

# FRENCH AND BRITISH AT OUTS OVER SYRIA

Differences That in Ordinary  
Times Would Be Serious Have  
Arisen in Asia Minor.

## FRENCH STAND ON TREATY

Demand That Britain Turn Over  
Territory Allotted to France but  
Conquered and Held by British.

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Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PARIS, Aug. 3.—If there had not just been a war, if all the world were not helpless to start another war now, there would be in the present British-French situation in Asia Minor all the ingredients of at least what used to be called "war scare." The Fashoda incident offered nothing by comparison with present heartburnings in the French Foreign Office over the British policy in Syria since the war ended. But there is no war scare; not only no war scare, but Frenchmen most deeply resentful of the British attitude in Asia Minor scout the idea of their ever being another war between England and France. Perhaps even "strained relations" is too strong an expression to use in connection with this situation, for what strain exists is much more than offset by French gratitude to England at this moment for the prompt action of the British Parliament in ratifying the separate treaty to come immediately to French assistance in case of German aggression.

Nevertheless, in its gratitude for this British assurance of protection on the Rhine, France by no means is disregarding the fact that, in the opinion of the Quai d'Orsay, England is deliberately violating French rights in a big section of Asia Minor, where British troops of occupation and British civil administrators are kept in control, despite various urgent appeals from the French Foreign Office to have them withdrawn and the territory placed in French charge.

### A Franco-British Treaty.

France bases her claims on the terms of the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, which was entered into between only France and England. The year previous there had been an agreement concerning the future disposition of Turkey in Asia made by England, France, and Russia. The present British view, as it is interpreted in France, is that with the collapse of Russia the agreement, including her and the Sykes-Picot Treaty both, became invalid. France disputes that on the ground that Russia was not a party to the Sykes-Picot Treaty, so her collapse was not in anyway a factor.

By the agreement to which Russia was a party that country was to have Constantinople and be allowed to push her own Armenian border further west into Turkish Armenia.

By the Sykes-Picot treaty France was to have the immense territory bounded by a line starting at Lamma, on the coast, and running northeasterly to Sivas thence through Kharput and Diarbekir and on east to the Persian border, thence back southwesterly to a point on the Mediterranean coast to Syria, just north of Akka. The Syrian coast, with the Mediterranean coast of Syria, just and as far north as Aintab, was to be under a direct French administration. The rest of allotment was under French supervision.

England, by the terms of this Sykes-Picot treaty, was to have the whole of Mesopotamia with Bagdad, plus the seaports of Akka and Haifa, just south of the French line where it reached the Syrian coast.

There was still a third agreement made about the same time by England, France, and Italy by which the latter country was to have a big southern section of Anatolia. That agreement is not a factor in the present controversy between France and England.

When the question of mandates first attracted attention France expressed willingness to surrender the northern triangular section of her Sykes-Picot allotment ending in an apex at Sivas, because that portion formed a big wedge in the territory which France hoped—still hopes—the United States will take as an Armenian mandate. The British recognition of the independence of the King of the Hedjaz wiped out practically the whole French claim under the treaty to the hinterland east of the Syrian coast.

### The French Complaint.

"England is basing her policy on two grounds," said a French Foreign Office member to me today. "One is that Russia has collapsed, which we do not admit to be relevant at all to the Sykes-Picot treaty. The other ground is that it was British troops which conquered Mesopotamia and won all the other victories in Asia Minor with practically no assistance. That is true; France had at most only 5,000 troops there. But that does not invalidate the treaty agreement of 1916."

"We can get no satisfaction from the British Foreign Office in the matter, nothing but delays, postponements and evasions. England's official Government policy is vague and apparently colorless, but that is not what we fear most. It is the unofficial but very aggressive and positive policy of the Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Egyptians that France has to fear, for they are the real leaders who always determine the final British policy in all matters Asiatic. The whole past record entitles us to assume that they will prevail now."

"The cardinal point of this unofficial policy, which eventually will be official, is the protection of India. England in the present Asia Minor situation sees an opportunity to put a finishing touch on her work of the last thirty years to keep Russia from penetrating to India. England says now that these agreements of 1915 and 1916 concerning the future disposition of the Turkish empire are invalidated, because one of them included Russia, which is now out of existence. England knows Russia is not out of existence permanently, and fears her coming back to normal power and a resumption of her old Asiatic aims. France also knowing Russia will come back sooner or later, our Foreign Office is not in favor of a Turkish policy which would leave nothing for Russia in the future."

### French Object to Independent States.

"The first violation of the Sykes-Picot treaty by the British was in their recognition of the independence of the kingdom of the Hedjaz, which included much of the French zone. They even recognized as one of the Arabian capi-

tals the city of Damascus, which is in our territory. We submitted because war and European conditions in general made us helpless to do otherwise.

"During the war when her troops were making conquests in Asia England had some excuse, but the excuse does not hold now. Why do they continue to occupy and control territory which should pass under French administration? They are spending money lavishly for propaganda on the native populations whom we should administer. There is one most significant point of the propaganda. It is in encouraging the Syrians to think they are now competent for complete self-government and start a movement for that liberty. What would be the result of such an attempt? England knows very well it would be a failure. The Turks, Jews, and Christians, left to themselves, would soon have a turmoil of disorder demanding intervention of troops to save life and property. British troops in Mesopotamia, being the nearest neighbors, would be the ones to do the intervening, and that would be an excuse for permanent British occupation and administration. The fact that there had been a hiatus during which self-government was tried and failed would serve as another argument for the invalidity of the treaty agreement with France."

"But we do not have to look to the future for a cause for anxiety. Present conditions are bad enough. The British refuse to leave our zone. They even send such French troops as there are away from the regions we should control to such places as Adana and elsewhere in Cilicia, which region may come under the American mandate for Armenia."

"The case of the town of Beirut, which is almost at the centre of the coastline allotted to France, furnishes a good example. The British control it. A Frenchman may have had business in Beirut before the war. Now he is not allowed to go there, but an Englishman who had no business there before the war now has no difficulty in going there to establish an entirely new enterprise."

"There was a time in European history when such conditions would surely have meant war, but, happily, there is no danger of that now, as bad as things are. We admit the Sykes-Picot treaty is badly riddled now. We are only trying to use that document as a basis of negotiation over what is left. We have lost much of what we want and are entitled to. Despite the British attitude, we still expect to get a Syrian coast strip from just north of Akka to Latakia."