

Tuesday, June 15, 2021 | Rana Atef

Erdogan's Neo-Ottoman Ambitions Grow as WWI Treaty Expires in 2023

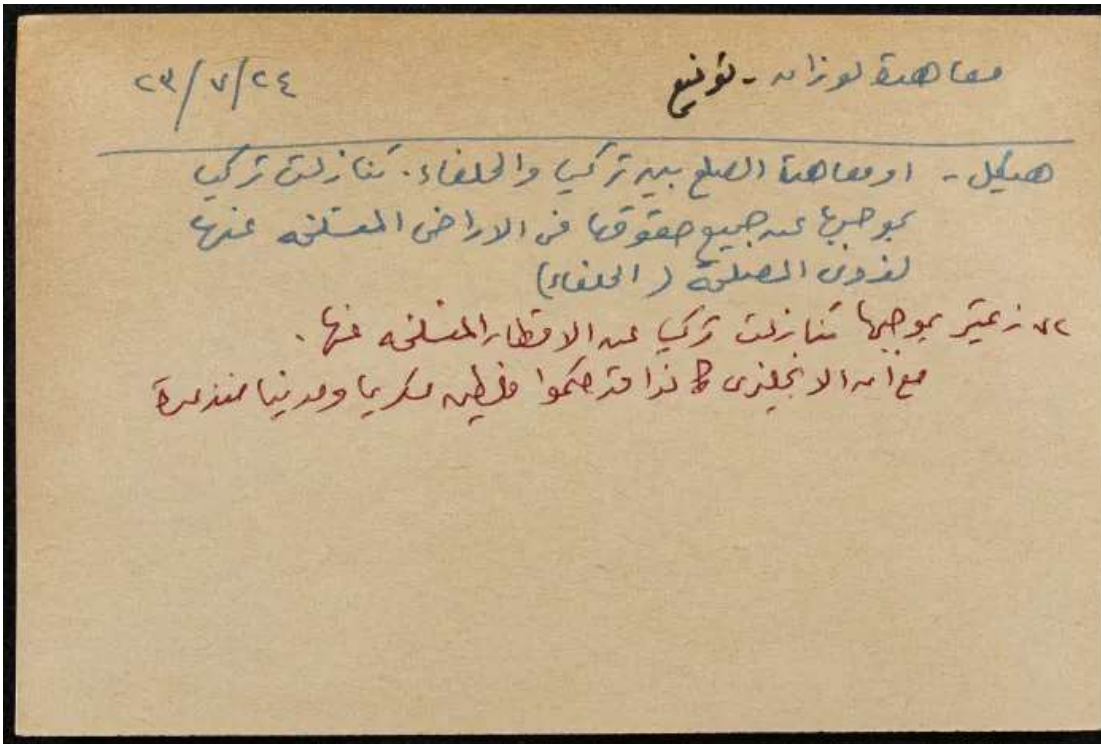
After defeating the Ottoman Empire in WWI, Britain, France, Italy, and the other allies held various rounds of negotiations to ease the worldwide turmoil after the great war. The victorious parties agreed to restrict the authority of the “Sick Man,” or the Ottomans and divided the vast expanded land of the fading empire through a vital treaty.

This important agreement is known as the Treaty of Lausanne, however, with its expiration date in July 2023, could set a precedent for Turkey to revive its old colonial ambitions.



Turkey had to renounce sovereignty over Cyprus, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, and the Levant, except cities that were located in Syria, such as Urfa, Adana, Gaziantep, Kells and Marsh.

The old Ottoman territories went under European occupation: Syria and Lebanon fell completely under the French occupation, on the other hand, Egypt, Sudan, and Iraq became officially part of the British Empire.



Palestine was put under the hands of the British authorities before it was handed to new-born Israel, Libya faced the Italian occupation and finally, Cyprus reached its today's tragic stand.

The Turkish straits between the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea were declared open to all shipping.

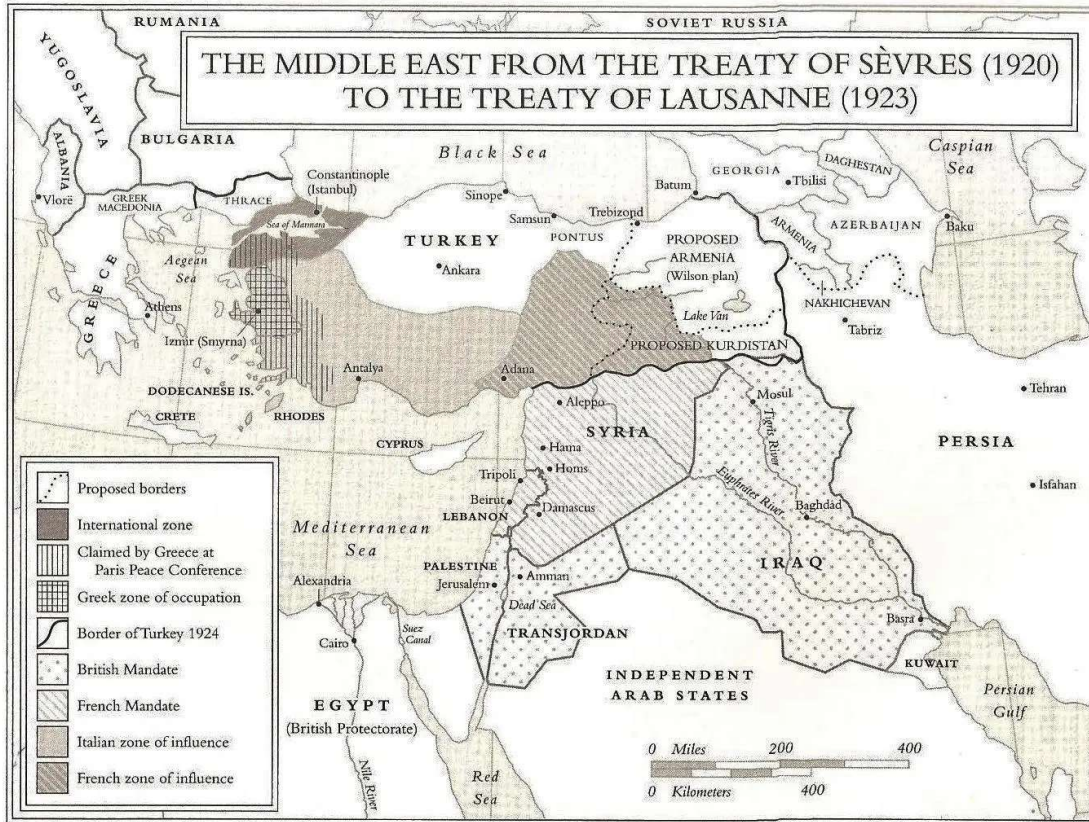
It also provided for the Greek-Turkish population exchange and allowed unrestricted civilian passage through the Turkish Straits.



More restrictions were imposed on Turkey such as preventing it from drilling for oil or gas and limiting its resources from its international passages.

In 1923, the agreement was ratified after several rounds.

Furthermore, it not only declared the death of the old Ottoman Empire officially and declared the birth of today's Turkey but also reshaped the nowadays borders of the Arab countries and the Middle East.



Mustafa Kemal Ataturk strove hard to keep the original borders of today's Turkey and managed to keep the lands of Turkey safe.

With this historical agreement is about to expire in 2023, the myths of re-establishing the old Ottoman Empire never faded away by the Turks' continued ambition as they are well known for their expansion plans, colonization, and nationalism.

This attitude was supported after the rise of Erdogan in the Turkish political scene supported by various Islamist and radical Islamist movements which inherited the dream of establishing a wide state under one Islamic flag as part of their ideology.

“Turkey has embarked on a second republic — what Erdogan calls “New Turkey.” Supporters believe this new incarnation of the Turkish state will be free of the authoritarianism that defined Ataturk's republic; critics worry it will be bereft of Ataturk's secularism,” said Foreign Policy's Nick Danforth.

Turkish Islamists' ideology is somehow complex as it combined the dream of establishing a modern Islamic state and a Turkish flagged state.

Therefore, various motives supported Erdogan's plan such as the coming of the Arab Spring in the Middle East which opened the doors to the Turkish army to be active in the Middle East in various countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

Egypt would be part of the Turkish dream-list after the Muslim Brotherhood became Egypt's rulers before they were demolished by the 30 June Revolution.

According to [Mohamed Abdel-Kader Khalil](#), an Egyptian expert on Turkish affairs, "Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East is linked to the use of Turkish military capabilities in the region.

This has been reflected in Turkish military concentrations on the borders with Iraq and Syria and in its involvement in the Red Sea through an agreement on the Sudanese island of "Sawaken" as well as the Turkish military intervention in the northern Syrian city of Afrin."

However, Turkey is trying to disturb Egypt's national security by situating itself in various regional conflicts in Libya, and causing tensions in the Mediterranean nearby Cyprus and Greece which are now two of Egypt's strongest strategic regional partners.

Also, its trials to set a false maritime deal with Libya to control a vast area of the Mediterranean besides controlling the Libyan oil resources.

With the expiration of the 100-year-old treaty in 2023, Turkey can set in a new era as it can drill for oil and establish a new channel connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara as a prelude to collect the fee from passing ships. It could be named as Istanbul Canal.

The state is directing its eyes towards the latest Gas explorations in the waters, the continuous flooding of Oil in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, and the hopes to strengthen the strategic stand of the state.

As many experts indicated, one of the most significant areas for Turkey currently is Mosul.

“The idea is to expand Turkish relations abroad to promote military exports, maximize economic returns and increase regional influence based on hard power,” Khalil expressed, adding, “Erdogan’s aggressive nationalism is now spilling over Turkey’s borders and is aiming at grabbing land in Greece and Iraq.”

In addition, it will be free to seize the rich resources including those that are in northern Iraq, and they will have the right to seize the underground resources and begin the drilling for resource exploration.

Moreover, Turkey can conquer its past Greek Islands in the Aegean which was handed over to Greece amid the treaty, that’s why the maritime agreement that Egypt held with its sea allies Greece and Cyprus, alongside signing Cairo Declaration in 2014 disturbed the Turkish plans in the Mediterranean.

Alongside Turkey's role in Libya, Syria, and Iraq, Turkey has won extra victory from its own point of view when Armenia handed over massive parts from the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh to Turkey's ally Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan revealed amid the Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts that if Azerbaijan and its ally Turkey managed in having the lands of the disputed region that would motivate the Turkish hopes of expansion.

Greece has unveiled that there is a serious diplomatic debate between Turkey and Greece for re-negotiating around the borders between both countries under the umbrella of the close-to-end Lausanne Treaty.

Moreover, Turkey's latest diplomatic and political moves prove the state's will for re-gaining the long-gone Ottoman Empire.

So, Turkey's movements to pave the way to its mythical "New-Turkey 2023" contained: Expanding Turkey's lands to include the northern part of Syria, Iraq, and preventing the Kurds from having their own unified state.

Alongside controlling Libya, stretching the occupied part of Cyprus island, enhance the Turkish military presence in the Mediterranean, disturbing the peace of Saudi Arabia through rising the armed clashes in Yemen to re-control Mecca and Al Madina. On the other hand, Turkey initiated some diplomatic ways to negotiate around the future of the state's foreign policy with European countries.