

of the schemes that are being floated around Washington today—for the complete reorganization of the Middle East—make that assumption that the pieces on the ground are going to fall into their slots very neatly and stay where they are told to stay.

That brings me to Germany. Here again the situation in 1919 was different from that in 1945. True Austria-Hungary had gone; Bulgaria was completely defeated; and the Ottoman Empire was tottering and had already lost most of its Arab territories. But Germany was not completely defeated or certainly not defeated in a way which was going to make the making of peace easy.

The allies had decided, and it was a very contentious decision, to agree to Germany's request for an Armistice in November 1918. German armies had been defeated on the battlefield. In August 1918, the German lines had broken and the German troops had fallen back towards their own borders. German officers reported from all quarters that they could no longer fight on. (This is something that Germans later on forgot or never knew.) The German High Command, headed by Generals Ludendorff and Hindenburg, panicked and demanded that their civilian government get an armistice as quickly as possible. The request to the allies came in the old-fashioned way when two German officers waving a white bed sheet tied to a stick came across to the Allied lines. But it was also came in a very modern way through an exchange of public messages. The German government asked the American president Woodrow Wilson to arrange an armistice for them with the European powers. Wilson replied saying that he would undertake to intercede if the Germans accepted that the Fourteen Points would be the basis of a subsequent peace.

The making of the armistice caused contention, partly because neither Britain nor France felt they had been consulted on the process. More importantly, the Germans assumed that they were making peace on the basis of Wilson's new type of diplomacy and his new world order and that they would be treated gently. They assumed that Germany would have to pay nothing or little in the way of war damages or reparations, and that they would lose very little territory. Indeed if national self-determination were to be taken as a basis for decisions, Germany might even gain the German-speaking parts of the defunct