The Treaty of Lausanne was the most successful and lasting peace settlement of the post-First World War period. Britain and Turkey, the only ex-enemy state to be treated as an equal in any of the peace negotiations, came away with their aspirations largely satisfied. The conference terminated four years of strife and tension in the Near East, a result partially of the reckless decision of the Council of Three at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 to authorise the landing of Greek troops in İzmir (Smyrna) on 15 May, largely to thwart Italian claims in the region. This decision was largely responsible for the creation of the Turkish nationalist movement at Ankara, headed by (General) Mustafa Kemâl Pasha (later Atatürk), who had served in the Ottoman army with distinction during the First World War.

The imposition, largely at Britain's behest, of the humiliating Treaty of Sèvres on Turkey in 1920, antagonised practically all Turks, massively strengthened the Kemâlist movement and totally discredited the Sultan's government in Istanbul which, by 1920, was propped up by the bayonets of Allied troops who had occupied the city in that year. The next two years saw a frantic attempt by Britain to modify Sèvres in a way which might appear satisfactory to the Turks by offering them cosmetic improvements while preserving the clauses regarded as essential to British interests. This proved to be impossible: the Turkish Nationalists would only settle for far-reaching changes to the treaty. At the same time, France and Italy deserted Britain and negotiated their own agreements with the Kemâlists in an effort to safeguard their economic and other interests in Turkey. Turkey also reached agreement with Bolshevik Russia which enabled her to secure arms and ammunition for her burgeoning army from Moscow.
The final nail in the coffin of Sèvres was the catastrophic defeat of the Greek army in Anatolia in the late Summer of 1922 which sent it reeling back in chaos to İzmir, and to evacuation to Greece. Greece had not only lost İzmir: she now faced the loss of Eastern Thrace, another of her gains from the First World War, to the victorious Turks as well. The British were now isolated: deserted by their so-called allies, their small and ill-equipped occupation troops in the neutral zones on the Straits were now faced with the prospect of a war with Kemâl’s forces, flushed with their victory over Greece, and determined to liberate the capital and the Straits from British control.

The dream of a British-dominated Eastern Mediterranean, maintained by the ships and bayonets of the Greek army and navy had completely evaporated, and the British now had to find another way to safeguard their influence in the area. To achieve this a bellicose government in London, with the pro-Hellene Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, in the lead, nearly landed Britain in an unnecessary war with the Turkish Nationalists at Çanakkale, in the British defended neutral zone. Only the patience of the British commander in Istanbul, General Sir Charles Harington, and the moderation of Kemâl Atatürk, avoided a catastrophe at the end of September.

As the Çanakkale crisis unfolded the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, hurried to Paris between the 20 and 23 September to persuade Raymond Poincaré, the French Prime Minister, to support Britain in convening a new peace conference to replace Sèvres and to work out a joint policy for the conference. At the end of stormy discussions between the two men, who cordially detested each other, at the Quai d’Orsay, they agreed to invite the Turkish Nationalists and the other Sèvres powers to a conference on a Near Eastern peace treaty. They proposed that as an inducement to the Turks to agree to the conference, Turkey should be offered Greek-occupied Eastern Thrace, including Edirne (Adrianople), down to the Meriç (Maritza) River. A new Straits Convention, more favourable to Turkey than the one negotiated at Sèvres, would be worked out between the concerned powers, while all the Sèvres clauses would be re-examined to render them more acceptable to the Turks. An essential pre-condition for this conference was Turkish agreement to an armistice. After the near-showdown between British and Turkish nationalist troops at Çanakkale on 29 and 30 September, Kemâl agreed to a meeting between the Allied military commanders and (General)
İsmet Pasha, the commander of the Turkish Western Army, at Mudanya on 3 October. Eventually, on the morning of 11 October, after tense discussions, the allied generals signed military convention with İsmet at 7.15 a.m. on the 11th, which included an agreement on the mechanism for the eventual Turkish take-over of Eastern Thrace, and a Turkish pledge to remove their troops from, and respect, the neutral zones.

Britain, France and Italy agreed that the Near East conference should be convened at Lausanne, in neutral Switzerland. Representatives of the Soviet Republic would be invited solely for the purpose of re-negotiating the Straits Convention. Following Lloyd George's resignation on 20 October, a general election in Britain on 15 November resulted in the formation of Andrew Bonar Law's Conservative Government, in which Curzon remained Foreign Secretary. This, and Benito Mussolini's seizure of power in Italy at the end of October, delayed the opening of the conference until 20 November. The interval allowed for the solution of one embarrassing Allied problem—what to do about the Allied-recognised but now almost defunct Ottoman government in Istanbul. On 17 November the Sultan fled into exile on a British warship. As a result Curzon was reluctantly forced to agree to allow a Kemalist civil administration, gendarmerie and governor into the city, and the presence of Nationalist officials side by side with Allied military occupation authorities in Istanbul, both jealous of their prerogatives, provided many opportunities for potential conflict during the months ahead.

Curzon, who had, with some justice, little confidence that France and Italy would support Britain at the conference -'I am not going into the conference in order to find myself let down very likely on the first day by the French or the Italians'- insisted on a preliminary meeting of the three allies to reach agreement on a common policy at Lausanne. He informed Lord Hardinge, the British Ambassador to France, that he would 'not go to common front on all the main issues'. The Foreign Office prepared a list of British requirements which were divided into two categories '(A) Essential', which included Greek retention of Western Thrace, the freedom of the Straits to shipping, with demilitarized zones on the coasts and the retention of allied troops at Istanbul until the new treaty was ratified, and '(B) Most Desirable', which included measures for the protection of minorities in Turkey and some safeguards for the Armenians and the satisfaction of Allied requirements on the Ottoman debt, capitulations and the future financial and economic régime in Turkey.

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2DBFP Curzon to Hardinge, tel 419, 9 November 1922, no. 169, p. 246.
3DBFP Curzon to Hardinge, tel 428, 12 November 1922, no. 181, p. 258.
The Paris meetings took place on Saturday 18 November and lasted five hours during which Poincaré insisted on taking Curzon's memorandum point by point. Curzon was not greatly reassured about Poincaré's likely steadfastness in face of Turkish pressure. However, the French Prime Minister grudgingly accepted the bulk of Curzon's proposals as a basis for Anglo-French cooperation during the conference. The two men then journeyed to Lausanne to meet Mussolini on Sunday the 19th, where the entire discussion had to be repeated although, given Mussolini's manifest ignorance of the subjects under review, his agreement to the Anglo-French agenda was secured without much difficulty.

Mussolini and Poincaré then returned to their respective capitals, leaving Curzon at Lausanne. He was joined there by Sir Horace Rumbold from Istanbul, who was to be the second British delegate at the conference. Cémille Barrère, the French Ambassador to Rome, was the first French delegate, assisted by Maurice Bompard, a former Ambassador to Istanbul and a member of the French Senate, and General Pellé, the French High Commissioner in the Ottoman capital. Marquis Garroni, the Italian High Commissioner in Istanbul, was the chief Italian delegate. Ismet Pasha, now Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, was the chief Turkish delegate. Rumbold thought this appointment portended trouble - 'Ismet's attitude at Mudanya was most intractable until [the] last day when concessions were reluctantly made under instructions from Angora',  

Eleftherios Venizelos, restored to favour by a military revolution in Athens on 27 September, which had overthrown King Constantine's régime, was the chief Greek delegate. Much chastened by the Greek debacle in Izmir, he was prepared to settle with Turkey on the best terms he could get, a policy which often led him into conflict with the leaders of the military coup in Athens.

The first business meeting of the conference was held in the morning of 21 November. Curzon appointed himself president of the conference and three commissions were set up. The first, on territorial and military questions and the most crucial from the British point of view, was chaired by Curzon. He was content to leave the chairing of the other two commissions - on financial and economic questions and the future judicial status of foreigners in Turkey - to Barrère and Garroni respectively. French and Italian financial and trading interests in Turkey were of greater concern to their governments than to Britain, since Britain's economic stake in the country was relatively small. A host of sub-committees on a wide range of subjects and composed of military, naval, financial and diplomatic experts, were spawned by these commissions.

\[5\text{DBFP} \text{ Rumbold to Curzon, tel 631, 28 October 1922, fn 7, no 156, p. 231.}\]
On the 23rd, at the first meeting of Curzon's commission, the Foreign Secretary had his first taste of Turkish obstinacy, when, during a long speech, Ismet demanded the cession of Karaağaç, a suburb of Edirne, which had been retained by Greece as part of Western Thrace, to Turkish control and also a plebiscite in Western Thrace. Curzon answered this by delivering a magisterial indictment of what he regarded as these excessive Turkish demands, for which he was 'loyally and warmly applauded' by the French and Italian delegates. Curzon commented that the 'exhibition of so firm an allied front at this stage and on so important an issue took [the] Turks very much by surprise and will probably exercise a decisive influence on our future proceedings.'

On the 26th, at the end of the first week of the conference, Curzon considered that 'we may without exaggeration claim to have made progress that would have been deemed impossible a week ago.' His euphoria was not to last. On 1 December he was complaining that Turkish obstruction and Italian dilatoriness were preventing any progress on the capitulations issue and that 'behind the scenes the Italians are giving great trouble putting forward outrageous demands for commercial or other concessions as their price for remaining at the conference. I have had to speak plainly to them about this shameless attempt at blackmail which seems inseparable from Italian conceptions of policy and renders any dealings with them very difficult.'

The Russian delegation arrived in Lausanne on 28 November with Georgy Vasilyevich Chicherin as its chief spokesman. Its demand to be admitted to the whole conference was rejected. When the Straits Commission first met on 5 December Curzon's suspicions of Soviet-Turkish cooperation appeared to be confirmed when Chicherin, claiming that he also spoke for the Turkish delegation, demanded the closure of the Straits in peace and war to the warships and aircraft of all nations except Turkey. However, much to Curzon's delight, there was an evident rift in Russo-Turkish relations on the 8th, when the Turks accepted in principle the Anglo-French proposals for the Straits régime. Russian protests were ignored.

Turkey's agreement on this subject was not repeated elsewhere. On the 12th, when the conference came to deal with minorities, Curzon reported that İsmet delivered an hour's treatise on the subject which contained (1) a lengthy

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7 Ibid.
8 DBFP Curzon to Neville Henderson, Constantinople, tel 17 26 November 1922, no. 226, p. 337.
9 DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 62, 1 December 1922, no. 244, pp. 352-353.
travesty of bygone history; (2) quotations from innumerable authorities of every nationality who had ever said anything favourable to Turkish rule, and (3) a statement of the views of the Turkish government full of contempt and hostility towards Armenia, disparagement of the League of Nations and refusal to allow that there was any minority question that required to be dealt with otherwise than by expulsion of [the] Christian population and by ordinary Turkish law.\(^\text{10}\)

When, on the following day, İsmet still remained unaccommodating on the subject, Curzon 'delivered the most serious speech I have made in this conference,' in which he threatened to abandon the conference if the Turks persisted in their obstructive attitude.\(^\text{11}\) Whether or not as a result of this intervention, on the 14 December İsmet was more conciliatory on this issue and accepted the Allied invitation to join the League of Nations on the conclusion of peace. Curzon believed that his threat to leave Lausanne had 'brought them to the ground' and that the 'outlook is therefore more promising.'\(^\text{12}\) The Foreign Secretary was, however, forced to give way on the naval and military clauses when the Italian and French naval and military advisers informed the Turks, without any prior consultation with their British counterparts, that they had abandoned placing any restrictions on the size of the Turkish navy and army, except, in the case of the latter, in Eastern Thrace, and agreed, over Curzon's protests, to Turkey's retention of conscription, and justified this abandonment on the grounds that inspection in Asia Minor would be impossible to enforce.

On 16 December Curzon decided that he would remain at Lausanne over Christmas in an attempt to bring the conference to a successful conclusion - Barrère, Bompard and Garroni had decided to return home. He intended to draw up 'a preliminary treaty' containing the main heads of agreement reached so far for discussion with the Turks during the Christmas week. He then intended to invite İsmet to accept or reject it as a statement of agreed principles, leaving the details to be filled in by the experts and the final treaty to be signed later. This was not to be—the Turks and Russians now demanded the re-opening of the discussion on the draft Straits Convention while controversy continued over minorities and capitulations. Curzon complained bitterly that he had 'to fight a solitary battle, my colleagues overflowing with unctuous civility to the Turks and showing an inclination to bolt at every corner from the course... In this melancholy environment I seemed fated to pass my Christmas... (The) Turks after

\(^{10}\) DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 110, 13 December 1922, no. 274, p. 387.

\(^{11}\) DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 113, 13 December 1922, no. 275, p. 388.

\(^{12}\) DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 120, 14 December 1922, no. 278, p. 391.
prolonged gestation have produced a twelve page reply about Mosul which it will be sole Christmas relaxation to destroy.\footnote{Curzon to Corwe, tel 146, 22 December 19322, no. 286, pp. 400-401.}

After Christmas, increasing Turkish intransigence on practically all the outstanding clauses, and rumours of an imminent Turkish military advance on Istanbul led Curzon to seek a private meeting with Ismet. He found the Turkish Foreign Minister 'impervious to argument, warning or appeal, and can only go on repeating the same catchwords, indulging in the same futile quibbles, and making the same childish complaints. One might just as well argue with the Pyramids at Cheops. I said that I had already spent five weeks here and was not prepared to spend five more. Much less five months, which at the present rate of progress would be a moderate estimate... I do not conceal from the Cabinet that the omens are wholly unfavourable, and I can find no solace in any other reflection that Ismet, like all other Turks, is doubtless at bottom a true-born son of the bazaars.'\footnote{DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 154, 26 December 1922, no.293, p. 415-416.}

On 31 December Curzon left Lausanne for Paris to meet Bonar Law, who was attending the fateful meeting of the Reparation Conference in early January 1923, at which France and Belgium finally announced that they intended to send their troops into the Ruhr. There the British Prime Minister urged Curzon to terminate the Lausanne Conference quickly on the best terms he could get, since the British Government was committed to peace and retrenchment, and did not want complications outside Europe while facing a serious rift with the French over Germany. Curzon returned dolefully to Lausanne on 5 January 1923, aware from British intercepts that the Turks were convinced that the breach in the Allied front over the Ruhr would play into their hands at the conference.

He found that no agreement had been reached on capitulations or minorities, and he was inclined to blame the French and the Italians for encouraging Turkey's intransigence on these issues. On the 12th he informed London that 'altogether the atmosphere is becoming very trying and nerves are apt to show frayed edges... Sisyphus and his stone were tame performers compared with my daily task.'\footnote{DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 198, 12 January 1923, no. 323, pp. 443-444.} On the 13th he complained that Bompard's sub-committee on the Ottoman debt had spent eight weeks discussing 'every question \textit{ad nauseam} with the Turks both at the committee and outside it... I said I would prefer to go home and leave these desultory and useless talks to proceed in my absence... The fact is that my colleagues are willing to go on here indefinitely. They have no other duties or responsibilities and are quite happy here as anywhere else. Similarly the Turks, who receive an exorbitant entertainment allowance, greatly prefer the fleshpots of Lausanne to the austenities of Ankara, all the more if by hanging on here they can realise their
extreme demands. He concluded later that 'I entertain little hope except on the last moment theory which is practically becoming our sole chance with these impossible people who seem to combine the intelligence of an undeveloped child with the indurated obstinacy of the mule.'

Curzon's intention of presenting the Turks with a preliminary treaty was forestalled by delays in receiving any reply from Poincaré as to whether it was acceptable to France, and in mid-January Bompard, who had taken over from the ailing Barrère as chief French delegate, visited Paris to find out what was happening. When he returned on the 21st he produced a paper of 24 headings which had been dictated by Poincaré and represented a French demand for substantial concessions to Turkey on most issues as a means of bringing the conference to a rapid conclusion. An indignant Curzon described this paper as 'unconditional surrender' to the Turks. He adamantly refused to accept 'any of these eleventh hour proposals.' Bompard did not deny Curzon's assertion that Poincaré's climb down was a consequence of the Ruhr crisis and the French Prime Minister's fear of becoming involved in a parallel conflict in the Near East for the sake of British interests. Curzon now decided to fix a date for the departure of the British delegation from the conference. On that day the Turks would be asked to accept or reject the text of the treaty which Britain's diplomats at Lausanne were now drawing up—without of course incorporating any of Poincaré's amendments.

Curzon again complained of a conspiracy between the French, Italians and Turks to frustrate British policy and to insist on a further delay in submitting the peace treaty to Turkey in order to allow more time for discussions. Curzon would have none of this. He noted that 'the French and Turks who live in [the] same hotel fraternise. Everything that passes or is in contemplation is disclosed to the latter; and at night there is abundant hobnobbing over champagne...The spectacle may be witnessed nightly of French and Italians joking and clinking glasses with the men by whom the allies were openly affronted in the council chamber only an hour or two before.'

On the 24th Curzon brought matters to a head in a two and a half hour meeting with Bompard and Garroni, informing them that the final text of the treaty would be ready by Saturday 27 January and read by the principal allies on Sunday, handed to the Turks on Monday the 29th and formally

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16 DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 204, 13 January 1923, no. 326, pp. 446-447.  
17 DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 210, 15 January 1923, no. 327, p. 449.  
19 Ibid.  
20 DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, tel 231, 24 January 1923, no. 343, p. 467.
presented to the plenary conference on Wednesday the 31st. He would allow another day for a further discussion of the Straits Convention but the entire British delegation would definitely depart on Friday 2 February, whether or not the Turks signed the treaty. The French and Italians were forced to accept this timetable, but on the evening of the 30th they told Curzon that İsmet wanted a further eight days delay in order to discuss with the allies the clauses on Mosul, capitulations, finance and reparations which the Turks regarded as unacceptable. Curzon refused this request telling Bompard and Garroni that to stay any longer 'could only be an incitement to further demands and more humiliating condition,' and he told London that he intended 'to show' İsmet that Great Britain is not to be frightened or cajoled into surrender.21

When the draft was presented to the plenary conference on the 31st İsmet again asked for an adjournment of eight days. Curzon, Bompard and Garroni retired to an adjoining room and there ensued fifty minutes 'of violent discord and even recrimination' with the French and Italians insisting that they would remain at Lausanne to continue the conversations with İsmet. Eventually Curzon reluctantly agreed to postpone his departure until Sunday evening, the 4th, on the basis, confirmed by British intelligence reports, that 'it is to my mind clear that Turks do not mean fighting and must have a treaty...' and that his ultimatum would encourage them to settle with the allies.22

There was a further acrimonious meeting of the allied delegations on the morning of the 2nd at which Curzon reluctantly agreed to further modifications on capitulations and tariffs, the abandonment of reparations due from Turkey and the removal of all restrictions on the size of the Turkish army in Thrace. It made no difference. On 4 February the Turks accepted all the territorial terms of the draft treaty, with a reservation about Mosul, but rejected the judicial, economic and financial clauses. They also demanded reparations from Greece for the damage her army had caused in İzmir, a demand which Curzon had already rejected on the grounds of Greek impoverishment.

Although the allies agreed to further slight changes in the economic clauses, at 17:40 that evening the Turks again refused to sign the treaty on the grounds that the economic and judicial clauses were still unsatisfactory.

Curzon reported that 'there ensued for an hour and a half a scene such as rarely if ever before have been seen in a conference chamber and such as would have been incomprehensible in any company but that of the Turks. İsmet Pasha seemed incapable of understanding the simplest proposition, or

21 DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, tel 251, 31 January 1923, no. 356, p. 484.
22 DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, tel 252, 31 January 1923, pp. 465-486, 357.
of realising the position in which he was about to place his country and himself. I described the refusal of terms offered him as incredible. Monsieur Bompard, aroused to unusual passion, denounced it as a crime. Every form of argument, adjuration, warning, request, appeal was addressed to İsmet without producing the smallest effect...This painful and almost unbelievable scene continued until the time for my departure drew near and a message had been sent to the station asking that the Orient Express should be delayed for half an hour at the station. The Turks had now retired in sombre silence, but with a still unbroken obstinacy, to their hotel. They were followed there by M. Bompard, and by the Italian and American delegates who could not believe that such monumental folly could exist in the world or that peace could be destroyed for so petty a stake, and who were resolved to make a final and desperate effort for a settlement. I was already on the platform when my colleagues came to tell me that their endeavours had failed, and the train containing the British delegation then steamed out.23

Despite his disappointment Curzon could congratulate himself that Britain had secured the bulk of her territorial demands - a Straits Convention, which Turkey (but not Russia) had agreed to sign on 1 February and which confirmed Britain’s naval predominance in the Eastern Mediterranean, and agreement over the Islands and on the frontier between Eastern and Western Thrace on the Meriş River, with the provision for the exchange of Greek and Turkish minority populations between the two areas. Curzon admitted that the minority clauses were less than satisfactory and that the Armenians had been abandoned to their fate. Nevertheless, the conference had broken down on financial and economic issues, not territorial, and the form was of little interest to Britain. The Foreign Secretary was convinced, correctly as it turned out, that ‘the Lausanne conference has not failed and that the Treaty will still be signed.’24 The other delegations had all left Lausanne by 7 February.

The way was cleared for the resumption of the negotiations when in early March a Turkish note suggested new formulae for the settlement of the outstanding financial, economic and judicial questions. Curzon accepted the Turkish proposals as a reasonable basis for the revival of the conference, although he ruled out any fundamental revision of the territorial clauses and although there remained a number of minor points to be cleared up. Between 21 and 27 March British, French, Italian and Japanese experts met in London

23 DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, unnumbered tel, 5 February 1923, no. 370, p. 505. Even then İsmet telephoned twice to find out whether Curzon had really gone. ‘Like the true Turk he thought that he could still catch me before I turned the corner of the street in order to have a final transaction over the price of a carpet.’ Ibid.
24 Ibid.
to discuss Allied criteria for the settlement of the outstanding issues at the conference.

The conference eventually reopened at Lausanne on 23 April 1923. Once again three commissions were set up: the first dealing with the remaining territorial questions and the régime for foreigners, which was chaired by Sir Horace Rumbold, the principal British delegate as Curzon refused to return to Lausanne, the second under General Pellé, now the principle French delegate, on financial questions and the third, under Montagna, the chief Italian delegate, on economic questions. Most of the proceedings were of a highly technical nature, and, as Rumbold pointed out, in answering press criticism of the slow progress of the negotiations, 'to the public [the] bulk of questions at issue for which solutions have been found only by patient debate are probably uninteresting and may often appear unimportant but agreement by discussion however slow is the only procedure possible to-day.'

In fact, progress in settling many of the issues was so satisfactory that by 25 April Rumbold thought that 'the pace we have set has begun to prove a little too hot.' However, his optimistic assumption that the conference would complete its work by the end of May was thwarted by a number of highly contentious questions. France renewed her demand for the payment of reparations to the Allies by Turkey, although, as Curzon pointed out, the Allies had agreed to abandon these in February. Nor could any agreement be reached with Turks on the future judicial régime for foreigners in their country. There were rows about the currency in which interest due to the Ottoman debt-holders (mostly French) was to be paid, since French insistence in payment in gold would bankrupt the already depleted Turkish treasury. Finally, Turkish insistence that the Greeks pay reparations to Turkey for war damage in İzmir almost led to a renewal of Turco-Greek hostilities.

On the 14th Venizelos informed Rumbold that Greece could not and would not pay reparations to Turkey. However, the Greek delegate was prepared to offer Turkey Karaağaç (which had been saved for Greece during the first phase of the conference) if Turkey would renounce all her reparations claims against Greece. He added that the Greek military were confident that if Turkey persisted in her claims for cash indemnities and hostilities were resumed, the Greek army would have no difficulty in advancing to the Çatalca lines. Increasing war fever in Athens resulted in Allies warnings to the Greek government not to precipitate hostilities.

26 DBFP Rumbold to Curzon, tel 7, 25 April 1923, no. 479, p. 693.
The question of reparations from Greece was closely bound up with French (and Italian) efforts to revive the issue of Turkish reparations due to them - clearly the Turks would not abandon the former while they were still threatened with the latter. On 21 May Rumbold told his Allied colleagues that if they revived this issue, he would be forced 'to remain silent and Turks would know that Allied unity of front had been broken.'27 On the 24th the Greek delegation threatened to walk out of the conference on Saturday the 26th if the Turks had not accepted the Greek offer of Karaağaç in lieu of reparations. However, the possibility of war was averted - and Rumbold was uncertain as to how far the Greek and Turkish military were bluffing in their high profile military preparations - when Curzon persuaded Poincaré and Mussolini to abandon all reparation claims from Turkey.

At the same time, Rumbold was able to get Venizelos to postpone his threatened departure from Lausanne for a few days to enable negotiations on the reparations issue to continue. On the 26th, after İsmet threatened to resign if Ankara continued to insist on obtaining cash payment from Greece, Mustafa Kemal intervened, and his government agreed that İsmet could accept Karaağaç in lieu of reparations if this was coupled with a favourable settlement of the remaining questions. On the afternoon of the 26th, after appeals from all the delegates at the conference, İsmet accepted the compromise which was coupled with rather vague assurances by the Allies that every effort would be made to satisfy Turkish requirements on other issues.

Such a promise was easier to make than to execute. Arguments continued about the pre-war concessions granted to Allied companies by the Ottoman Government which the Kemalis were unwilling to recognise. The currency to be paid on the interest due by Turkey to the Ottoman debt-holders remained, as Rumbold put it, 'a temporary obstacle' given 'the tenderness of the French government for their bond holders.'28 Furthermore, the proposed Allied declaration on the future judicial régime for foreigners, inserted after the Allies agreed to abandon capitulations in their original form, was fervently opposed by a Turkish Government anxious to avoid creating any new machinery whereby the powers could undermine Turkey's new found sovereignty. İsmet was being bitterly criticised in Ankara for settling the Greek reparation issue so readily without securing cast iron pledges from the Allies that other issues would be settled in Turkey's favour. He now required some concession from the Allies to compensate him for his surrender on this issue. Thus, he stood firm in rejecting the Allied declaration on the 29th. Rumbold reported that 'a long and wearisome discussion followed in the course of which İsmet became very excited. He ended by insisting that we

27 DBFP Rumbold to Curzon tel 90, 22 May 1923, no. 537, p. 776.  
should come to a decision at once with regard to the Judicial Declaration, but we explained that this was quite out of the question and we could not undertake a settlement on each big question every day.  

However, on the 30th İsmet accepted a new French declaration which Rumbold had urged on the French and which, while abandoning most of the Allied demands, contained a few provisions which afforded some protection to foreigners in Turkey from arbitrary arrest.

On 2 June Rumbold pointed out that the problems of debt interest and Allied concessionaries were now the only major questions outstanding. Meetings on the debt issue dragged on until 12 June with İsmet rejecting a French proposal that this question should be determined by private negotiations between Turkey and the concessionaires after the treaty had been signed. Rumbold complained that 'we have now reached the absurd position that a rupture on [the] Ottoman debt question seems possible although the matter in dispute is only a question of words.' Pélè warned İsmet on the 12th that 'if [the] Turks by an arbitrary act were now to announce their intention of despoiling bondholders whole public opinion in France would be turned against France and ... [the] French Government would have to ask itself whether French troops could evacuate Constantinople' if the treaty remained unratified by the French parliament.

On the 14th Rumbold told Curzon that 'at present [the] deadlock is complete and none of the sub-committees have [sic] any work to do. We feel this situation cannot be allowed to continue as it is as undignified as it is useless.' The French now refused to offer any further concessions on the subject, and Rumbold was forced to warn Pélè 'that my government would be reluctant to see a rupture and I asked him, point blank, whether, if positions were reversed, [the] French Parliament would be willing to see France engaged in hostilities on account of British bond-holders. His embarrassed silence was a sufficient answer.

Poincaré believed that Turkey would yield to an Allied ultimatum on this issue. Rumbold did not agree: 'all our evidence tends to show that [the] leaders at Angora, headed by Mustapha Kemal and supported by [the] most influential elements in country, are worked up to point of fanaticism on this question... As for [the] military aspect, Mustapha Kemal and his associates

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29 DBFP tel 130, 29 May 1923, no. 571, p. 813.
30 DBFP Rumbold to Curzon, tel 178, 11 June 1923, no. 599, p. 850.
31 DBFP Rumbold to Curzon, tel 184 and 185, 12 June 1923, no. 602, p. 853.
32 DBFP Rumbold to Curzon tel 196, 16 June 1923, p. 873.
33 Ibid.
have never shrunk from heavy risk and it would be foolish to count on their doing so now especially as their chances of having to take on [the] Greek army are small. He warned Curzon that 'we should...have to reckon with definite risk of [an] ultimatum [to Turkey] being rejected which would entail rupture of [the] conference followed by a fresh period of prolonged uncertainty or by hostilities. It would be worse than useless to resort to [an] ultimatum unless we are prepared to face these consequences. After further sterile meeting on the issue with Ismet on 21 June he described the 'slough of despond into which [the] conference has sunk and from which nothing but speedy joint decision of governments can extricate it.'

Accordingly, on 2 July Curzon instructed Lord Crewe, the British Ambassador to France, to ask Poincaré whether he had 'weighed all the consequences which may arise and whether they [the French] would be prepared to send reinforcements' to Istanbul if the ultimatum was rejected by Ankara and the conference collapsed. Poincaré would not budge. Rumbold told Curzon that if the French insisted in keeping their troops in Istanbul this 'will in effect amount to [the] creation of another Ruhr question in Istanbul and I am convinced that this will land Allies in serious difficulties.' The French were now completely isolated over this question at Lausanne, as even the Italians now supported Britain on this issue. Rumbold complained that, given that the bulk of the forces in Istanbul were British, Poincaré 'expects [the] British to bear almost the entire brunt of the danger at Constantinople and Chanak... In these circumstances I cannot see how [the] French can ask us to pull chestnuts out of the fire for bondholders, majority of whom are French citizens and who would themselves gain nothing unless and until we had inflicted [a] fresh and crushing defeat on Turkey. I cannot see either, though this is a question for you rather than for me, how we could justify to British public opinion [a] rupture of [the] Conference involving so much uncertainty and danger.'

However, after a further appeal to Poincaré by Crewe on 6 July, the French Prime Minister accepted a British proposal that a declaration about the debt interest should be omitted from the treaty and the matter dealt with in a separate note from the Allies to Turkey. After another long six-hour meeting on the subject between the Allied and Turkish delegates at which the Turks 'tried the patience of my French colleague and myself to an extent

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34DBFP Rumbold to Curzon tel 209, 19 June 1923, no. 623, p. 881.
35DBFP Rumbold to Curzon, tel 221, 25 June 1923, no. 634, p. 897.
37DBFP Curzon to Crewe, tel 281, 2 July 1923, no. 645, p. 911.
38DBFP Rumbold to Curzon tel 247, 3 July 1923, no. 651, p. 919.
39DBFP Rumbold to Curzon tel 249, 4 July 1923, no. 653, p. 922.
unparalleled during the present phase of the conference, the issue was finally settled. At 1.30 a.m. on 9 July agreement was reached on the debt interest and concessions questions and on the evaluation of the Allies from Constantinople after Turkey had ratified the peace treaty.

Rumbold reported that 'we had been working at high pressure since an early hour on Saturday [the 7th], and most of the delegates were reduced to a state of extreme physical exhaustion. This was all the greater as our labours were conducted in an atmosphere of stifling heat. It happened that the two days also coincided with an annual regatta and fair which were held under the very windows of the building in which we met. To some it appeared that the Near Eastern Peace Conference had assumed the position of one of the gloomier sideshows to the fair. From our own point of view, it was extremely trying to have to carry on conversations so laborious and important to the accompaniment in our immediate neighbourhood of merry-go-rounds, shooting practice and the clash of varied music.

However, there were still delays over the settlement of other minor issues and not until 24 July was the Treaty signed at a plenary session of the conference, with Rumbold wearing 'a grey top hat to give the proceedings a bit of tone.' Rumbold and the rest of the British delegation left Lausanne for London on the Simplon Express that evening. The Turkish Grand National Assembly ratified the treaty on 23 August enabling the Allied garrisons to evacuate İstanbul by 2 October. The Allied departure was marked by a triumphant march past of British and Allied military contingents before the Allied High Commissioners and generals with Harrington to the fore. These impressive parting ceremonies were to become a familiar feature in future years as Britain abandoned one imperial commitment after another.

Britain had achieved a remarkable success at Lausanne. Her representatives frequently had to play a lone hand against formidable odds: Turkey's determination to achieve the bulk of her demands and the disloyalty of Britain's supposed European Allies. At one point Curzon exclaimed that the 'enemies whom I have to contend with and defeat are not at Angora but at Paris and Rome.' He feared that Poincaré's attitude 'may precipitate that dissolution of the Entente which seems to loom in the future,' although 'I mean to preserve the façade if I can.'

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40 DBFP Rumbold to Curzon, tel 256, 7 July 1923, no. 660, p. 929.
41 Ibid.
   For the text of the Treaty, see Cmd 1929 (1923).
43 DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, tel 252, 31 January 1923, no. 357.
44 DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, tel 251, 31 January 1923, no. 356, p. 484.
Curzon's task at Lausanne was certainly eased by the resignation of the pro-Greek Lloyd George from No. 10, Downing Street, whose private diplomacy had so much vexed Curzon since 1919. Bonar Law was not so immersed in foreign affairs as his predecessor. However, the new government restrained Curzon in a negative sense since it insisted that Britain should not become involved in hostilities in the Near East, thus reducing, to some extent his room for manoeuvre. Despite his arrogance and his patronizing manner, which applied to all human beings, not just the Turks, he was a skillful negotiator, demolishing the arguments of opponents by demonstrating his mastery of the facts of any subject presented to him. If military threats were ruled out, Curzon did not scruple from using any other means of attaining his ends: for instance telling İsmet, during a dispute over Mosul, that a strong and independent Turkey would probably want cash. It was my experience that everyone who wanted cash ultimately turned up in London, and it might be well to contemplate this movement in advance. His contrived departure from Lausanne was not solely based on Foreign Office memories of Disraeli's supposed coup at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, when he ordered his train to be ready to leave Berlin if the treaty was not signed at a certain time. In fact by the end of January Curzon had achieved the bulk of his territorial demands. He was bored and anxious to return to his duties in London. He described Lausanne as 'a detestable place,' and lamented 'the varying phase of this almost transpontine drama, and...the varying moods of hope, amusement, fury and despair, through which we pass from day to day.' Nor did he want to become embroiled in tedious financial and economic negotiations which did not interest him.

His successor at Lausanne, Horace Rumbold, was of an entirely different temperament. Patient and courteous, which Curzon was not, Rumbold did much to ease the path of the negotiations during the second phase and he managed, in the face of considerable difficulties, to maintain the unity of the allies to the end. He understood İsmet's difficulties with his home government and attempted to suggest compromises which might satisfy the more moderate element at Ankara.

On the 25 July D.G. Osborne, an official in the Near Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, minuted that 'the skill and patience of our delegation [at the Lausanne Conference] has been fully recognised...All through the negotiations we were in the disadvantageous position of not being prepared to fight to get our way because the questions at issue were not sufficiently important to us; whereas they were important enough for the Turks to fight for. The Straits would have been another matter as the Turks

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45DBFP Curzon to Crowe, tel 41, 27 November 1922, no. 228, p. 338.
46DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, tel 231, 24 January 1923, no. 343, p. 470.
47DBFP Curzon to Lindsay, tel 211, 16 January 1923, no. 330, p. 453.
no doubt realized. On the whole, we have more than regained at Constantinople, Mudania and Lausanne the prestige in Turkey that the defeat of the Greeks lost us, whereas...French prestige has never been as low. Apart from the ungenerous remark about the Greeks, this may serve as the final epitaph on Britain's achievement at Lausanne.

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48 Minute by Osborne, 25 July 1923, on Rumbold to Curzon, tel 308, 24 July 1923, no. 683, fn 5, p. 973.