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The Report of Niles and Sutherland

The following is a copy of the Niles and Sutherland Report as it appears in the draft copy in the United States National Archives. Being a draft, it contains infelicities of language, mistakes in paragraph numbering, confusing nomenclature, etc. These do not interfere with the message of the report. (Any editorial explanations are in brackets or footnotes).

Constantinople, Aug. 16th, 1919

Report of Captain Emory H. Niles and Mr. Arthur E. Sutherland Jr.
 on trip of Investigation through Eastern Turkish Vilayets.

1. Introduction

a. In accordance with orders from Headquarters, Constantinople, 25th of June, 1919, a party consisting of Captain Emory H. Niles and Mr. Arthur E. Sutherland, Jr. left Derindje on the 3rd of July 1919 via the Bagdad Railway for the purpose of investigating conditions in the Eastern vilayets of Turkey with a view of ascertaining the needs of this region in regard to Relief and the possibility of furnishing such Relief by the ACRNE [American Committee for Relief in the Near East--"Near East Relief"].

b. We proceeded by rail from Derindje to Aleppo, at which point we made an unsuccessful attempt to engage a Turkish interpreter and a cook. After three days delay we proceeded by rail to Mardin, at which point the territory to be investigated begins. At Mardin we engaged Osman Rohi, a Turkish medical student, who had been discharged from the Army, as interpreter, but we were unable to engage a cook. Two and one-half days were spent by us in preparations, and on the 14th of July, we left Mardin on horseback for Bitlis accompanied by a guard of Turkish soldiers. From Mardin to Bitlis and Bitlis to Van the journey was made on horseback; from Van to Bayazid in carriages; from Bayazid to Erzerum by horse, carriage and railroad; and from Erzurum to Trebizond by automobile.

The following is a detailed itinerary of the journey:

Date	Place	Km.	Means
July 13	Mardin	—	—
14	Saour	35	Horseback
15	Elmadin	50	"
16	Batman	35	"
17	Zokh	35	"
18	Dukhan	45	"
19	Bitlis	45	"
20	Bitlis	—	—
21	Reshadieh	40	Horseback
22	Polodagh	45	"
23	Vosdan	40	"
24	Van	40	"
25	Van	—	—
26	Van	—	—
27	Djanik	45	Carriage
28	Bayazid Agha	60	"
29	Bayazid	70	"
30	Bayazid	—	—
31	Kara Kilissa	102	Railroad
Aug. 1	Kara Kilissa	—	—
2	Kara Kilissa	—	—
3	Keusse Dagh	45	Horseback

4	Khorasan	64	Carriage
5	Erzerum	90	Railroad
6	Erzerum	—	—
7	Erzerum	—	—
8	Namoukatoun	110	Automobile
9	Karabivik	60	"
10	Khadrak	210	"
11	Ardasa	70	"
12	Trebizond	80	"
Total Km.		1426	
Time-Days		30	
Average per day of travel Km.		64.8	

Although the trip was made as speedily as possible we were not able to affect the journey in as short a time as had been anticipated, for the following reasons:

1. Delays in changing means of transportation at both Van and Erzurum were unavoidable.

2. Sickness delayed us for three days. Mr. Sutherland had fever at Bayazid and Captain Niles at Kara Kilissa.

It was therefore impossible to carry out completely the itinerary prescribed for us in the following respects:

a. Diadin, passed on railroad July 31st when both Captain Niles and Mr. Sutherland had fever, and to have stopped would have meant a horseback ride of 15-20 kilometers and the loss of at least one day. The figures for the town were obtained, however, from the authorities at Erzerum.

b. Erzindjan to Shebbin Kara Hisar³⁹. An attempt was made to reach these points by automobile. The only machine available was a heavy Packard camion and the route was found impracticable, and the gasoline supply insufficient. To have made this trip by horse would have entailed a journey of from two to three weeks, which we felt under the cir-

³⁹ Original reads "Kissar".

cumstances was unjustifiable. A Red Crescent Commission is already working in that region, which is also accessible from Sivas.

c. The means of transportation used by us were furnished entirely by the Turkish authorities, chiefly military, who placed every facility at our disposal. Besides the horses and carriages, we had the use of automobiles from Erzerum to the Black Sea and two special trains were run for us between Bayazid and Erzurum.

Throughout the trip we were furnished with guards of soldiers and gendarmes. At most times these seemed unnecessary, but at certain points it would have been impossible for us to proceed without them. Our interpreter, Osman Rohi, was of invaluable assistance to us; the fact that he was a Turk seemed to have a great influence upon the people with whom we came into contact. He proved himself thoroughly capable and reliable.

At every point we were treated with great courtesy by Turkish authorities, both civil and military. They seemed friendly and anxious not only to give us information, but to aid us in every other way. As a result we feel that, although some of the impressions we have received may have been colored by our hospitable reception, and many of the figures are unreliable, especially those relating to Armenians before the war, nevertheless, we have obtained a view of the conditions as a whole which is accurate and will be of use to the Commission. As the first members of any Allied nation to see this Country since the war, we believe our observations are true and unbiased.

d. The object of this report is to summarize our observations as recorded in notes made at the time. This report should be taken in conjunction with these notes and not separately.

II. General Situation

The country through which we traveled falls generally into four regions; first—from Mardin to Bitlis, second, from Bitlis through Van to Bayazid; third, the frontier region from Bayazid through Erzerum, and fourth, the Black Sea region depending on Trebizond.

a. The region from Mardin to Bitlis consists of the upper Mesopotamian plains and the mountainous region bordering them on the north.

It is a country untouched by the war, for no fighting was done south of Bitlis. It is inhabited entirely by Kurdish tribes who are engaged in raising cattle and cultivating the land by primitive means. There are no good roads in the region which is practically inaccessible for any transportation except pack animals.

We found that the harvest this year is excellent and that there is no fear of want for the coming winter. The whole population seems peaceable and contented, and there is no need for the ACRNE to concern itself with work there.

b. The second region, from Bitlis through Van to Bayazid may be described as the basin of Lake Van. It is a district of high mountains and bad roads. In this region there was heavy fighting between the Russians and Armenians, and the Turks. There were pillage and massacres committed, with the result that the district was completely ruined. The cities of Bitlis and Van are both more than nine-tenths destroyed, and a large majority of the villages were destroyed also. The country is one of bare mountains and ruins. Last year there was great want in this region, but as a result of the work of returned refugees much of the land is now under cultivation and the coming harvest will support the existing population through the winter. In the two cities, however, and in Van particularly, there is need of institutional work by the ACRNE.

The population consists chiefly of returned Mussulman inhabitants who have taken the Armenian villages left intact, and are now working the land. There is also a considerable number of Mussulman refugees (Kurds) from the Armenian Caucasus, now supported partially by the government. Finally, there are a few hundred Armenians, a remnant of those who resisted the Turks, on one of the islands of Lake Van.

In this entire region we were informed that the damage and destruction had been done by the Armenians, who, after the Russians retired, remained in occupation of the country, and who, when the Turkish army advanced, destroyed everything belonging to the Musulmans. Moreover, the Armenians are accused of having committed murder, rape, arson and horrible atrocities of every description upon the Musulman population. At first we were incredulous of these stories, but we finally came to believe them, since the testimony was absolutely unanimous and was corroborated by material evidence. For instance, the only quarters left at all intact in

the cities of Bitlis and Van are the Armenian quarters, as was evidenced by churches and inscriptions on the houses, while the Musulman quarters were completely destroyed. Villages said to have been Armenian were still standing, whereas Musulman villages were completely destroyed. The verbal testimony of the inhabitants regarding personnel atrocities was supported by the violent hatred of Armenians manifested everywhere. At every town and village at which we stopped the inhabitants first desire was to tell us, not of their needs, but of horrors which the Armenians had committed upon them and their families, the details of which were almost exactly the same as those perpetrated by the Turks upon the Armenians. We believe that it is incontestable that the Armenians were guilty of crimes of the same nature against the Turks as those of which the Turks are guilty against the Armenians.

An inevitable result of the feelings of the inhabitants is that it is impossible for any Armenian to come into the region to live, without any regard to the number of troops which may be stationed there.

c. The third region, from Bayazid to Erzerum and beyond may be termed the "Erzurum Frontier region" and consists of a series of plains surrounded by mountains, and inhabited by Turks, Kurds and Kurdish refugees from the Caucasus. In this region there was much fighting, and the villages and towns are almost completely destroyed. Moreover, the present inhabitants have had no opportunity to cultivate the land and there is therefore insufficient food for the coming winter. There are very imperfect communications and consequently the natives have been unable to procure seed or grain for bread. They are now subsisting largely on "grass" which means a sort of wild vegetable named "Ebehgumedgi" and a wild grain named "Everik", neither of which have much food value. Cattle are very scarce and consequently milk products cannot be made. Already famine is reported, although the report is probably exaggerated, but it is certain that the inhabitants of this region will suffer and die⁴⁰ in large numbers next winter unless some outside food relief is provided.

Included in this district is the city of Erzerum in which there is need of institutional work. At Bayazid also there is institutional need, although neither of these places are in as bad a state of material ruin as Van or Bitlis.

⁴⁰ Original reads "due".

Although difficult, transportation of supplies to the region is possible. There is an auto road from Trebizond to Erzerum, an auto road from Kars to Erzerum through Khorasan and Hassan Kale, and a railroad ?Ekkh? [sic] Takto in Persia on the Batum-Tiflis Railway to Kara Kilissa.

In this region the racial situation is intensely aggravated by the proximity to the frontier of Armenia, from which refugees are coming with stories of massacres, cruelty and atrocities carried on by the Armenian Government, Army and people against the Mussulman population. Although several hundred Armenians are actually living in the vilayet of Van, it would seem impossible that Armenians could live in the rural regions of the vilayet of Erzerum, since the utmost hatred of them is manifested by all. Here also the Armenians before retiring ruined villages, carried out massacres, and perpetrated every kind of atrocity upon the Musulman population and the doings of the Armenians just over the frontier keep alive and active the hatred of the Armenians, a hatred that seems to be at least smouldering in the region of Van. That there are disorders and crimes in Armenia is confirmed by refugees from Armenia in all parts of the region and by a British officer at Erzerum.

Although we were unable to see it personally we were told that the region of Erzindjan is in very great need. It seems probable that the same conditions prevail there as in the neighborhood of Erzerum, since the country is similar, it was fought over at the same time and the causes of want are the same. We saw the country as far as Namoukatoun, and it was in a condition exactly like that east of Erzerum. The country to the northwest as far as Baiburt seems to be in the same state of ruin and want as well.

An important indication of the general feeling against Armenians in this region is the congress being held at Erzerum when we were there to protest against any annexation of Turkish territory to Armenia.

d. The fourth region is the watershed leading to the Black Sea and depending on Trebizond and smaller Black Sea ports. It is a region of mountain sides, fertile and well-watered, inhabited largely by Greeks. As far as we could judge, the inhabitants were in no need. Owing to the fact that this region is already being assisted by the ACRNE, we made no attempt at investigation.

e. In general it may be said that while institutions such as the ACRNE may help famine and suffering in a small way, there will always be abject poverty, disease and starvation until there are established in the region:

- a. Public order
- b. Means of transportation and communication.
- c. [letter only in document]

III. Detailed Situation.

a. Bitlis

1. Roads

The city of Bitlis cannot be reached by automobile. The road from the south via Diarbekir is the nearest approach to an automobile road, but after the Batman Su is crossed near Farkin the road through the Bitlis pass becomes bad and beyond Zialet the road is not practicable. There are excellent beginnings of a good road for the entire way, but until a government spends millions of dollars on improvements, the road will remain as it is now, available only for non-wheeled traffic. Time--from Diarbekir five days; from Mardin six days. The commercial route for reaching Bitlis is via Mush and Erzerum--six days. This route likewise is for pack animals only.

The best method of reaching Bitlis at the present time is via the Black Sea to Batum, via Railroad to Erivan, by automobile and by horseback from Tadvan to Bitlis--one day. There are at present motor boats on Lake Van, but there is no gasoline to run them. They are said to be in good condition.

For light supplies, assuming automobile transportation from Trebizond to Erzerum, the best method would be to use pack animals via Mush.

2. Population

City of Bitlis.

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	30,000	4,000
Armenian	10,000	—

There are no refugees from other places in the city. Those who fled from Bitlis are coming back slowly.

The population of the city is 50% Turks and 50% Kurds. In the vilayet the population is almost exclusively Kurd.

3. Destruction

City of Bitlis.

	Houses Intact	
	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	6,500	—
Armenian	1,500	1,000

About nine—tenths of the town is destroyed, chiefly through neglect, since roofs are of mud and mud is used in walls instead of cement. Walls of most houses are still standing, but roofs, windows and all furniture are gone. Mosques, shops, public buildings and bridges are destroyed. The Armenian quarters are those which have suffered least, and almost the entire population is now housed in Armenian buildings.

Building materials can be found in the ruins sufficient for the needs of the present population. Wood is scarce, but cut stone is abundant and mud is used for mortar. There is abundant wood in the mountains to the south.

a. The American buildings are not destroyed. The walls, roofs, and floors are still intact, but windows and furniture are gone and the whole compound is in a state of filth and decay.

b. Turks are rebuilding about 100 Armenian houses with consent of the Government.

4. Food

Although the Governor-General thinks the food supplies will not suffice for next winter, other officials think there will be no lack. We observed large quantities of grain both to the south and in the region to the north of Bitlis. We believe that there will not be famine in this region next winter.

Price of bread - 20 piasters paper per oke.

Cattle are abundant.

Agricultural implements are sufficient for needs of population.

There are no products of the country except food. Before carpets and cloth were made.

5. Safety

There are no troops in the city except a recruiting office with 10 or 12 soldiers. Armenians might be able to return, but would be in a precarious position.

6. Relief under way

There are no hospitals, schools or orphanages at present running. We were not told of any orphans who need help. The Vali has no plans to aid sufferers next winter. Apparently everything is at a standstill until the fate of the country is decided.

7. Recommendations

a. Owing to the inaccessibility of Bitlis, it would be impossible to bring in bulky supplies.

b. There is need in the city of some forms of industry. An industrial plant for making woolen cloth would be the most useful form of work, since inhabitants need clothes badly. The necessary outside supplies would not be bulky, and the American buildings could be used as workrooms.

c. There is no extraordinary need for medical relief, but the inhabitants doubtless need ordinary attention.

d. Food relief would be impracticable and is unnecessary.

b. Van

1. Roads

The only road by which Van is accessible by automobile is that from Bayazid. This road has a dirt surface, is fairly broad, and is of easy grades except for one hill just south of Teperis. It is thoroughly available for auto trucks and could be used in supplying the city. Bayazid itself is accessible by Railroad for which see notes on Bayazid. The roads are open until the end of October.

2. Population

a. Vilayet of Van

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulmans	301,000	150,000
Armenians	68,000	700
Nestorians	42,000	—

All present population are returned emigrants. On the basis that 50% of those who emigrated are killed there are expected in this region:

Musulman	75,000
Armenian	34,000
Total	109,000

But this basis is inexact. Probably not more than 50,000 persons are still alive.

b. City of Van

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulmans	43,000	5,000
Armenians	35,000	60*
Total	78,000	5,060

* not including about 100 in the orphanage and hospital.

3. Destruction

a. Vilayet of Van

	Villages	
	Before War	Intact 1919
Musulmans	1,373	350 (Repaired)
Armenians	112	
	187	200 (both)
	1,672	550

Rebuilding proceeds daily and Vali expects that by end of year not more than 300 villages will remain in condition of absolute destruction. When villages are repaired they may not be as large as before, but some houses at least are habitable.

b. City of Van

	Houses	
	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	3,400	3
Armenian	3,100	1,170

1. Houses in this district are of mud, with wooden roofs. The only material needed is wooden beams for the roofs, and these are available by cutting trees in one village in order to provide roofs for several others. The Vali assigns trees of one village to be destroyed for use of others.

2. The needs of the city and the vilayet in the matter of building materials are nothing. In any case transportation difficulties make supply impossible.

3. The American buildings in Van are completely destroyed with two exceptions. One is a house on the main street, now used by Turkish soldiers. The other is the American church now used as a Turkish military hospital.

4. Food

Harvest 1918	3,000,000 kilos
Harvest 1919	7,000,000 kilos
Seed distributed by Gov. in 1919	200,000 kg.
Seed planted by inhabitants	500,000
Total planted in 1919	700,000 kg. ⁴¹

a. Cattle

Sufficient for all needs. Government gave away 400 and division sold 3,000.

⁴¹ The form of the table has been slightly changed to improve readability. The contents are unchanged.

b. *Agricultural Implements*

Sufficient for all needs. Besides the native stocks, large Russian supplies have been discovered and distributed.

c. There are no industries now under way in Van. In the City the shops contain nothing; for instance, it was found impossible to buy or to have made a brazier of sheet iron.

d. The produce of the district consists of wheat, barley and millet as principal products, fruit, nuts and grapes as secondary products. Price of bread - 40 pstres paper per oke.

e. Vali estimates that he will have sufficient food not only for the present inhabitants, but also for at least 10,000 persons additional if they should return.

5. *Safety*

a. *Troops*

In the city of Van there is one battalion of regular troops. The 11th Division recently moved from Arnis on Lake Van to Bayazid. In the villages in which Armenians are living, gendarmes are stationed for their protection. The gendarmes, however, are now at only one-eighth of normal strength, there being only 350 in the whole vilayet.

b. The Vali guarantees that Armenians in the vilayet will not be molested. He now has about 700, and declares that they are in safety. Those in the city of Van appear to be in a fairly safe position, but the plight of those in outlying villages must be very precarious, as is best illustrated by the fact that the Vali has stationed gendarmes for their protection. Owing to the general feeling against Armenians, who are charged with all sorts of atrocities, and to the arrival of mohadjirs from the Caucasus, it would seem impossible for Armenians to return at the present time.

6. *Relief under Way*

a. Civilian Women's hospital and orphanage; established in Armenian houses - buildings unsuitable for such work.

Women's hospital contains 45 beds, 25 patients, all venereal cases.

Orphanage contains 40 girls and 43 boys, about one-third of whom are Armenians. Besides the children, there are working in the workroom of the orphanage, 16 girls, who make clothes and bed clothes for the two institutions. In the hospital there are 10 nurses and in the orphanage there are 12 servants.

Summary:

Hospital	25 patients 10 nurses
Orphanage	40 girls 43 boys <u>12 servants</u>
Total persons supported	130

Cost: Food (at Govt. prices) 500 Ltq paper per month

Needs: Money, soap, cloth, sewing machines, sugar, foods of small bulk as preserved meat; drugs.

See Annex [not in the text]

b. Military hospital. Well equipped hospital, with wards of 100 beds, established in American Church. Operating Room seems fairly well supplied. No necessity of support by ACRNE.

c. Food and Seed distribution. Handled by Vali. Probably there will be no need for food distribution this year or seed distribution next year. Refugees arriving from Caucasus are given cattle.

d. The charitable and relief work in the province seems to depend largely on the Vali himself, whose energetic character and knowledge of conditions make it possible to carry on work which under a less capable man would be neglected.

e. No schools are running in Van at present time.

7. *Recommendations*

a. It is recommended that the civilian orphanage and hospital be aided by the ACRNE. If possible, a group of workers should be sent to Van to take over the running of this institution, and institute other work. In any case an amount of supplies should be sent to Van to provide for urgent needs - e.g., ten sewing machines, soap, cloth and drugs.

b. It is recommended that an industrial plant be established at Van for making cloth. There will be next winter at least 500 persons without work whose support⁴² will be a drain on the means of the province. If they could be engaged in productive work the resources of the province would be sensibly increased.

c. There is no need to establish food relief.

d. The two remaining American buildings could be taken over from the Turks and used for any purposes of the ACRNE.

c. ⁴³ Bayazid.

1. Roads

a. Railroad, narrow gauge from Bayazid to Shakh Taktu in Persia, where connection is made with Batoum, Tiflis, Tabriz line. Road goes west through Diadin as far as Kara Kilissa - 102 km.; not now operating to Shakh Taktu, but line is intact and could be operated.

b. Automobile Roads.

1. Erivan - Bayazid, 120 km. Said to be good auto road. All statements, however, regarding roads are unreliable. It is essential that they should be personally investigated.

2. Van - Bayazid. Good road. Passable for loaded unto trucks [sic].

3. Erzerum - Bayazid. Road not passable, as bridges are destroyed between Kara Kilissa and Khorasan.

2. Population.

a. Sandjak de Bayazid [sic]

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulmans		
Kurds	68,000	63,000
Turks	35,000	23,000
Emigrants from Caucasus		7,500
Armenians	7,500	—
	110,500	93,500

⁴² Original reads "suppose".

⁴³ Should be "E" in the proper sequence, but left here as in the text.

Number of Musulmans killed by Armenians in this region is 7,000.
Number of Musulmans expected to return is about 20,000.

b. City of Bayazid.

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	5,000	2,460
Armenian	1,000	—
Total	6,000	2,460

Population Turkish with a proportion of Kurds.

3. Destruction

a. Sandjak de Bayazid.

	Villages	
	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	448	243
Armenian	33	33

Thus 205 Musulman villages are destroyed.

b. City of Bayazid.

	Houses	
	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	960	600
Armenian	190	90

1. The houses in this region are built of mud [?] or stone, with wooden roofs. There is no wood in the country with which to rebuild. The Muta Serif puts the Sandjak in building materials at.

100,000 beams
100,000 planks
3,000 kegs of nails
100 tons of cement
300 cases of window glass

It is obviously impossible to send the above supplies into this country and at present Bayazid seems to be in better condition as regards buildings that either Bitlis or Van, and about the same as Erzerum.

2. There are no American buildings in Bayazid.

4. *Food.*

Expected Harvest, 1919

6,000,000 kg.

This amount the Muta Serif thinks will be insufficient and he says that food supplies will suffice for only six months. In comparing his figures with those of the Vali of Van, it is seen that in Van there will be 7,000,000 kg. to support 150,000 people, while in Bayazid there will be 6,000,000 kg. to support 111,000 people.

There should thus be no danger of famine in the region.

- a. Cattle are abundant in the region.
- b. Agricultural implements are sufficient for the needs.
- c. Produce of the country, wheat, barley, maize, potatoes and beans.
- d. There is no industrial work being carried out in the region.

5. *Safety*

- a. There is one division of troops at Bayazid, the 11th, belonging to the 15th Army Corps of Erzerum, strength between one and two thousand.
- b. Gendarmes - nine officers and two hundred men.
- c. No unusual disorders or brigandage.
- d. It was at Bayazid that Musulman refugees from the Caucasus made their strongest appeal on account of atrocities committed by Armenians upon them and those Musulmans who remain. The notes taken at the time show what the Armenians are doing now in the Caucasus and what they did at Bayazid during their occupation. There is a most intense bitterness and thirst for revenge against the Armenians here, and it would be utterly out of the question for a single Armenian to come into the country to live. It is equally impossible for a Musulman to go into Armenia. We tried to get a man to take a letter to Erivan, but no one could be found who would undertake to go.

6. *Relief under Way*

a. Food distribution by government has been going on regularly. At present there is a reserved depot of 50,000 kg., 18,000 persons are given relief by government at rate of 15 kg. per month. Last year government distributed 200,000 kg. of seed. Cattle have been given to Caucasian refugees.

b. Orphanages, established in two ruined buildings, 111 children and 10 helpless women are given relief by government. The orphanage is in a disgraceful condition, the building being almost completely in ruins, in indescribable filth and the children having no supervision or direction. One old Turkish caretaker is the only person in charge. Cost of orphanage about 4,000 Ltq. paper per month - a figure which seems excessive when compared with that of Van.

7. *Recommendations*

a. It is recommended that the orphanage in Bayazid be taken over by the ACRNE and run so that children now without any semblance of proper care may be given attention. What is required is the establishment of a complete orphanage for 120 children.

b. Medical and industrial relief here as everywhere would be valuable, but the need here is not as great as in other centers.

c. It is strongly recommended that the situation of Musulmans in the Caucasus be investigated, and, if the statements of refugees be found true, that energetic steps be taken to bring the Armenian government to repress massacres and atrocities at present going on. Whatever has occurred in the past, and whatever the rights and wrongs of the case may be, the disorders now occurring merely keep alive the hatred of Musulmans and Armenians and make a final peaceful settlement further distant and more difficult.

D. Erzurum, Frontier District, i.e. Diadin, Kara Kilissa, Alashgird, Zeidekan, Velibaba, Khorasan, Keupri Keui, Jaghan, Hassan Kale, Ilidja, Karabijik, Baiburt.

1. *Roads*

The region from Bayazid along the frontier to Erzerum comprises a district about 300 kilometres in length, consisting of a series of oval

shaped plains surrounded by high mountains, through which run rivers draining the plains. At the east the principal river is the Araxes, which flows east into the Caspian Sea, and at the west the chief river is the Euphrates, which at this point flows west towards Erzindjan. The region has been fought over and was occupied for a considerable time by the Russians in 1916. During their occupation, the Russians made many improvements in the way of communications, building roads and railroads. On the Russian retirement, however, the Armenians destroyed many of the Russian improvements and most of the Musulman villages, they massacred the Musulman inhabitants, and retired leaving the country in a complete state of desolation. At the present time there is only one road available for automobiles east of Erzerum - that leading from Erzerum through Hassan Kale, Keupri Keui and Khorasan over the frontier to Sari Kamish and Kars. A narrow gauge railroad follows the same route, but the section in operation ends at Khorasan, about 100 km. east of Erzerum. From Khorasan east through Veli Baba, Zeidekan and Alashgird, to Kara Kilissa east about 100 km. through Diadin to Bayazid there is a narrow gauge railroad in operation. This road leads to Shakh Taktu, in Persia, the junction with the Batoum railway, but this last section, though intact, is not in operation.

Thus both the eastern and western section of the district between Erzerum and the Armenia frontier are accessible; but the central section, where the need is greatest, is not.

The region west of Erzerum is accessible by the automobile roads between Trebizond, Erzerum and Erzindjan; it is a region [that] includes Ildija, Karabiyik, Namoukatoun and Baiburt.

The whole country under consideration is in the vilayet of Erzerum, and statistics for it were obtained both from the inhabitants of certain towns and from the central authorities at Erzerum. These figures are to be found in the reports appended.

2. Population

The region has between one-third and one-fourth of its former population, varying in certain districts. Those cities and villages on the line of retreat of the Armenian Army suffered most. The figures given us at Erzerum appear to us to coincide with our observation. Full statistics

of the population appear below in the attached table. There are practically no Armenians in this region.

3. Destruction

All the villages and town through which we passed showed the marks of the war. Most of them were completely ruined. Some were partially repaired, and some seemed to have been little damaged. But in general it may be said that less than one-third of the housing facilities of the region remain. Exact figures are found in the detailed report.

a. Building material, chiefly needed is wood, which is very scarce owing to the almost total lack of trees in this region. It would seem, however, that housing facilities can be improvised for the present population sufficient for the coming winter.

4. Food

The chief need of this district is food.

Although some fields are under cultivation, the population in most areas were unable to plant this year owing to lack of seed. The refugees from the Caucasus have no opportunity to plant and are in a very precarious position, although they do not seem to lack cattle. A very complete agricultural report was furnished us by the director of agriculture at Erzurum, and his figures do not seem to exaggerate the need. For instance the province will have twelve million okes of wheat to support a little less than [unreadable] population, which amount is calculated as sufficient to last the population for only three months. The province of Van has 7,000,000 kilos to support 160,000 population. Thus if the statistics on the amount of harvest expected are accurate, there will be enormous need for food importation.

For a full analysis of the situation, see the report on Agriculture.

a. Cattle are scarce, especially sheep and goats.

b. Agricultural implements are scarce.

c. The region now produces nothing except food.

5. Safety

Although there are three divisions of troops, with quarters at Bayazid, Khorasan, and Erzerum respectively, the region is impossible for Arme-

nians. The refugees from the Caucasus and the old inhabitants are both extremely bitter against Armenians. We are surprised to find that there are at present in the vilayet 393 Armenians, but there are practically none in the frontier districts. Individual Armenians could not possibly return with safety. For distribution of Armenians, see attached table.

6. Relief under Way

Except for seed distribution and some food and cattle distributed by the Government, there are no relief works under way in this region.

7. Special notes on Diadin, Kara Kilise, Jaghan and Hassan Kale.

a. Diadin.

1. Population of Caza

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	19,640	6,500
Armenian	1,000	—

2. Destruction.

Number of Villages	62
Houses before war	2,798
Houses now habitable	1,147

3. Food (only title entered)

b. Kara Kilissa

1. Population

Town, present population 1,800 no Armenians.

2. Destruction

Houses habitable before war	2,344
" " August, 1919	543

3. Food

Very scarce; famine reported already.

Price of bread, 70 piastres, paper per oke.

c. Jaghan

Village about 5 km. south of Keupri Keui formerly completely Armenian.

1. Population.

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	—	100
Armenian	1,000	—

2. Destruction

	Houses Habitable Before War	August, 1919
Musulman	—	—
Armenian	200	20

3. Food

Seems much more plentiful here than at any village seen. Agricultural implements and cattle abundant, except for sheep and goats.

This village is merely one of hundreds of similar ones, and appears to have no particular importance in any respect.

d. Hassan Kale.

1. Population

a. Caza

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman and Armenian	75,000	28,000
Refugees, Caucasus	—	2,000

b. Town

	Before War	August, 1919
Musulman and Armenian	6,000	100 (?)

Figure for present population appears to be too small.

2. Destruction-Houses Habitable in Town

<u>Before War</u>	<u>August, 1919</u>
2,000	200

3. Food

Very scarce. This year only 5% of native population saved grain. There is not food for more than two months.

Agricultural implements are sufficient. Cattle are scarce; [?] and oxen are in considerable quantities, but goats and sheep are all [?].

4. Atrocities

The inhabitants of Hassan Kale are most violent in denouncing the Armenians for having committed the most atrocious crimes upon Musulmans of the district.

8. Recommendations.

It is recommended that steps be taken to import food into this region in large quantities. As can be seen from the agricultural report, there will be starvation if help is not provided. The region from Baiburt through Erzurum to Khorasan can be reached by automobile from Trebizond. The 100 km. stretch between Khorasan and Kara Kilissa can be reached only by pack animals. The region from Kara Kilissa to Bayazid can be reached by railway from Persia and Batum. Any steps taken in this region should be in conjunction with the work of the Red Crescent.

E. Erzurum City.

1. Roads

a. Automobile road runs from Trebizond to Erzerum, 400 km. Entirely practicable and is now being used by Turkish truck trans. In case supplies are sent in the Turkish trucks should be used [sic].

b. Auto road is said to run to Kars, 300 kms. Not investigated personally. See statement of general situation.

2. Population

	<u>Before War</u>	<u>August, 1919</u>
Musulman	83,070	68,362
Armenian	32,751	76
Miscellaneous	3,000	—
Total	118,821	68,438

3. Destruction

	<u>Houses Habitable</u>
	<u>Before War</u> <u>August, 1919</u>
	7,574 5,553

These figures agree generally with our observations. We have no sources as to whether houses standing are Armenian or Musulman. It is probable, however, that here as in other cities the Musulman houses suffered most.

a. As in the outlying regions, wood is very scarce, but other building materials are not lacking. Erzerum has not suffered materially as much as the other cities.

b. The American buildings are in the following condition:

1. Church - walls, roof, and floors intact. Furniture and windows disappeared.

2. "American Consulate" (Mr. Stapleton's house) - completely gutted by fire.

3. Hospital - walls, floor and roof intact. No furniture or windows; whole property in filthy condition.

4. School - Practically intact. Has been lived in for six months by British officers who have affected minor repairs. Mayor promised to guard building efficiently.

4. Food

The food situation in the city is dependent on that of the vilayet, and consequently next winter there is certain to be a lack of food and conse-

quent starvation. At present, however, food seems to be plentiful in the market, where business appears to be carried on almost as usual. Erzerum, as compared with Bayazid, Bitlis and Van, has the appearance of a large and thriving city, an appearance which we believe is deceitful. (See agricultural report).

a. There is no industry in the city at the present time.

5. *Safety*

Although there are 76 Armenians living in Erzerum at the present time, the feeling is very strong against them. One division of troops is stationed at Erzerum, but it would be impossible for Armenians to return at the present time. The Congress being held while we were there illustrates the general feeling.

See Declaration of Congress of Erzerum, appended. [not attached in this text]

6. *Relief under Way*

a. Military Orphanage 139 boys
8 civilian teachers
6 servants

Cost - nothing, as it is run by the Army

This is the best institution we have seen, the children being clean, well dressed, and well instructed in elementary school and manual training.

b. Civilian Orphanage 364 boys, girls and women.

Cost - 33,000 Ltq. paper per year.

An institution badly in need of aid, as there is no instruction, no cleanliness, no supervision. The inmates are absolutely destitute and in most miserable condition.

c. Civilian Hospital 100 beds (Mayor's figure gives 200 "persons")

Cost 75,000 Ltq. per year.

Large and well built, but not modern, building used. Running water in yard. Drugs are lacking and hospital is dirty. There is needed an effi-

cient American direction and American supplies. The above figure for the cost of the hospital was taken from the official report. At our visit the mayor said the cost was about 1,000 Ltq. per month, or about 12,000 instead of 75,000 Ltq. per year.

d. Military Hospital 300 beds

Cost borne by army and work done entirely for army.

e. Polytechnic School 100 persons

Cost 22,568 Ltq. paper per year

A very unsystematic attempt to give instruction to orphans in civilian and military orphanages in weaving, carpentry, electricity, cotton (?) working and spinning.

This institution for a very much smaller figure than that given above could be made of great use to the city.

f. Women's refuge 35 poor women

A most filthy and disgraceful institution in a small dilapidated building. Should be abolished and women moved to hospital or orphanage.

g. Poor Relief.

Mayor gives elaborate figures on food distribution, but he said nothing about it to us. His figure is probably an estimate of what ought to be spent and not what has been spent.

h. In general it may be said of the mayor's report that it appears to be padded, both as to the amount of relief done and as to cost. We were unable to go over this report with the mayor himself.

7. *Recommendations*

It is recommended that a strong unit of the ACRNE be established in Erzerum with the following objects.

a. To establish a line of food supply from Trebizond by American and Turkish automobile trucks.

b. To undertake food distribution to Erzerum city and in the vilayet on a large scale as soon as possible.

c. To operate the following institutions in the city:

1. Civilian Orphanage

2. Civilian Hospital
3. Polytechnic School
4. Women's Refuge, which should be merged with the orphanage.

IV. Atrocities.

Although it does not fall⁴⁴ within the exact scope of our investigation one of the most salient facts impressed on us at every point from Bitlis to Trebizond was that in the region which we traversed the Armenians committed upon the Turks all the crimes and outrages which were committed in other regions by Turks upon Armenians. At first we were most incredulous of the stories told us, but the unanimity of the testimony of all witnesses, the apparent eagerness with which they told of wrongs done them, their evident hatred of Armenians, and, strongest of all, the material evidence on the ground itself, have convinced us of the general truth of the facts, first, that Armenians massacred Musulmans on a large scale with many refinements of cruelty, and second that Armenians are responsible for most of the destruction done to towns and villages. The Russians and Armenians occupied the country for a considerable time together in 1915 and 1916, and during this period there was apparently little disorder, although doubtless there was damage committed by the Russians. In 1917 the Russian Army disbanded and left the Armenians alone in control. At this period bands of Armenian irregulars roamed the country pillaging and murdering the Musulman civilian population. When the Turkish army advanced at Erzindjan, Erzerum, and Van, the Armenian army broke down and all of the soldiers, regular and irregular, turned themselves to destroying Musulman property and committing atrocities upon Musulman inhabitants. The result is a country completely ruined, containing about one-fourth of its former population and one-eighth of its former buildings, and a most bitter hatred [of] Musulmans for Armenians which makes it impossible for two races to live together at the present time. The Musulmans protest that if they are forced to live under an Armenian Government, they will fight, and it appears to us that they will probably carry out this threat. This view is shared by Turkish officers, British officers, and Americans whom we have met.

⁴⁴ Original reads "be".

A further aggravating condition is the state of affairs across the border. We have no way of knowing how far the complaints of the refugees prove true and how far the Musulmans are themselves to blame by organizing resistance to the Armenians. In any case the inhabitants of the Turkish side of the frontier believe that their co-religionists on the Armenian side are being massacred and treated with utmost cruelty and this belief intensifies the feeling against the Armenians. It is most strongly urged that conditions in the Caucasus be investigated with a view to ascertaining the true state of affairs, and if the Musulman reports are true, that steps be taken in order to prevent disorders that make a permanent settlement in this region more difficult than the present circumstances already make inevitable.

Attention is called to the annexed statements of refugees and inhabitants regarding atrocities. [not appended in this text]

V. General Summary

Our recommendations for relief may be summed up as follows:

A. Bitlis.

Industrial work is needed. Food impossible to transport. Orphanage and Hospital not urgent at present time.

B. Van.

Orphanage of approximately 100 children. Hospital of 45 beds. Industrial work for 300 to 500 persons. No need for food relief.

C. Bayazid

Orphanage of 110 children and women. No need for relief in this city.

D. Vilayet of Erzerum

Food relief on a large scale, by importation of food through Trebizond by means of auto trucks, Turkish and American; and distribution in the towns and villages, especially Diadin, Kara Kilissa, Zeidekan, Hasan Kale, and Alashgird.

The eastern portion of this region can be reached by railway from Batoum and narrow gauge. The central portion can be reached by pack animals.

E. City of Erzerum

A strong ACRNE unit to undertake the following works:

Automobile transportation

Food distribution

Orphanage 300 inmates

Hospital 100 beds

Polytechnic School

Respectfully submitted,

(signed) Emory H. Niles

Arthur E. Sutherland, Jr.

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