initial landings was thus compromised, Hamilton later overcompensated for the earlier lack of security. The plans for the Suvla landing in August remained shrouded in such secrecy that only the highest commanders had any idea of what was to be accomplished.<sup>159</sup> The result was that subordinate commanders and men did not appreciate the necessity for initiative or a rapid advance off the beaches during the first day.

Very early in the war, the fledgling air services of the belligerents took up the traditional cavalry missions of reconnaissance and security. At first, the troops on the Peninsula were denied these benefits. Kitchener refused to send aircraft of the Royal Flying Corps (as the R.A.F. was known until 1918) to Gallipoli, maintaining the facade that it was a naval operation.<sup>160</sup> In turn, the Royal Naval Air Service (R.N.A.S.), with few planes to spare in the beginning, restricted its missions to spotting artillery fire for the fleet's guns. R.N.A.S. strength grew slowly at the Dardanelles, but by late 1915 two full wings, including seaplanes from H.M.S. Ark Royal, patrolled the sky over the Peninsula on a regular basis. During the last two weeks of the campaign, the R.N.A.S. held virtual air supremacy on the front and prevented enemy air observation of the preparations for evacuation.<sup>161</sup> The total withdrawal of British troops from Gallipoli was ordered by the War Council in December, and was executed by Birdwood between the 7th and 9th of January 1916. The operation stands as a model of security. Aside from the air activity noted above, units on the Peninsula undertook aggressive patrolling in conjunction with alternate periods of no activity. This

accustomed the Turks to a routine and discouraged them from probing the British lines. At the end, British troops set up rifles with crude self-firing devices to give the impression that their trenches were still manned. They also left several mines to encourage the Turks to keep their distance during the critical stages of the evacuation. In all, over 125,000 British soldiers withdrew from the Peninsula in successive stages over several nights. Although Hamilton, before his recall, had predicted the loss of 20 to 40 percent of the force during evacuation, thanks to stringent security the British suffered only three casualties during the entire operation.<sup>162</sup> Part of this success was also due to a proper balance between the initial lack of security and the extreme secrecy of Suvla.

#### MACEDONIA--

The Allied effort in Macedonia was plagued by security problems from the beginning. As Greece clung to technical neutrality throughout most of the war, German, Turkish, Bulgarian and Austrian agents, housed in their respective consulates at Salonika, could observe the arrival of Allied forces at the port. In fact, until the end of 1915, an express train ran daily between Salonika and Constantinople, allowing "diplomatic" mail to reach the Central Powers in a matter of hours. Finally, after a German air bombardment, allegedly guided by signals from one of the consulates, Sarraill authorized Allied military police to arrest the consular staffs. Information obtained during the arrests led to the exposure of an even greater number of enemy agents in the city during January 1916.<sup>163</sup> Even with the removal of this security liability, the Allies could never quite break the intelligence chain of peasant

informants which the Germans had recruited in the hinterlands.

In the realm of tactical or operational security, the British suffered a severe handicap. The main British area of interest, the Vardar River valley near Lake Doiran, was dominated by a 2,000 foot high land form called the Grand Couronné. Near its peak the Bulgarians established an observation post sunk into the solid rock face. The outside was protected by 12 feet of concrete and had a large observation slit covered by a steel grill. The feature was visible for miles and the British dubbed it "The Devil's Eye".<sup>164</sup> From this vantage point the British positions and supply railroad could be monitored as easily as looking at a map. The Bulgarians held the mountain until the final offensive in 1918, and until that time were able to calculate British movements and concentrations with precision. Repeated British failures during the various Allied offensives were due in a large measure to the nefarious and all-seeing "Devil's Eye".

#### PALESTINE--

During the first 15 months of the war the British forces in Egypt conducted a pure security operation, i.e., the defense of the Suez Canal. Under Sir Archibald Murray the concept of canal security expanded to include the Sinai. He justified his advance on the basis of economy of force. Instead of holding the entire length of the Canal, British troops could control the access routes to it by occupying key passes and wells. This would require far less effort and would have the additional advantage of keeping the Turks out of artillery range of the Canal. Murray's

Headquarters, in Cairo, seems to have had trouble in coordinating the activities of the army's far-flung covering forces under the new defence scheme. On one occasion (23 April 1916) a flying column of 2,500 Turks under Kress von Kressenstein covered 75 miles in three successive night marches and captured a complete British Yeomanry regiment of the Territorial Force at the Ogh Ratina and Qatia posts, in spite of the fact that an R.F.C. air patrol had reported the advance of the column on the 22nd.<sup>165</sup> Murray did not enjoy the benefits of this meager air reconnaissance for long, however, as his supply of aircraft dwindled steadily. For the rest of Murray's tenure a single German squadron<sup>166</sup> dominated the air over the Sinai and Palestine. Under such conditions the Turks could easily read Murray's intentions during First and Second Gaza.

Under Allenby, the Palestine Front received more resources, especially after Lloyd George removed Robertson from the General Staff. These forces included more aircraft which Allenby deemed essential to his operations. In addition to the measures of secrecy and deception noted under Surprise, Allenby actively employed his R.A.F. contingent in the gathering of intelligence and denying enemy aircraft the same opportunity. By late 1918 he possessed sufficient air strength to disrupt enemy communications and headquarters by offensive strikes. Prior to Allenby's great offensive of 19 September 1918, the R.A.F. achieved air supremacy in order to mask the offensive preparations. During June, German observation planes crossed the British lines 100 times in the space of one week. By September, R.A.F. strength and patrol activity had increased to such a

level that during the first three weeks of that month only four German aircraft successfully penetrated the British lines.<sup>167</sup> Thus, by strict attention to security, Allenby preserved the secrecy necessary to achieve his greatest coups of surprise.

#### MESOPOTAMIA--

The campaign in Mesopotamia, one of the worst examples of the application of security, grew from a fundamental misinterpretation of Imperial security requirements. While the War Council would have much rather employed Indian troops in a theater closer to Europe, they could not ignore their advisors at the India Office. Major-General Sir Edmund Barrow (Military Secretary) and Sir A. Hirtzel (Political Secretary) repeatedly warned the Council that, unless British forces defended the Persian Gulf, a Turkish directed Muslim holy war would threaten India itself. In the event they proved as wrong about this as they did in predicting a pro-British Arab rising in Mesopotamia. It was on the strength of Barrow's appreciation (see Objective) that Crewe telegraphed the Government of India in October of 1914 to prepare the 6th Division for contingency operations in the Persian Gulf.<sup>168</sup>

Townshend's ill-fated advance on Baghdad ignored security completely. Not only should the War Council have questioned the safety of the British expedition before authorizing the advance, but Nixon should have assessed the vulnerability of his command in terms of dispersion and communications security. Townshend, a vain egotist not unlike the American Major-General George Custer of the previous century, approached Baghdad as if he was conducting a punitive raid against savages. Undaunted by the reverse at



Ctesiphon, he decided to stand at Kut in much the same manner as he had during the famous siege of Chitral on the Indian frontier in 1895. The opposition, however, did not consist of ill-armed tribesmen in 1915-16, but a European trained and equipped army.

Even during the later period of British successes in Mesopotamia, the theater caused security headaches among members of the War Council. Thus it was the apprehension of a Turkish offensive to retake Baghdad that inspired Lloyd George to shift two divisions from Macedonia to Palestine in August of 1917 for the purpose of pinning the Yilderim Army Group.<sup>169</sup>

The most persistent security problem for British forces throughout the campaign in Mesopotamia remained the local Arabs. This is not to say that they were "anti-British" or "pro-Turk". Both sides treated them badly, ruined their crops, and destroyed their homes. Naturally they responded the only way they could, by hovering on the periphery of columns and camps to obtain loot. Most of the time they remained out of rifle range until dark when they could successfully infiltrate British or Turkish positions. During the latter stages of the campaign, Maude and Marshall established strict precautions to prevent stragglers or small parties from falling prey to the Arabs, and instituted strong line-of-communications guard units to protect supply columns.<sup>170</sup> More about the Mesopotamian campaign as "security" for India is included under Economy of Force.

#### CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Only two of the campaigns under examination grew out of Imperial security needs--Palestine and Mesopotamia. In Egypt and Sinai, the security



of the Suez Canal was well provided for during 1915 and 1916. The campaign ceased to be a security operation with the ensuing offensives into Palestine. It was here, in 1917-18, that Allenby achieved his greatest feats of surprise, largely due to skillful and enterprising security measures. The campaign in Mesopotamia, originally conceived as a precaution for the security of British oil sources, also grew into an offensive operation of some magnitude. Basic disregard for the security of the operating British forces, however, led directly to the unmitigated disaster at Kut. At the Dardanelles, initial lapses and misapplication of security served only to further muddle an already badly handled campaign. In the end, under the astute and innovative Birdwood, security measures shielded the withdrawal from Gallipoli-- a more successful, if less spectacular, operation than the 1940 Dunkirk evacuation. In Macedonia, the British faced security problems which, in fairness, they could have done little more to overcome than they did historically.

### MOBILITY

"Mobility implies flexibility and the power to manoeuver and act with rapidity, and is the chief means of inflicting surprise. Rapidity of movement for battle should, therefore, be limited only by physical endurance and the means of transportation available."

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--Field Service Regulations 1920

On the grand strategic scale, Britain's greatest asset for mobility was the Royal Navy. As Churchill noted, the fleet had the capacity to land 250,000 men anywhere in the Eastern Mediterranean at any time during 1915. Furthermore, these troops, whose destination could have remained a surprise, could have been transported in a fraction of the time that it would take for an equal number of Austrians or Germans to reach the same place.<sup>172</sup> The War Council, unfortunately, did not avail itself of the full potential of this capacity for strategic mobility.

In addition to striking capability, mobility affords the commander, as we see at Gallipoli, the opportunity to break off contact with the enemy when necessary. On the lower levels mobility is dependent on the training and physical fitness of the troops and the organization and efficiency of supply and transport services. Additionally, smooth staff work can mean the difference between optimum mobility and rear echelon muddle. The personality of a commander will also influence mobility, for not only does he choose the time and place of its application, but his will and nerve determine the rapidity and extent of pursuit operations which can alternately bring reward or ruin to the pursuing army.<sup>173</sup>

Lastly, mobility is highly dependent on factors of terrain and weather. A commander who appreciates these factors will take steps to overcome the handicaps which they impose.

#### THE DARDANELLES--

As previously noted, Kitchener killed the idea of a combined operation against the Dardanelles by announcing to the War Council that no troops were available. This was the greatest "lost opportunity" of the campaign, for Britain had the ships and the troops to take the Peninsula in February or March of 1915. The chance for such a coup of mobility would not appear a second time. Churchill's naval plan, which envisioned complete disengagement in the event of failure, did in fact miscarry on 18 March. At that time, the mobility of the fleet would have allowed a clean break and an end to the venture. After all, the Royal Navy had "demonstrated" and the Russians had retrieved their position in the Caucasus on their own. At that point the British had lost less men than in a single trench raid in France, and no ship of any consequence had been sunk.<sup>174</sup> Asquith, however, accepted the decisions of Hamilton and de Robeck and the assertion of Kitchener that the Army would carry the Straits by military force. Thus the chance to break off, when only the highly mobile fleet was involved, was thrown away by the Prime Minister.

During the landing operations of 25 April, Hamilton failed to utilize the fleet's mobility by adhering to an inflexible plan. Early in the operation, Turkish resistance at Cape Helles brought the 29th Division's attack to a halt. Just around the tip of the Cape, at "Y" Beach, troops

disembarked without opposition. Instead of allowing Hunter-Weston to feed reinforcements into the slaughter of the Cape, Hamilton should have exploited success at "Y" Beach. Naval officers, including de Robeck's Chief-of-Staff Commodore Roger Keyes, suggested this to Hamilton who<sup>175</sup> refused to override his subordinate.

The Suvla operation in August was an attempt by Hamilton to use amphibious mobility to outflank the Turks. Had he employed experienced troops and commanders in the landing force, it most certainly would have succeeded. It is a wonder that Hamilton, with the fleet at his disposal, did not undertake many more similar operations with a few of the eventual 13 divisions under his command.

#### MACEDONIA--

The greatest impediment to Allied mobility in Macedonia was the rugged nature of the terrain. This, coupled with undeveloped transportation routes, severely hampered the belated efforts to save Serbia in 1915. Ironically, in 1914 Kitchener had had the chance to dispatch Royal Engineers to improve the single-track railway between Salonika and Serbia but allowed the project to lapse. Such improvements would have eased Allied concentration and supply problems during late 1915 when Serbia desperately needed assistance. Under Guillaumat the Allies constructed light railways and secondary roads within the defensive perimeter to aid lateral communications. Although most of the roads were improved donkey tracks which washed out in the wet weather, they insured the Allies<sup>176</sup> superior mobility during the dry season when the front was most active.

British mobility suffered further because the greater part of Milne's

sector included malarial swamps. During the campaign ten times as many British troops were hospitalized for malaria as for wounds, and the equivalent of two divisions of men had to be invalided home as a result. Milne's efforts to combat the disease met with little success. Both the  
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Bulgarians and the British ended up evacuating the worst areas.

The 1918 offensive and subsequent Bulgarian rout, found the British Salonika Army deprived of any mobile forces save the R.A.F. As the War Office had withdrawn all mounted units from the theater, French and Serbian cavalry constituted the only ground pursuit force. Rising to the occasion, the French Jouinot-Gambetta Cavalry Brigade, a North African formation, advanced 57 miles in six days over mountains to liberate Serbia's second largest city, Skopje, ahead of the arrival of most of the retreating  
178  
Bulgarians. One can only speculate on the effects that a similar brigade of Australians or Indians would have had in the British sector.

#### PALESTINE--

Until the Allenby period, most mobile operations in this theater were of the unconventional variety. During 1915 and 1916, Senussi tribesmen of the Western Desert undertook a campaign to harass the British at the instigation of the Turks. Maxwell countered them with second-line troops, camelry, and armored car patrols. Strangely the Senussi failed to use their inherent mobility to advantage by the employment of guerrilla tactics. Had they done so, the British would have had to expend greater resources to eliminate them. Throughout the war, the most mobile troops available to the British were the Arabs operating with Lawrence. Armed and equipped on a light scale, they undertook raids against the vulnerable supply lines

of the Turks. Their expeditions could be entirely self-sufficient for up to six weeks, and they could cross 250 miles of rugged country in three days without stopping to water their camels.<sup>179</sup>

In Palestine, Allenby's Desert Mounted Corps could undertake operations which conditions in Europe precluded. The lack of concentration of troops and machineguns, and the relative scarcity of artillery fire permitted cavalry mobility to the extent that even mounted charges were possible, such as those at Beersheba which carried the Turkish positions. The real value of cavalry lay in its strategic mobility. A mounted unit could raid an enemy position 25 miles away in a single night operation. Infantry allotted the same task would require three or four days. The cavalry pursuit after Beersheba was not as effective as it might have been because the mounted troops had to fight their way through the main Turkish positions first. At Megiddo, Allenby did not repeat this mistake, but held the cavalry in reserve until the infantry broke through the enemy positions. In a fresh condition the cavalry could thus conduct the pursuit with more vigor.<sup>180</sup>

Having more than one source of mobility available aided Allenby in his deception at Beersheba. The Turks became so apprehensive of an amphibious landing behind Gaza that they paid too little attention to their desert flank.<sup>181</sup> The success of Allenby's mobile operations at Beersheba can be traced to two conditions. First, he realized that mobility depends on efficient communications, and second, he exercised his personal will and determination to keep the impetus of the pursuit alive in his troops.<sup>182</sup> During the ten days after Third Gaza his forces

advanced 50 miles through the Philistia plain and captured 10,000 Turks and 100 artillery pieces. The Turkish 7th and 8th Armies retreated to the line of the Judean Hills and the Auja River. More effective mounted action was only precluded by the fatigue of the cavalry and the lack of water.<sup>183</sup> The subsequent Turkish counterattack on the British right (12 November 1917) proved that the mounted forces could be just as effective on the defense. The Australian Mounted Division parried the attack by a mobile delaying action which secured the flank.<sup>184</sup>

At Megiddo Allenby used his cavalry as a pure exploitation force. Within the first 36 hours the Desert Mounted Corps had completed the envelopment of the 7th and 8th Armies, isolating the Turkish Headquarters, and initiated a pursuit of the 4th Army toward Damascus. The Corps covered 500 miles during the next 36 days and captured 48,000 prisoners. It operated at distances of up to 100 miles from the nearest source of supply, and during the entire campaign suffered only two percent casualties to enemy action.<sup>185</sup> Allenby's Megiddo campaign and subsequent pursuit to Damascus and Aleppo must be considered an unqualified success. Through intelligent use of the principles of war--especially mobility--he advanced the front line 350 miles, captured 75,000 prisoners and 360 guns. All this he accomplished with the loss of only 5,666 men.<sup>186</sup> In comparison, Haig lost ten times as many men on the first day of the Somme offensive and failed to penetrate the German lines.

#### MESOPOTAMIA--

Mobility in Mesopotamia was hampered by mud in the winter, floods

from swollen rivers in spring, and extreme heat in summer. The area abounded with dysentery, cholera, malaria, sandfly fever, smallpox, and typhus. The terrain, cut by wadis, had no roads--only unmetalled tracks. Below Baghdad (500 miles from the Gulf) there were no railroads. No modern port facilities existed at Basra in 1914, and only six to nine ships per month could discharge cargo there by lightering. The only transportation route suitable for military operations was the Tigris, navigable for about 50 miles upstream by small steamer.<sup>187</sup> The Turks fared a little better, being connected to Constantinople by a line of communications 1,255 miles long (867 miles by rail; 385 miles road and track). In sum, Mesopotamia was a mobility nightmare.

On the basis that these conditions were known in India prior to the war, the Mesopotamia Commission cited the General Staff and the Government of India for failing to provide adequate river transport for the expeditionary force. During the critical months of November 1915 to August 1916 only two-thirds to three-quarters of the force's logistical needs could be met by available means. In the opinion of the Commissioners, "The evidence shows conclusively that shortage of river transport was the chief cause of the failure to relieve Kut."<sup>188</sup> To make matters worse, Nixon requested that he be sent materials from depots in India to construct a light military railway between Basra and Nasariyeh to take up the logistical burden, and both Duff and Hardinge refused his request. Their excuse was that the impending capture of Baghdad by Townshend would<sup>189</sup> obviate the necessity for supply routes!

On the tactical level, Townshend made good use of the limited mobility



afforded him by terrain and the nature of his troops (infantry) by pinning the Turks with a frontal attack while a flanking column, cleverly placed by night, converged to force the Turks out of their entrenched positions. It was a maneuver which called for critical timing, which at Ctesiphon Townshend failed to achieve. As he habitually kept no tactical reserve, Townshend lacked the flexibility to salvage that battle, and lost heavily.<sup>190</sup> During the 1917 offensive, only Maude's slowness and the ineffectual pursuit by his cavalry commander prevented the Turks from sharing the fate of their comrades in Palestine.<sup>191</sup> Maude's cavalry had the opportunity to complete the rout of the Turks, but instead broke contact after sustaining only 23 casualties. Their commander offered the excuses that water was short and further advance would have been costly in the face of Turkish firepower. Under Marshall the British cavalry performed up to standard and during the 1918 offensive he succeeded in placing them astride the Turkish route of retreat.<sup>192</sup> At last, in Marshall, the British had a commander who appreciated mobility. It is unfortunate that he had not been appointed in 1915.

#### CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Paradoxically, the Dardanelles campaign provides some of the best and worst examples of mobility in the peripheral theaters. The naval operation encompassed the strategic and tactical mobility characteristic of Britain's historic role. The military commanders, on the other hand, failed to achieve a decision, in part, due to misuse (or non-use) of the

navy's mobility. Ironically, the only coup of mobility during the campaign was the final evacuation of the army from Gallipoli. In the Balkans and Mesopotamia, geography and "higher direction" neglect combined to hamstring British forces. While the situation never improved in Macedonia, belated efforts in Mesopotamia overcame the worst conditions, allowing an orderly advance and considerable tactical success by Marshall. While the British never availed themselves of the Royal Navy's mobility for an amphibious landing in Palestine, within that theater Allenby's campaigns demonstrated his masterful grasp of strategic and tactical mobility.

### ECONOMY OF FORCE

"To economize strength while compelling a dissipation of that of the enemy must be the constant aim of every commander. This involves the correct distribution and employment of all resources in order to develop their striking power to the utmost.

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--Field Service Regulations 1920

Economy of force implies that military effort will be directed toward a single main objective while providing adequate security for other areas. This security may be attained by either defensive or offensive means by detachments from the main forces. The ability of these detachments to accomplish their missions efficiently is the measure of economy of force. Another point to be borne in mind when considering economy of force in the First World War is the relative power of the defense over the offense during this period.

Robertson, speaking for the Westerners in his memoirs, asserted that the effort expended on the peripheral campaigns was a mistake and a dangerous dissipation of strength which imperilled the ultimate Allied victory.<sup>195</sup> This argument would carry more weight if Robertson had not continued by stating that the same situation prevailed during the Napoleonic Wars. The following table, derived from official British statistics, presents the proportion of men employed by the Empire in the various theaters, taking the Dardanelles as the unit.

FIGURE 3  
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MAN-DAYS

(Officers Excluded)

Dardanelles . . . . .	1.00
Salonika . . . . .	6.40
North Russia . . . . .	.08
Palestine . . . . .	12.20
Mesopotamia . . . . .	11.80
East Africa . . . . .	8.20
France . . . . .	<u>73.00</u>
TOTAL: . . . . .	112.68

In all, slightly over one-third of the British Empire's military man-days were spent outside of the Western Front. Robertson's criticism, therefore, would seem to have some validity--if the detached troops were necessary to the success of the Western Front. This, however, was not the case. Allied offensives in France and Flanders failed to make appreciable headway until the very last months of the war, after the Germans had dissipated their reserves in the advance of 1918. This was not due to lack of manpower, but rather to faulty attack doctrine. Furthermore, from the standpoint of attrition, the British offensives never yielded a loss ratio of less than three British casualties for two German ones, and often resulted in an even less desirable exchange rate of two for one.<sup>197</sup> In the end the Germans never did run out of men, they ran out of food. In fact, available German strength actually increased on the front throughout the war. In the absence of tanks and infiltration doctrine, the British soldiers from the

peripheral fronts could have served no purpose on the Western Front other than to increase the scale of the fruitless exchange of lives.

It is interesting to speculate the possibilities available to Britain if the War Council had adopted a defensive policy on the Western Front and used the surplus manpower to close out the peripheral theaters. Unfortunately, the French and the senior British generals exerted strong pressure for continued offensives in France and Flanders which the government could not afford to ignore. Thus, in absolute terms it is impossible to state whether the peripheral campaigns as a whole constituted a violation of economy of force without adopting an Eastern or Western stance. Certainly the West was the main theater. Just as certainly, decisions could be obtained only in the East--by a military campaign, that is. If Germany could not be defeated by land, at least her allies could. For Britain, an imperial power with a tradition of colonial and naval involvement in Continental wars, the way should have been clear. Only in the outlying theaters could the spoils of conquest be realized, and in any event some military effort had to be expended there to meet the minimum requirements of Imperial security. The naval blockade would achieve the primary objective of defeating Germany no matter what the British Army did.

#### THE DARDANELLES--

In its original conception, the naval plan against the Dardanelles was the very model of economy of force. Fisher first proposed the idea of forcing the Straits with old battleships in a letter to Churchill.

The First Lord eagerly presented it to the War Council as a method of influencing the situation in the East without the commitment of large forces to a new military front. What made the plan more attractive was the fact that it would be executed by ships due to be struck off the active list anyway. With de Robeck's lack of resolve to see the plan through, came the unwanted involvement of land forces.

Although Lord Kitchener pointed with pride to the fact that nearly 300,000 Turkish troops were tied up on Gallipoli for nine months, the Dardanelles Commissioners remained unimpressed. A total of 410,000 Empire troops and 79,000 French served in the campaign and suffered 205,000 and 47,000 casualties, respectively. The Turks lost somewhere between 251,000 and 350,000 men.<sup>198</sup>

The Commission noted that the manpower and casualties, when added to the naval effort and financial expenditure, did not justify a campaign to tie down 300,000 Turks.<sup>199</sup>

The military expedition originally consisted of four divisions. Out of loyalty to Kitchener, Hamilton promised him that he would not embarrass the War Office by asking for more, unless it was absolutely necessary. This false economy increased the War Council's expectations and magnified their subsequent disappointment. By August of 1915, the equivalent of 14 British divisions were on the Peninsula.<sup>200</sup> Had these units been available to aid in Serbia's defense, that country might have survived conquest. Additionally, Bulgaria would have been discouraged from entering the war. The military effort at the Dardanelles, therefore, must be judged a violation of economy of force.

MACEDONIA--

In general, the Allied high commands grudged every man and gun sent to Salonika. The British maintained a contingent there which was barely large enough to save face among the other Allies. Macedonia took on many of the aspects of the World War II campaign in Italy, as both sides regarded it an economy-of-force theater. During 1916, Joffre hoped that a threatened offensive in the Balkans would draw a few German divisions away from Verdun, while conversely, Falkenhayn pressed for a Bulgarian offensive hoping to lure French and British divisions away from the Western Front.<sup>201</sup> Had either side acted vigorously in 1915 there probably would have been no Macedonian Front. In the event, neither side committed enough resources to achieve a decision until the Allied offensive of 1918. This victory alone could justify the campaign, especially as the theater drew only minimally on the Western Front for resources. In fact, half of the British troops eventually serving in Macedonia came from Gallipoli.<sup>202</sup> The campaign represents an extreme of economy of force; and, as such, its potential as a major theater was only realized at the end of the war.

PALESTINE--

The first British offensive moves in this theater, the advance across Sinai, came as a result of Murray's desire for economy of force. He found it much easier to keep the Turks at arm's length than to tie down his troops along the 100 miles of the Canal.<sup>203</sup> From 1917 on, however, the theater retained an offensive mission and absorbed an increasing amount of resources. Even so, Palestine only deprived France of two or three

divisions which could have participated in the defense against the German 1918 offensive. Subsequently Allenby did give up divisions which, because of their training and experience, were more valuable on the Western Front after the German offensive. He achieved his final victory over the Turks utilizing Indian troops which the War Office had de facto deemed unsuited to European conditions. <sup>204</sup> In all, the Palestine campaign accounted for about ten percent of the Empire's military man-days and produced some of its most brilliant victories.

On the tactical level, the campaign produced some good examples of economy of force. The Arab Revolt and Lawrence's exploits diverted Turkish supplies and reinforcements at practically no cost to the British. Furthermore, the Arabs provided an economical flanking force for Allenby during his northward advance through Palestine. Allenby's great coups of concentration and surprise involved economy of force also. For example, during the Beersheba/Third Gaza battles, he achieved concentration of his XX Corps and Desert Mounted Corps on the Beersheba flank, and the XXI Corps on the Gaza flank by covering the 20 mile interval with the Yeomanry Mounted Division. As the area consisted of flat, open ground, the cavalry could economically screen the gap between the two major <sup>205</sup> forces. Although the defense of Egypt could have been accomplished with fewer troops, the expanded mission of Allenby's force demanded larger numbers. In such a context, strict economy of force may not have been achieved, but relative economy of force certainly was.

#### MESOPOTAMIA--

From either an Eastern or Western point of view, the decisive theater



was not, and could never have been, Mesopotamia. The British outlay of men, material, and shipping was never matched by a corresponding Turkish effort. Furthermore, the offensives of 1917 and 1918 made heavy demands on Indian resources when the Northwest Frontier was only weakly held.<sup>206</sup>

In addition, the theater competed for general resources which had to satisfy Palestine also. Maude could have stayed on the defensive, as Robertson had wanted, and from a stronger, shorter line secured India's safety with greater ease.<sup>207</sup> For that matter, in 1914 and early 1915, Hardinge and Duff could have simply dispatched one division and one cavalry brigade to the area. Such a force would have been sufficient to guard the oil fields and Basra. Had the Turks been so misguided as to attempt an offensive down the Tigris, they would have run into the same logistical tangle as beset the British on the way up.

#### CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The naval operation against the Dardanelles stands as the most economical, if unsuccessful, of the peripheral campaigns. The subsequent military landing, however, absorbed a disproportionate amount of effort to achieve the same lamentable result. The Macedonian front, figuratively starved of resources, is a paradigm of economy of force carried to excess. Milne's army could not effectively render even minimal support to the Allies throughout most of the war. The initial campaigns in Egypt and Sinai were undertaken with an emphasis on economy. The expansion of the theater into Palestine necessitated the strategic allocation of more assets, which Allenby utilized with the utmost efficiency and economy. In Mesopotamia, the early security mission was also accomplished with scant resources. The ambitious advance on

Baghdad, with the ensuing fiasco at Kut and the later offensives of Maude and Marshall, however, consumed the lion's share of India's efforts for the later half of the war.

In closing, it is interesting to note the valuable economy of force role which the Turks played for the Germans. The Allied failure to bring the peripheral fronts to a speedy end early in the war, condemned them to greater efforts later on. The following chart demonstrates the extent to which the Turks bled off Allied forces out of proportion to their size.

FIGURE 4  
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RIFLE STRENGTH

	<u>August 1917</u>		<u>August 1918</u>	
<u>FRONT:</u>	<u>Turks</u>	<u>Allies</u>	<u>Turks</u>	<u>Allies</u>
CAUCASUS (Russian)	64,000	123,000	56,000	160,000*
PALESTINE	36,000	96,000	36,000	100,000
MESOPOTAMIA	35,000	85,000	22,000	100,000

\*These troops were of little value

### CONCLUSIONS

The use of the principles of war as an analytical tool permits some limited quantification of the material presented. This is found in Figure 5, which the reader can utilize to profile the various campaigns. Ten of the most profound, if obvious, conclusions depicted by the chart are:

1. The best directed campaign overall was Palestine (1917-18).
2. The worst directed campaign overall was the Dardanelles (Military).
3. The best example of higher direction was Lloyd George on Palestine (1917-18).
4. The worst example of higher direction was Herbert Asquith and the Dardanelles (Military).
5. The best theater commander was Allenby in Palestine (1917-18).
6. The honor of worst theater commander is shared by Nixon for Mesopotamia (1915-16) and Hamilton for the Dardanelles (Military).
7. The most frequently applied principle was Economy of Force. (This is quite natural as these were secondary campaigns.)
8. The least frequently applied principle was Surprise. (It is also one of the most difficult to achieve, but no attempt was ever made to use the Royal Navy for this purpose.)
9. Out of a possible score of 16 (for perfect application), the average score for the campaigns under examination was just above six. This indicates a very general lack of appreciation of the principles.
10. Theater commanders seemed to have a better grasp of the principles than the higher direction by a ratio of three to two.

None of these revelations is particularly startling. The point to be made here is that the campaigns in which the abuse of the principles of war was more pronounced were also the most notorious failures, and vice versa. Another salient point is that key failures by the higher direction, in policy guidance or material support, can doom a campaign no matter how astute the theater commander may be.

Considering the evidence presented in the preceding chapters, both the higher direction and the bulk of the theater commanders must be faulted for inattention to the principles of war during these campaigns. The higher direction, consisting chiefly of the War Council and the service staffs, never developed a systematic organization for dealing with strategic problems. Instead, ad hoc relationships existed between departments and personalities which often blurred responsibility or placed too much power in the hands of narrow interest groups. This lack of proper organization kept a proper balance from being achieved between civilian policy makers and military strategists. Ergo no regular forum was available where the desires of Grand Strategy could be tested against the sobering principles of war. This was the fault of the government, but the service staffs proved just as prone to a "muddling through" approach to the war. The best example is the Imperial General Staff which adopted a myopic view of the war through its subservience to the B.E.F. Headquarters. The Army chiefs recognized two principles of war-- concentration and offensive.

In the theaters, Allenby was the only commander to get the resources to pursue his campaigns in accord with the principles. Although Marshall also achieved success by application of the most important principles,

neither Milne nor the slow-starting Murray had the resources to do so. Hamilton, Nixon, Townshend, and de Robeck all demonstrated a singular lack of appreciation of the principles, and paid for it with failure. Maude remains somewhat enigmatic as his untimely death prevented further development of his capabilities. A point may be raised here in favor of the pre-war German General Staff system in which the principles were taught methodically with an eye toward their uniform application on the battlefield. As can be seen from the most elementary comparison between Palestine and Mesopotamia or the Dardanelles, British application of the principles was anything but regular.

Which campaigns could be justified? Undoubtedly the Dardanelles offered the best chance to apply the principles with vigor and efficiency to attain far reaching political and military ends. That this opportunity slipped from Britain's grasp through faulty execution must be regarded as one of the tragedies of the twentieth century, and an excellent lesson about the consequences of ignoring the principles of war. As conceived, the Dardanelles must be accorded the place of the most promising secondary campaign. As conducted, it must be judged an unmitigated failure. Macedonia had the potential of being the second most important theater to Britain. The tardiness of the Allies in going to Serbia's aid defies explanation. The victory of 1918 could have been achieved earlier had a more balanced view of the World War been adopted in Whitehall. The necessity for a Balkan Front cannot be challenged except from the extremely prejudiced view of the Westerners. The campaign can certainly be justified by the end result and by the politics of coalition warfare; the decision to conduct it as a pure economy of force gesture cannot.

Palestine represents the most successful of the peripheral campaigns in terms of theater application of the principles of war. On the grand strategic level, however, it need never have been fought. The long term objective, to take Turkey out of the war, could not be realized in Palestine. In retrospect, a simple defense of the Sinai would have sufficed on this front. Even less justification can be found for the Mesopotamia campaign. At no time could a Turkish "invasion" of India have been seriously contemplated. The entire campaign, therefore, devolved around the issue of British prestige. Gone were the days when the Oriental could be imposed upon by empty threats. Unfortunately, the entire campaign of 1915-16 was based on just that premise. The later lavish expenditures of men and materiel were just as unnecessary.

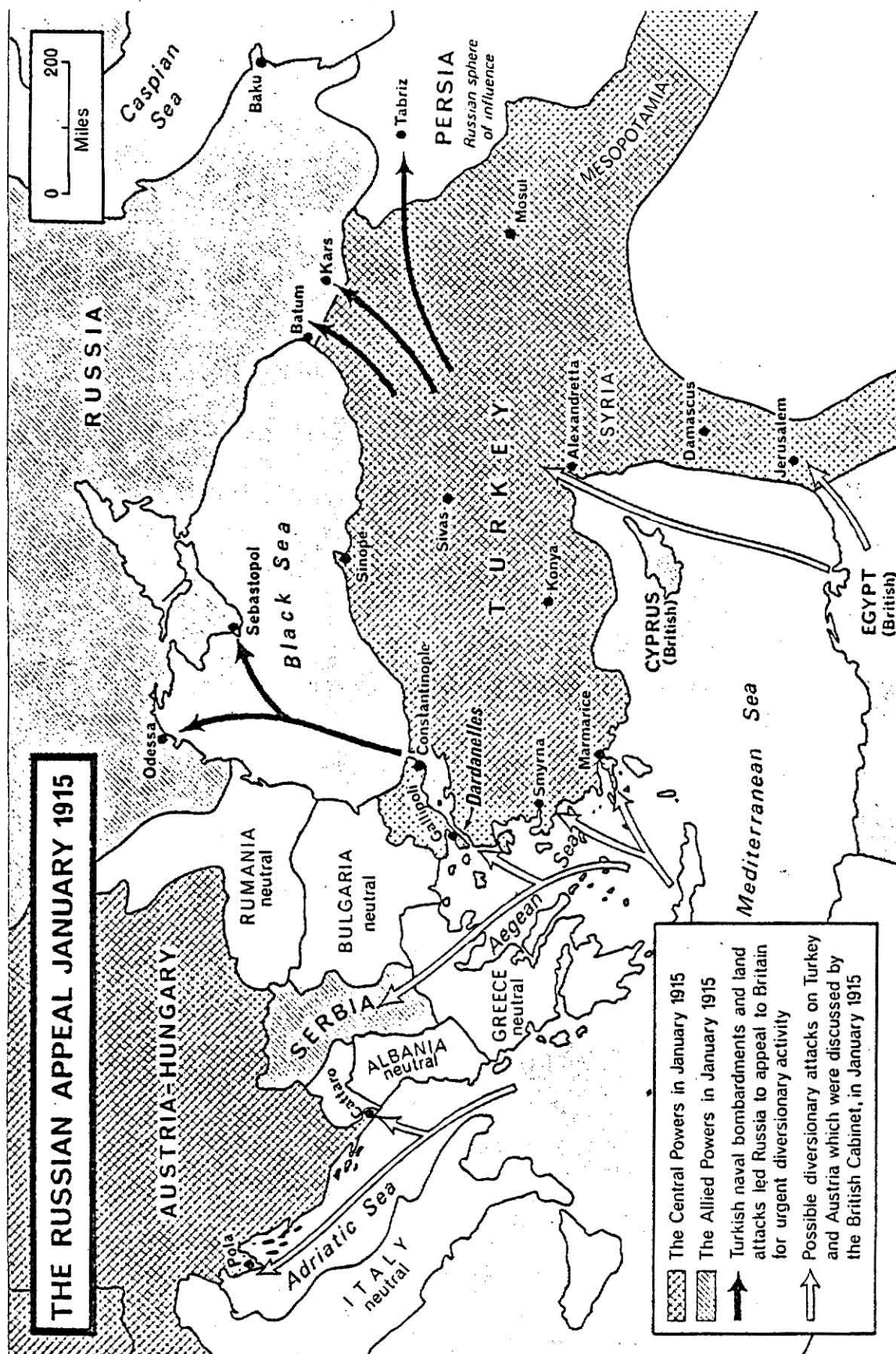
FIGURE 5

APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR

Principle:	<u>Co-operation</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Offensive</u>	<u>Concentration</u>	<u>Surprise</u>	<u>Security</u>	<u>Mobility</u>	<u>Economy</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>
<u>CAMPAIGN:</u>										
<u>Dardanelles</u> (Naval)	-/+	-/-	+/-	+/+	-/-	-/-	+/+	+/+	4/4	8
<u>Dardanelles</u> (Military)	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/+	-/-	-/-	0/1	1
<u>Macedonia</u> (1915-1916)	-/-	-/+	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	+/+	1/2	3
<u>Macedonia</u> (1917-1918)	-/+	+/+	-/+	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	+/+	2/4	6
<u>Palestine</u> (1915-1916)	-/-	+/+	-/+	-/-	-/-	+/-	-/+	+/+	3/4	7
<u>Palestine</u> (1917-1918)	+/+	+/+	+/+	+/+	-/+	+/+	-/+	-/+	5/8	13
<u>Mesopotamia</u> (1915-1916)	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	+/+	1/1	2
<u>Mesopotamia</u> (1917-1918)	+/+	-/+	+/+	+/+	-/-	-/+	+/+	-/-	4/6	10
<u>TOTALS:</u>	2/4	3/5	3/4	3/3	0/1	2/3	2/4	5/6	20/30	
<u>GRAND TOTAL:</u>	6	8	7	6	1	5	6	11		

Explanation: A "+" denotes a beneficial addition to the campaign through proper use of the principle listed, while "-" denotes an absence thereof. Symbols to the left of the "/" refer to the higher direction, while those to the right pertain to the theater commander-in-chief.



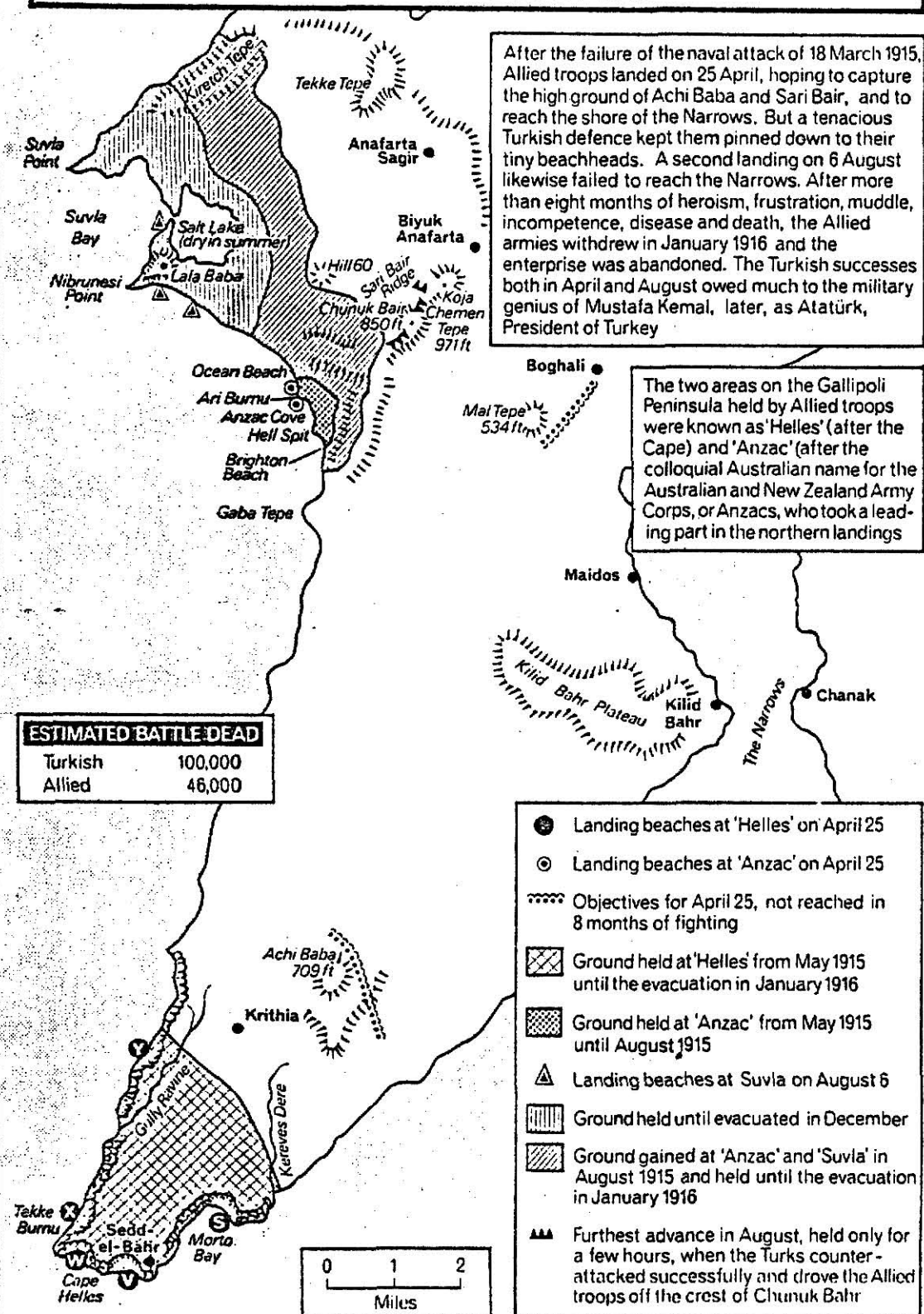






MAP 3. The Military Landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula<sup>211</sup>

# THE MILITARY LANDINGS ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA APRIL AND AUGUST 1915





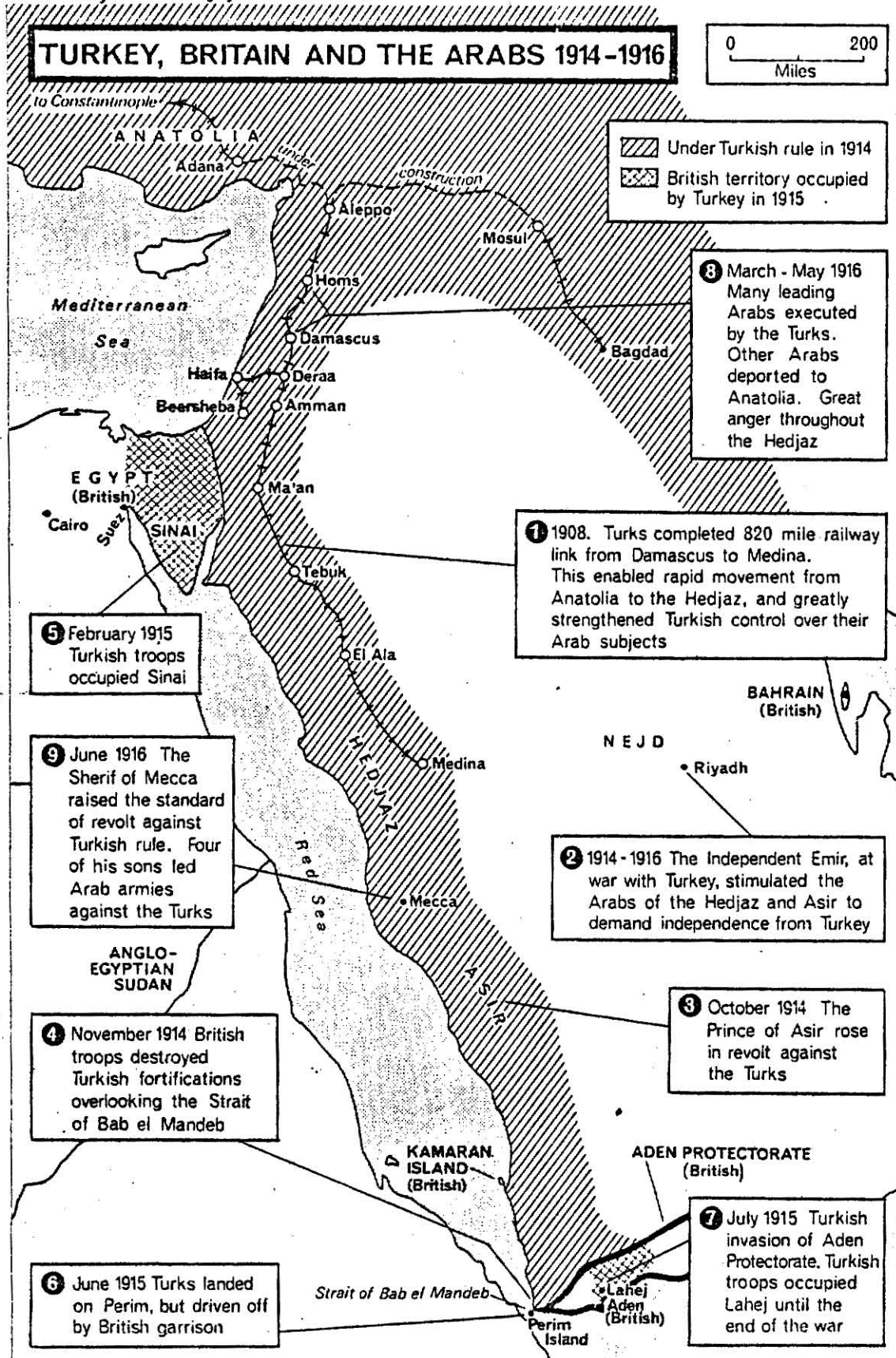
MAP 5, The War in the Balkans September-October 1918<sup>213</sup>

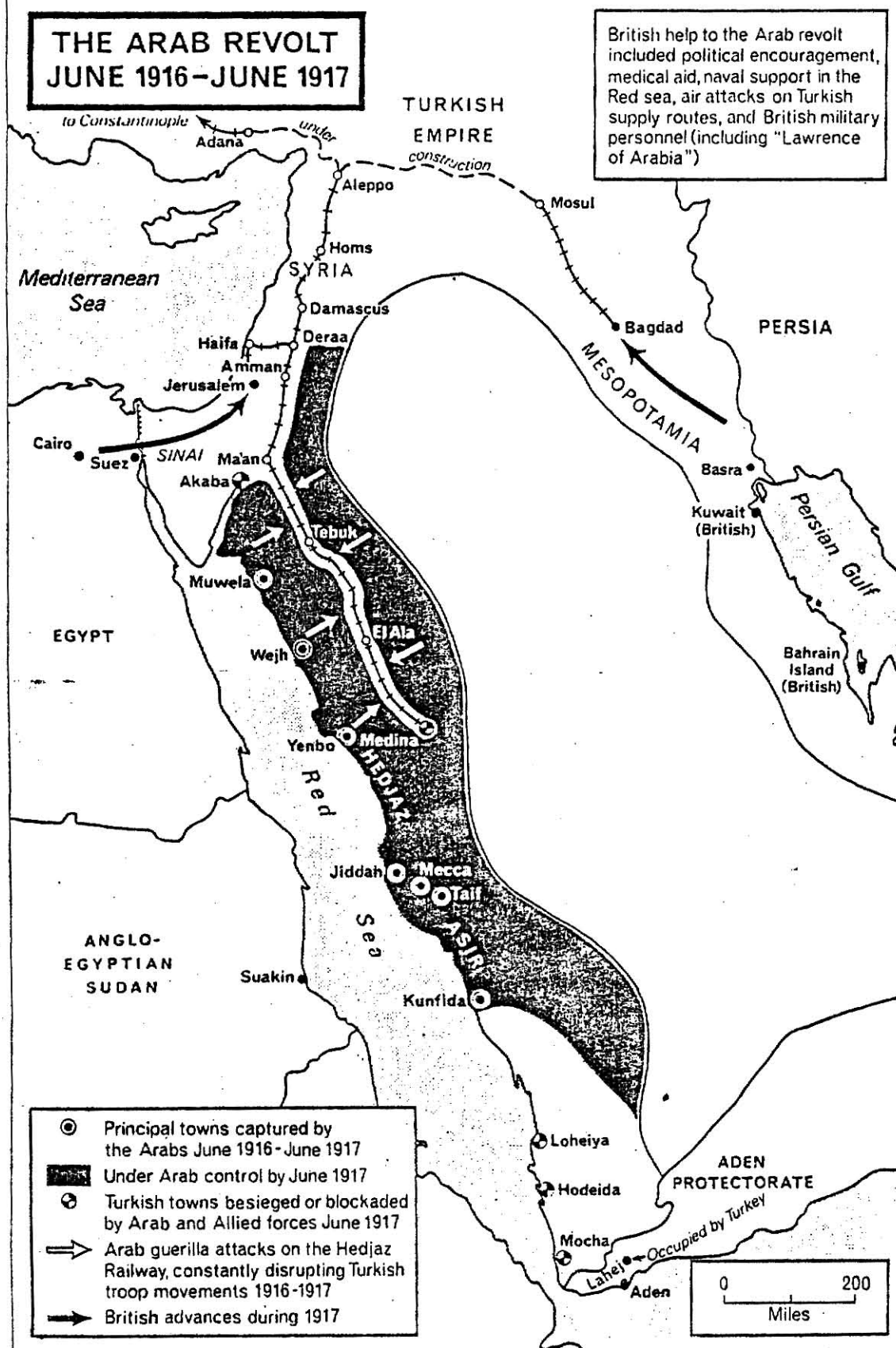
In 1917 the Bulgarians, having conquered Serbia Macedonia and the Dobruja, began secret negotiations with the Allies to end the war, but without success. In June 1918 Germany ended her annual 50 million francs subsidy, and stopped sending munitions. The Bulgars resented the way in which the Germans treated them increasingly as a conquered people, requisitioning food and supplies. On 20 September troop mutinies began. On 29 September Bulgaria surrendered unconditionally to the Allies

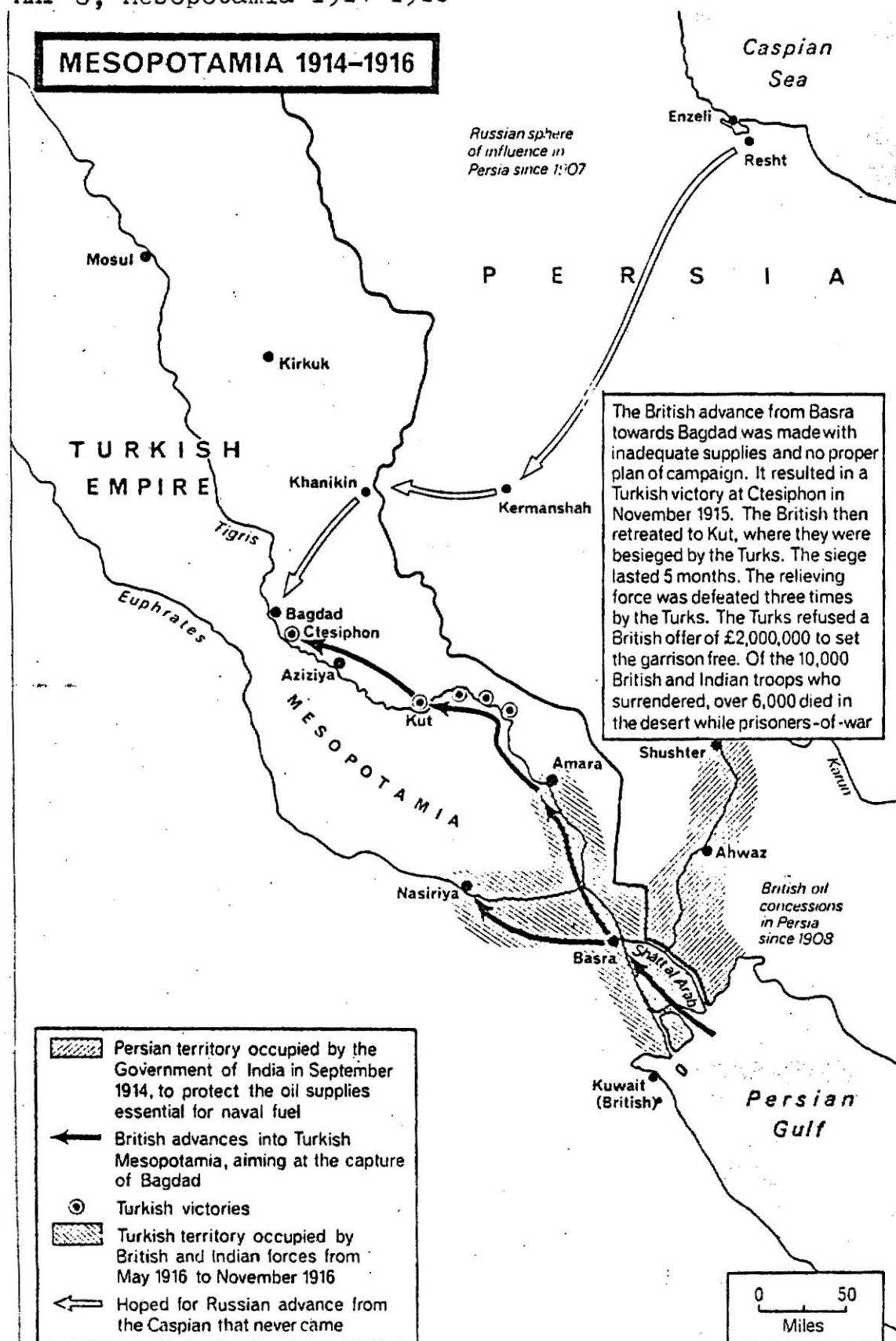
### THE WAR IN THE BALKANS SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1918

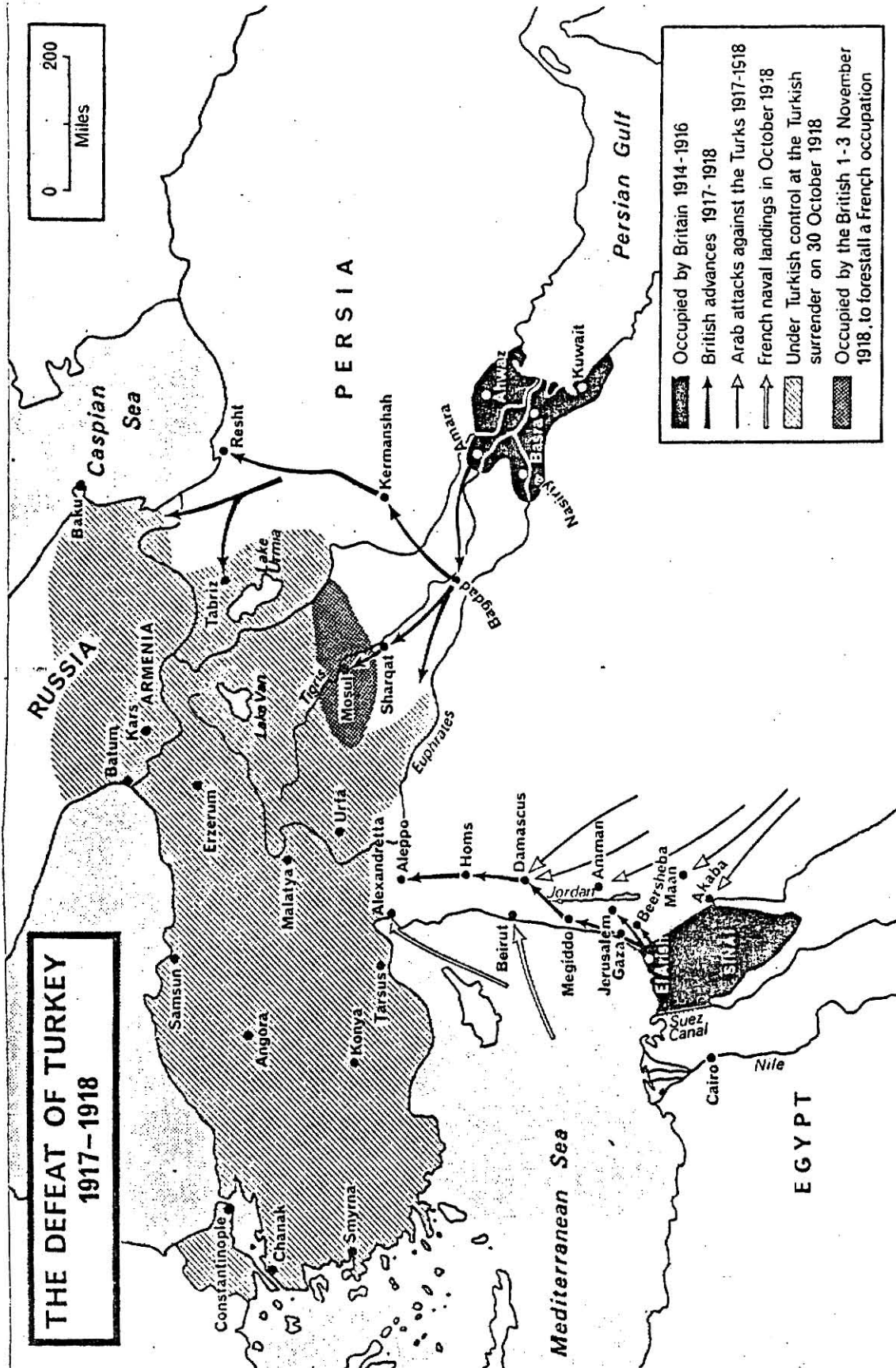




MAP 6, Turkey, Britain and the Arabs 1914-1916<sup>214</sup>


MAP 7. The Arab Revolt June 1916-June 1917<sup>215</sup>

MAP 8, Mesopotamia 1914-1916<sup>216</sup>

MAP 9, The Defeat of Turkey 1917-1918<sup>217</sup>



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PERIPHERAL CAMPAIGNS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR  
THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE 1914-1918

by

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## ABSTRACT

If Military History is to serve other than antiquarian interests, it must address the history of military problems in analytical terms. For that reason, this thesis utilizes the principles of war (as enunciated by the British military theorist Major-General J. F. C. Fuller) to test the management of Britain's major secondary campaigns during the First World War.

The campaigns examined include: 1) The Dardanelles (Gallipoli); 2) Macedonia (The Balkans); 3) Egypt and Palestine; and 4) Mesopotamia. Smaller efforts such as Africa and the Pacific are not treated, as they had virtually no effect on the course of the war. The four campaigns named are treated topically within the framework of the principles of war, which are: 1) Co-operation; 2) Objective; 3) Offensive; 4) Concentration; 5) Surprise; 6) Security; 7) Mobility; and 8) Economy of Force. The principles are applied on three levels of command: 1) Grand Strategic--the application of national power by statesmen and supreme commanders; 2) Strategic--the maneuvering of military forces within a theater of operations; and 3) Tactical--the handling of troops in battle. The thrust of the analysis centers on those decisions which should have been made with reference to the principles of war, and not on extraneous factors which were beyond the control of the participants.

During the First World War, British policy makers broke nearly every principle of sound strategy. In part, this was due to the lack of an organization dedicated to the higher direction of the war effort.



Prime Minister Herbert Asquith excluded his Cabinet from the decision-making process and allowed his "War Council" of concerned ministers to be dominated by the strong personalities of the 1st Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, and the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener. These two service chiefs, in turn, isolated the War Council from the advice of unbiased military experts from the army and navy staffs whose opinions would have been instrumental in averting notable disasters at the Dardanelles in 1915 and in Mesopotamia during 1915-16. Under Lloyd George's ministry (from December 1916), the situation improved little. During this period, the influence of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Sir William Robertson and later Sir Henry Wilson) and the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (Sir Douglas Haig) prevailed. These personalities demonstrated a singularly myopic "Western Front" approach to the conduct of the war, which stressed concentration to the virtual exclusion of the other principles of war. In the final analysis, Britain's grand strategy lacked clear objectives and did not appreciate the mobility with which the Royal Navy could have concentrated Imperial power.

In the theaters, the use or misuse of the principles of war by commanders had decisive results. At the Dardanelles, Sir Ian Hamilton's failure to coordinate his forces and assert his authority led to a lethargic campaign of attrition. In Mesopotamia, and more importantly in India, Sir John Nixon (commanding Mesopotamia) and Lord Hardinge (Viceroy of India) became enamoured of the offensive without regard to military realities and allowed a British force to be captured at Kut by the lure of a specious objective--the seizure of Baghdad. A

contrast is provided by the very successful campaigns of General Allenby in Palestine. This commander's appreciation of the principles of security and surprise provided British arms with spectacular victories against the Turks in 1917 and 1918. Due to the lack of support from authorities at home, the British commander in Macedonia (General Milne) did not have the opportunity to exercise command independent of the French.

In retrospect, adherence to the principles of war at all levels would have brought Britain decisive victories in the Dardanelles and Macedonia, while Palestine and Mesopotamia would have been better if ignored completely.