

## Chapter 2

# The Historical Background of Turkey's Foreign Policy

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Makers of Turkey's foreign policy continue to shoulder the burden of their Ottoman past. To this day they remain apprehensive about the creation of a Kurdish state in the region, fearing that something resembling the abortive Treaty of Sèvres of August 1920 might be imposed upon the Republic should they show any sign of weakness. This fear became even more real after 1991 with the collapse of Yugoslavia followed by the horrendous war in Bosnia. The Treaty of Sèvres, imposed on the sultan's government, partitioned Anatolia and left the Muslim-Turkish population with a rump state in the center. Apart from giving the Greeks extensive rights in western Anatolia and placing both the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits under League of Nations administration, the treaty created two territories for Armenia and Kurdistan to be placed under Great Power mandate. Though the treaty was never implemented, Turks have continued to live with the phobia that it never quite died and could be revived at any moment; thus their hostile attitude towards the Kurdish and Armenian questions today.

The Treaty of Sèvres was merely the culmination of the so-called Eastern Question, the term used to describe the inter-imperialist rivalry concerning the division of the legacy of the ailing Ottoman Empire, described as the "sick man of Europe." Until the end of the nineteenth century Britain had pursued the policy of supporting Ottoman territorial integrity against Russian encroachments towards Istanbul and the straits, which would have guaranteed Russia free access from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. But the diplomatic equation changed dramatically in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with German unification and the creation of the German Empire. The balance of power, which had pro-

vided stability in Europe after Napoleon's defeat, was damaged irreparably. Faced with the German challenge, Britain began to repair relations with its imperial rivals, France and Russia. The Anglo-French Entente of 1904 settled outstanding colonial differences between London and Paris. The Anglo-Russian Entente of August 1907 achieved the same goal by partitioning Persia into Russian and British spheres of influence, with understandings regarding their mutual interests in Tibet and Afghanistan. The meeting between the English king and the Russian tsar at Reval in June 1908 alarmed the Young Turk revolutionaries, convincing them that Britain and Russia had reached a similar accommodation over the Ottoman Empire. The fear that this meeting aroused is regarded as one of the causes of the constitutional revolution of July 1908.

Sultan Abdülhamid II, who ruled from 1876 to 1909, had attempted to balance British intrusion in Ottoman affairs by involving Germany in the Eastern Question. But the Young Turks who took charge of the constitutional regime were more imaginative and ambitious. Their intention, especially among the Unionist faction, members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), was to reform and modernize the empire so as to abandon the status of client for that of partner to the Great Powers. The Unionists saw their empire as potentially the "Japan of the Middle East" and hoped that Britain would sign an alliance with Istanbul just as it had with Tokyo in 1902. In 1909, when they made this proposal to Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary, he turned them down because he could not afford to alienate Russia and possibly drive it into Germany's arms.<sup>1</sup>

The Turks viewed Russia's southward expansion as the most potent threat to their empire. They had fought many wars against their northern neighbor and the war of 1877–78 had brought the tsarist army to the village of San Stefano and the very gates of the capital. Though Russian pretensions had been partially checked at the Congress of Berlin, the sultan had been forced to cede territories to Russia in the Balkans and the Caucasus. After July 1908, Russia altered its policy and attempted to achieve its goals through conciliation with the constitutional regime. This policy was implemented during the embassy of Nikolai Charykoff but it was abandoned in 1912 when Charykoff was replaced by M. N. de Giers and Russia reverted to its former aggressive policy towards the Ottomans.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See Feroz Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks, 1908–1914," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (July 1966), pp. 302–329.

2. On Russian foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire, see Alan Bodger, "Russia and the End of the Ottoman Empire," in Marian Kent, ed., *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984). Other articles in this anthology analyze the policies of the other Great Powers. Charykoff had come to love

The constitutional regime suffered a number of setbacks. The declaration of Bulgarian independence, Vienna's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the declaration of union between Crete and Greece (all in September 1908), the Turkish-Italian war in Libya in 1911–12, and finally the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, all undermined its legitimacy in the eyes of the people. In each case, Istanbul found itself totally isolated and powerless while the Great Powers found diplomatic solutions at the expense of Ottoman territory.

The war with Italy left Istanbul both isolated and bewildered. The Porte had always taken care to remain neutral and impartial in the diplomatic rivalries of Europe and expected to be treated even-handedly when engaged in any conflict. But that had not been the case here and a re-evaluation of policy was called for. When Hüseyin Cahid, an unofficial spokesman for the CUP, examined his country's policy vis-à-vis the two blocs he asked:

Why should Turkey wish to remain neutral? Was it in order to avoid being friendly with any of the Great Powers and sharing interests with them? No! It was to avoid having our friendship for one being regarded as a hostile act by another or all of the others. The aim of Turkey's policy is to achieve something positive rather than something negative; she wants to be friendly with all the Powers but she has not achieved this result.

He concluded that if Germany were unable to intervene on Turkey's behalf with its ally Italy, then Turkey ought to lean towards the Triple Entente.<sup>3</sup>

The poet Mehmet Âkif also issued a warning to Berlin with regard to its Ottoman policy. He wrote:

There is absolutely no doubt that if we are ruined, the key to the East will pass into the hands of her rivals rather than Germany's. . . . Today Germany is tied to Italy by an agreement. If Germany sacrifices us for such a friend, would it not be natural for us to throw ourselves into the arms of Germany's rivals? Our German friends may be certain that if the government of Germany wins over the persevering, loyal, and valiant Ottomans instead of treacherous and cowardly Italy, it will not have lost anything from a moral or material point of view; quite the contrary, it will gain a great deal. It could mean going directly to the East with the Ottomans in order to save and to civ-

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Istanbul so much that after the revolution he left Russia and sought asylum there, making his home in Bebek. He died there on September 11, 1930. See *The Times* (London), September 13, 1930.

3. "İttifak ve İtilaflar karşısında Türkiye" (Turkey against the Alliance and the Entente), *Tanin* (Istanbul), September 28, 1911.

ilize it. It could mean making the East a region for the expansion of German commerce and industry. . . . Thus, here is an attractive and important program for the Ottoman and German governments which understand each other.<sup>4</sup>

The catastrophe of the Balkan Wars increased the sense of isolation and created a mood of xenophobia. As war broke out, the Great Powers, anticipating a Turkish victory, declared that they would not permit a change in the status quo as a result of war. But when the Ottoman armies were defeated on all fronts by the Christian coalition, this declaration was disregarded and the Turks were forced to surrender virtually all their European territories. After the setback in Libya, the humiliation in the Balkans was even more traumatic. But the Unionists had no choice but to accept their fate. However, they decided to make a concerted effort to end their diplomatic isolation and seek the protection of one of the blocs. They calculated that the Triple Entente between Britain, France, and Russia was the stronger combination and sought an alliance with each of these powers, but to no avail. The Entente rejected the Unionist offer, convinced that an alliance with the Turks would be a heavy liability in a war against Germany. Berlin had reached the same conclusion and signed the secret alliance with Istanbul on August 2, 1914, only after the war in Europe had broken out. The Unionists preferred an alliance full of risks to neutrality and isolation.

Until the outbreak of war in Europe, most Unionists were pro-Entente. But Britain's naval blockade of the Dardanelles and its decision to confiscate two Turkish battleships built in British yards, and paid for by popular subscription, had a profound effect on the mood of the country.<sup>5</sup> The Porte issued a communiqué accusing Britain of a breach of international law. But the language of the press was much harsher, some newspapers describing Britain's decision as an act of piracy.<sup>6</sup> While Turkey maintained its armed neutrality, its hostility towards the Entente remained guarded. There was still hope of a short war and an early peace and therefore it would be unwise to alienate any of the Great Powers who might well decide Turkey's fate at the peace table. However, with the

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4. "Osmanlı ve İslam Muhibbi Alman'lara Açık Mektup" (Open letter to the Germans, friends of the Ottomans and Islam), in Mehmet Âkif, *İmzasız*, Vol. 7 of *Sirat-i Müstakim* (n.p., n.d.), p. 169, quoted in Cevdet Kudret, "Mehmet Akif," *Yön* (Istanbul), Vol. 6, No. 196 (December 30, 1966), p. 8.

5. Mehmet Cavit, "Mesrutiyet Devrine ait Cavit Beyin Hatıraları" (Cavid Bey's memoirs of the constitutional period), *Tanin*, October 16, 1944.

6. See Yunus Nadi, "Hazar Lanet" (A thousand curses), *Tasvir-i Efkar* (Istanbul), August 7, 1914.

declaration of jihad against the Entente in November 1914, Britain, France, and Russia—the colonizers of Islamic lands—became the enemy. Turkish armies fought on two fronts, in eastern Anatolia against Russia, and at the Dardanelles against Britain and France.

Had the Entente fleet broken through at the Dardanelles, that would have marked the end of the Ottoman Empire. A report presented to the British cabinet on June 30, 1915, entitled “British Desiderata on Turkey-in-Asia” noted that Britain’s war aim was to create a “new order in Asiatic Turkey . . . keeping the Ottoman Empire in name but breaking the ‘vampire-hold of the metropolis,’ providing for local rule in each of the geographic provinces—Anatolia, Armenia, Palestine, and Iraq.” Two years later, in response to President Wilson’s letter, the Entente stated its own war aims. Concerning the Ottoman Empire they demanded “the liberation of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turk and the eviction from Europe of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>7</sup> This became one of the Entente’s main war aims; Istanbul only learned of it in November 1917, after the Bolsheviks made public the secret treaties.

The Entente failed to force the Dardanelles and this victory gave the Turks a new sense of confidence about their ability to survive as an empire. Instead of being Germany’s clients, they saw themselves as allies and partners who had made vital contributions to the war effort. Nevertheless, the situation for the Turks remained desperate until the outbreak of revolution in Russia in March 1917. There was hope of an early peace if Russia left the war. But the provisional government’s determination to continue the war and its aggressive war aims led to despair. The Unionists came to the conclusion that even a Russian republic, whether socialist, federalist, or liberal, and ruled according to the ideas of the Cadets, would pursue the traditional policy of the tsars. Thus Russia, while a single political entity, would not be a friendly neighbor. To be a peaceful neighbor, Russia had to become a federal state; only then would the Black Sea be transformed from a battlefield to an arena of harmony and cooperation.<sup>8</sup>

The situation in Russia had the effect of changing the attitude of the Turks towards England. The press began to describe it as the obstacle to peace, continuing the war for its own imperialist war aims, and keeping France and Russia in the war through bribery and duplicity. The Istanbul daily *Tanin* (October 14, 1917) commented:

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7. Cabinet Papers 27/1, quoted in William Stivers, *Supremacy and Oil: Iraq, Turkey and the Anglo-American World Order, 1918–1930* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 22–23.

8. “Rusya ve Biz” (Russia and us), *İkdam* (Istanbul), October 9, 1917.

Everyone knows the egotism and vanity of England. Her lack of morality has been proved in this war. The English look upon foreigners as slaves to be exploited for their own purpose. England binds foreign nations to herself through cunning and duplicity so that they cannot break away. This war has finally shown England in her true colors, as the personification of treachery and selfishness.

At the same time, the attitude towards Russia became friendly, especially after the Bolsheviks seized power in November. Lenin's program of peace was welcomed in all quarters and the Turkish response was one of sympathy, even condescension. The speech in the assembly made by Servet Bey, deputy for the province of Trabzon, then under Russian occupation, expressed the sense of sympathy for the new Russia. He said:

I am of the opinion that we must take the first opportunity to listen to the voice of humanitarianism—that is, we must profit by the offer made to neutrals and belligerents by the Russian government. The proclamation which was read yesterday [November 30] in the press is addressed to all governments and all peoples, to the working classes, and to the deputies all over the world. I hope that the Turkish Chamber . . . will not remain indifferent to it. I am also sure that once the moment comes, our government will not fail to make known to us the official communication. . . . For my part, I applaud and congratulate the present rulers of Russia for their humanitarian action.<sup>9</sup>

A few days later, on December 5, 1917, the Russo-Turkish armistice on the Caucasus front was signed at Erzincan.<sup>10</sup> To show their goodwill towards the world of Islam, the Bolsheviks published an appeal to the Muslims of Russia and the East reaffirming their abrogation of the Secret Treaties “regarding the seizure of Constantinople, which was confirmed by Kerensky, the treaty to partition the Ottoman Empire, the Sykes-Picot Agreement which would have deprived the empire of Armenia.”<sup>11</sup>

Soviet propaganda found a receptive ear among the Turks. In Soviet revelations, they found irrefutable proof of the Entente's policy of conquest and partition at the expense of the Ottomans. “Each time the Entente found itself faced with the need to promise something to some element or nation which it wished to drag into war on its side, it promised a

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9. *Tanin*, December 2, 1917.

10. Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi* (History of the Turkish revolution), Vol. 2, Pt. 4 (Ankara, 1952), p. 95.

11. *Izvestia*, November 22/December 5, 1917, pp. 2–3, quoted in Ivar Spector, *The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917–1958* (Seattle: distributed by the University of Washington Press, 1959), pp. 33–34.

piece of our country." The Bolsheviks had exposed the myth that the Entente had been fighting for such humanitarian aims as the freedom of nations. It was time to mend fences with the Russians now that they had put an end to the anti-Turkish intrigues of the tsarist government.<sup>12</sup>

The Bolsheviks had not only put an end to the intrigues of the old regime, but they promised to leave the war and respect the rights of every nation. Such statements were welcomed in Istanbul and Yunus Nadi, a Unionist deputy and journalist, applauded the Bolsheviks for their achievements:

The great revolution which this new government will produce in the Near East and which contains the conditions essential to unlimited confidence in the relations between us may be considered as a fortunate issue for the good of the human race. Tsarist Russia did nothing but cause the greatest misfortunes to humanity with the ambitions, for example, of gaining possession of the Straits. If we do not have to fight for our very survival, it is well known that the Straits are open to the whole world.<sup>13</sup>

Bolshevik declarations of peace coincided with the Entente's Paris declaration that Turkey would be expelled from Europe and restricted to Asia Minor. *Tanin* countered:

Such stupid statements as these—even if intended as a joke—will not be tolerated and their repetition will force us to speak more bluntly once the war is over. The first test of a civilized nation is its attachment to its territory and to the nation. If the Italians, who allowed the enemy to conquer their country, are European why should not the Turks, who defended heroically their capital for months, remain a part of Europe?<sup>14</sup>

The major shift in Turkish foreign policy took place under circumstances of war and revolution. The Western alliance of England and France had already partitioned Ottoman lands and decided that the Turks would be expelled from Europe. Bolshevik Russia, itself a pariah state engaged in civil war and facing Western intervention, provided the

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12. "Sulh Celseesi" (Peace conference), *Tanin*, December 5, 1917.

13. Yunus Nadi, "İhtilal ve İnkılap Rusyasi ve Biz" (Russia in revolution and reform and us), *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, December 4, 1917; Agaoglu Ahmed, a Turk from Azerbaijan who had harbored pan-Turkish aspirations during the war, wrote that there would be no reason for hostility towards Russia now that it had abandoned its expansionist policies. See *Hilal* (Istanbul), December 5, 1917.

14. "Türkiye Avrupadan Kovulacakmış" (Turkey is to be driven out of Europe), *Tanin*, December 10, 1917.

only guarantee for the future. But the territorial basis for the Turkey-to-be was far from clear. At Brest-Litovsk in 1918, the Porte regained territory in eastern Anatolia lost to Russia in 1877–78 but Anatolia was still not well defined in the Turkish mind. When the empire was under siege in 1915, the Unionists “discovered” Anatolia and with it a sense of Anatolian-Turkish patriotism. But as soon as the British had been forced to evacuate the Gallipoli peninsula, the Unionists reverted to their imperial war aims of regaining the Arab provinces, including Egypt, from the British. These aims remained official until the failure of the German offensive of July 1918. Thereafter such ambitions were abandoned and the Nationalists settled for Ottoman territories held by the army at the signing of the armistice at Mudros on October 30, 1918. These boundaries were adopted in the National Pact of 1919. In July 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne gave international recognition to virtually the same borders, thereby creating the new Turkey.

The policy of conciliation with Moscow, begun during the last stages of the First World War, was cemented during Turkey’s national struggle and Russia’s civil war. The sultan’s Istanbul was under Allied occupation and the British were determined to implement their policy of driving the Turks out of Europe. Their Greek allies wanted to go one step further: they not only wanted to drive the Turks out of Europe but they were also determined to incorporate western Anatolia into a greater Greece. To accomplish that goal, a Greek army landed in Izmir on May 15, 1919, launching an invasion that lasted until September 1922. The Greek invasion provoked a resistance movement among the Muslims of Anatolia, which came to be led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

The Nationalists and the Bolsheviks were natural allies given the hostility of the West to both movements. But ideologically they were far apart. Mustafa Kemal had no sympathy for communism and took measures necessary to crush it. Nor did he and Stalin have warm regard for each other and he pursued a policy not always in conformity with Stalin’s wishes. Thus Stalin did not trust Mustafa Kemal’s motives when he agreed to give political asylum to Trotsky. Before Trotsky arrived in Istanbul on February 12, 1929, Maxim Litvinov, Stalin’s commissar for foreign affairs, wrote in his journal:

Received a letter from our Embassy in Ankara. Kemal said he saw no objection to granting a visa to Trotsky, but warned that he would have to stay in the Embassy or consulate of the USSR. . . . I had a talk with Koba [Stalin]. He was dissatisfied. “Kemal is a scoundrel,” he said. “The offer smacks of provocation.” . . . I said there was no hope of getting a visa from other countries. . . .

He retorted that our diplomats were “cobblers” and they should take lessons from the English: the English would have managed to get a visa. . . . In the end he said, “We shall probably have to accept. Let him go to Kemal.”<sup>15</sup>

Trotsky's private secretary, Jean van Heijenoort, wrote in his memoirs:

Throughout Trotsky's stay in Turkey there were no difficulties with the Turkish authorities. During the Turkish struggle for national independence in 1920 Kemal Pasha had received arms from Soviet Russia, which had been delivered through the agency of Trotsky as commissar for war. Years later, a visitor reported Trotsky as having said in 1933: “When Turkey was fighting Greece in the war I helped Kemal Pasha with the Red Army. Fellow soldiers don't forget such things. That was why Kemal Pasha didn't lock me up in spite of pressure from Stalin.” The words may not be exactly Trotsky's, but he did in fact give military supplies. I also heard it said that in the early years of the Russian Revolution, Lenin and Trotsky had been made honorary members of the Turkish Parliament.<sup>16</sup>

Be that as it may, a working relationship with Moscow had become the main pillar of Turkey's foreign policy and remained so until at least Atatürk's death in November 1938. Falih Rifki Atay, a journalist in Mustafa Kemal's inner circle, wrote, “It was clear that he [Atatürk] did not want Russia and Turkey to ever be enemies again.”<sup>17</sup>

The aphorism “Peace at Home, Peace in the World,” often used as

15. Maxim Litvinov, *Notes for a Journal* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1955), p. 76.

16. Jean van Heijenoort, *With Trotsky in Exile: From Prinkipo to Coyoacan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 21–22. While Lenin was alive, relations with the Nationalists were cordial. In November 1921, Lenin sent Mikhail Frunze to Ankara on a mission to provide support to a beleaguered Turkey. In a speech to the assembly, Frunze declared: “The voices which once urged our people to the conquest of Constantinople, the Straits and Anatolia have been stilled for ever.” See Raymond Lacoste, *La Russie soviétique et la question d'Orient* (Paris: Les Éditions internationales, 1946), p. 62, quoted by André Fontaine, *History of the Cold War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), p. 285. Mustafa Kemal sent telegrams to Moscow and Kharkov to express his appreciation of the Frunze mission. He wrote: “The mere fact that the Government of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, for concluding a treaty of friendship in order to further strengthen the political and economic ties between both peoples has chosen Frunze, one of the outstanding political leaders and at the same time one of the valorous generals and heroic leaders of the victorious Red Army, has caused particular gratitude on the part of the National Assembly.” *Izvestiya VTsIK*, December 28, 1921, quoted in Makhmut Akhmetovich Gareev, *M.V. Frunze, Military Theorist* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), p. 48.

17. Falih Rifki Atay, *Inanç* (Belief) (Istanbul: Dünya Yayınları, 1965), p. 21. Mustafa acquired the surname Atatürk by the law of November 1934.

shorthand to describe Kemalist foreign policy, suggests a quietist policy which sought isolation from the rest of the world. Yet that was never the case. Even before the establishment of the Republic, the nationalists had signed agreements with their neighbors to the north as well as with distant Afghanistan. At this point, the goal was to end the isolation imposed upon the new Turkey by the West after the end of the First World War. Even after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, the Turks had to struggle hard to stop the European powers from treating the new state as they had the former Ottoman Empire. Yusuf Hikmet Bayur in his 1934 study, *Yeni Türkiye Devletinin Harici Siyaseti*, describes how the republican government had to struggle constantly to be treated as an equal in response to some of the indignities the powers tried to heap on Turkey. Thus, even though Ankara was Turkey's new capital, some of the powers refused to move their embassies from Istanbul. The newly appointed American ambassador, Joseph Grew, who arrived in Turkey in August 1927, stayed in Istanbul most of the year, taking the night express to Ankara whenever it was necessary to do so. It is worth quoting from his diary for September 21, 1927, which reveals his casual attitude:

Here I am on the night train from Constantinople to Angora . . . feeling much more on a sight-seeing tour than traveling for the purpose of establishing relations with a new Government. My visit to the Minister for Foreign Affairs tomorrow will be purely incidental; happening to find myself in the capital of Turkey, of course I shall look in on him—that's the way I feel; I ought to be carrying a Turkish Baedeker.<sup>18</sup>

By the late 1920s, Turkey had regained much of its self-confidence, having reconciled itself to the loss of Mosul to British-mandated Iraq. As a result, its entire perception of geopolitics had changed. As far as Tevfik Rüstü Aras and the foreign ministry were concerned, the frontiers of the Near East were no longer the same; they no longer included Iran or the Arab provinces of the now-defunct Ottoman Empire. He defined the Near East as:

the Balkans and Turkey and its frontier is the eastern frontier of Turkey. Persia, Russia, Iraq, and Afghanistan compose the Middle East, and everything east of that is the Far East. Turkey is now a western power; the death of a peasant in the Balkans is of more importance to Turkey than the death of a king in Afghanistan.

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18. Joseph Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), p. 717.

He concluded that for Turkey "the Balkan Question exists no longer; it has disappeared and has become the Mediterranean Question."<sup>19</sup>

By the late 1920s and the early 1930s, the Mediterranean Question had come to mean thwarting the dream of Mussolini, Italy's fascist dictator who dreamed of restoring the Roman Empire in Asia and Africa and turning the Mediterranean into an Italian lake. Turkey took such pretensions seriously; not only had it fought the Italians in Libya, but the memory of Italian designs on the Antalya region after the First World War was still very fresh. Moreover, the Italians were still in occupation of the Dodecanese islands off the coast of Anatolia, islands they had occupied in 1912 and were now developing as a major base for expansion in the eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey dealt with the threat from Italy in terms of a policy Tevfik Rüstü Aras often described to Ambassador Grew during his term of five years: "Our foreign policy is simple and direct; we seek friendship with all, alliance or *groupement* with none."<sup>20</sup> This was the spirit in which the Grand National Assembly ratified the Briand-Kellogg Pact in January 1929, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. Turkey became the first country to do so after the United States, which was a signatory with France. Ankara had already signed an agreement on neutrality with Rome on May 30, 1928, binding both countries to neutrality in case of conflict with a third country and to arbitration should any dispute arise between them. In June 1930, the Turkish-Greek accord cleared the way for friendly relations between the two states, which were still occupied with problems left over from Lausanne. While regional agreements were significant in Turkey's strategic thinking, Ankara recognized that only friendly relations with such major powers as Britain, France, and the Soviet Union could provide true security against another Great Power, even of the second rank, such as Italy. Thus the Turco-Soviet Treaty of Friendship of December 1925 continued to be the basis of the cordial relationship with Moscow. But the warm reception given by the government to the British Mediterranean fleet in October 1929 began the process of reconciliation with London, which was cemented with an alliance in 1939.

Turkey's first venture into European affairs took place in 1930 when it joined a commission of inquiry into European union. Two years later, in

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19. *Ibid.*, p. 753. Grew's conversation with Tevfik Rüstü took place on January 14, 1928.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 917.

July 1932, Turkey entered the League of Nations and became an ardent supporter of the principle of “collective security” against aggression. If the reaction in the Turkish press is anything to go by, there was great and natural sympathy for Ethiopia when it was attacked by Italy in October 1935. Ethiopia was the last remaining independent state in Africa after the partition of that continent by the European powers, just as the Ottomans had been the last Muslim state to survive the imperialist onslaught before the First World War. The Turks could not help but make the comparison, having been the victims of Italian and Western aggression a generation earlier.

Ankara’s policy, based on pragmatism rather than sentimentality, was also principled. Ankara supported “collective security” and it therefore backed the League of Nations sanctions against Italy. Turkey adopted this position even though it sold both cereals and coal to Italy, one of its best customers during the depressed 1930s, and sanctions were therefore a considerable economic sacrifice. Moreover Italy, in occupation of the Dodecanese islands, even posed a military threat to Anatolia.

The Hoare-Laval Pact of December 1935, by which Britain and France abandoned Ethiopia to Mussolini, was bitterly criticized in the press. The Istanbul daily, *Cumhuriyet* (December 15, 1935), noted with heavy sarcasm that Ethiopia would surely have been denounced by the appeasers as the aggressor had it refused to be dismembered and fought back in self-defense. For the Turks, what they were witnessing under the guise of appeasement in the 1930s was virtually the same policy used to dismember the Ottoman Empire and to partition Anatolia. When the League accepted the Anglo-French proposals for Ethiopia, it did just what the Concert of Europe had done to the Ottomans in the past. The Turks could not forget their past so easily and therefore found it natural to sympathize with the victims of aggression.

The Spanish Civil War began virtually at the same moment as the signing of the Montreux Convention on July 20, 1936, permitting Turkey to militarize the straits. Turkey had sought the revision of the Lausanne Treaty in order to defend itself against possible Italian aggression. As the guardian of the straits, Turkey occupied a vital strategic position on the supply line from the Soviet Union to Spain. The war in Spain was seen by many as a European civil war, a struggle between democracy and dictatorship. Mussolini and Hitler came out in open support of General Franco’s rebellion against the republican government. England and France proposed that all states refrain from intervening in the conflict and from supplying arms to either party. This became the policy of the League though that did not prevent Rome, Berlin, and Moscow from sup-

plying their clients in the civil war. Ankara followed the League's lead but its sympathies were with the republicans.

Turkey was in no position to play an independent role in Spain, as Hitler and Mussolini were doing on Franco's behalf and Stalin on behalf of the Spanish republic. It continued to support collective security, especially when the Italian threat came closer to home with the sinking of a Spanish ship in Turkish waters in August 1937. The Mediterranean states responded by convening the Nyon conference in September and denouncing "Italian piracy." The Turkish delegation, acting on Atatürk's instructions, went so far as to permit British and French ships to use Turkish naval bases to prevent Italian aggression. Prime Minister İnönü opposed this policy on the grounds that Italy would find it provocative.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout the 1930s, relations with Britain improved dramatically and the desire to be close to the democracies also had an impact on the character of the regime at home. As *The Times* (London) noted on May 25, 1937, "In a sense, Turkey's foreign policy which relied on Moscow, and after 1936 on London and Paris, depended on having a regime at home which did not have a fascist colouring." This may have been a factor in the dismissal of Recep Peker as the ruling party's secretary-general in 1936 for he represented the faction in the Republican People's Party that was responsible for giving the Kemalist regime a "fascist colouring."

Turkey's attitude towards the threat the dictators posed was not restricted merely to diplomatic maneuvers and support for collective security. The government also took measures to deter aggression by strengthening the country's defenses. Not only were the straits refortified but the government also decided to build an air force, the principal instrument of modern warfare. The military maneuvers in Aydin in October 1937, attended by Atatürk, İnönü, and Bayar, were clearly designed to demonstrate the country's determination to resist Italian aggression. The Hitler-Mussolini meetings of these years, where the two dictators were thought to be discussing their spheres of influence, alarmed Ankara and led to greater emphasis on cooperation with neighbors in the Balkans and in the Middle East.

There is much more to explore concerning Turkish policy and attitude towards fascist aggression and the policy of appeasement in the 1930s. Perhaps Turkey's response to the Munich agreement of September 1938 and the Nazi seizure of Czechoslovakia the following spring sums up its position. If we measure this response from the comment of Tur-

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21. Dilek Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy in Turkey: Economic and Foreign Policy Strategies in an Uncertain World, 1929–1939* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), pp. 184–185.

key's controlled press, we learn that the Turks were alarmed by the cynicism of Chamberlain and Daladier in signing away Czech territory to the Germans. But they were not surprised by such an act, having witnessed something similar in Ethiopia, and relying on their own past experience. Even though Britain was seen as the main factor in Prague's passivity, there was even greater dismay when the Czechs surrendered their independence without a fight. The Turks remembered their own national struggle and were convinced that if the Czechs had decided to fight they could have maintained their dignity if not their independence. *Cumhuriyet*, the voice of the Kemalist establishment, was quite adamant in stating that if the Czechs had fought the Nazis, their situation would not have been any the worse; indeed, they might have saved the nation.

Throughout the 1930s, Kemalist Turkey took a clear stand against appeasing the dictators. This policy was so rare in Europe of the 1930s that George Orwell was able to write: "In the years 1935–9, when almost any ally against Fascism seemed acceptable, left-wingers found themselves praising Mustafa Kemal."<sup>22</sup> This in itself was a unique achievement in the history of the early Republic and speaks volumes for the foreign policy of the Kemalist regime.

After Atatürk's death in November 1938, Turkey's foreign policy became more cautious and opportunistic. Relations with Moscow, the keystone of Kemalist foreign relations, cooled after the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 and Ankara's "orientation in foreign policy now entered a new phase." In October, Foreign Minister Sükrü Saraçoğlu visited Moscow to test the waters and was confronted for the first time with Stalin's proposals to revise the Montreux Convention regarding the straits in Russia's favor. Saraçoğlu rejected these proposals and "strongly denied any possibility of bilateral revision of a multilateral convention and said Turkey would never allow another Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi" (of 1833) when Russia was allowed joint defense of the straits.<sup>23</sup> Yet by December 1941, when British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden arrived in Moscow, soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Stalin made a number of proposals for a postwar settlement. He requested "an immediate agreement to the incorporation of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia,

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22. George Orwell, "Who are the War Criminals?" *Tribune*, October 22, 1943, in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, Vol. 3 (London: Secker and Warburg, 1970), p. 367. I owe this reference to my friend, the late Dr. Naim Turfan.

23. Selim Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 85–86. See also Edward Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1943–1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973).

and parts of Finland, Poland, and Rumania into the USSR."<sup>24</sup> The straits were not mentioned and there was no request for any concessions from neutral Turkey. In fact, its strategic importance had improved so much that in order to woo Ankara and bring Turkey into the war, Stalin and Molotov proposed that after the war Turkey be given "the Dodecanese Islands and perhaps territories from Bulgaria and Syria."<sup>25</sup>

İnönü's government preferred to remain neutral, possibly gambling on a German victory in the Soviet Union. Perhaps that also explains the discriminatory wealth tax, the notorious *Varlık Vergisi*, imposed on Turkey's minorities. In 1942 the odds favored Germany. It controlled almost all of Europe and its resources, and seemed poised to move into the Middle East. Its ally Japan had destroyed the colonial empires and threatened India and Australia. The Soviet Union had been invaded and lost its industrial base west of the Urals; the United States had yet to mobilize its huge resources.

Until the German surrender at Stalingrad in February 1943, Turkey's neutrality tended to favor Berlin. But soon after the Casablanca meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt (January 12–13, 1943) there was a cautious change. Churchill attempted to bring Turkey into the war with the aim of entering the Balkans behind Ankara, before Stalin was able to do so. But the ever-cautious İnönü preferred to remain neutral.<sup>26</sup>

The question of the straits came up again when Stalin and Churchill met in Moscow in October 1944 to discuss post-war Europe and divide it into spheres of influence. Churchill "expanded the first discussion from Greece and Rumania to include Hungary and Yugoslavia."

Stalin rejoined with a reference to Bulgaria—and, to test the waters at their deepest, Turkey. "What about Russian rights in controlling the Black Sea straits?" [he asked]. The 1936 Montreux Convention covering the entrance to the Black Sea gave Japan as many rights as Russia. If Britain was interested in the Mediterranean, Russia had an equal concern with the Black Sea regime still dominated by Turkey. Suddenly on guard, Churchill asked what changes Stalin had in mind? For the moment, came the answer, agreement that the Montreux Convention must be altered was enough. "What would Britain do if Spain or Egypt were to gain the right to close the Suez Canal, or what would the United States say if some South American Republic had the right to close the Panama Canal? Russia was in a worse situation." Churchill accepted the principle, suggesting that it had to be done in a friendly way so as

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24. Forrest Pogue, "The Struggle for a New Order," in John Snell, ed., *The Meaning of Yalta* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), p. 18.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Lloyd Gardner, *Spheres of Influence* (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1993), pp. 158–159, n. 29.

not to frighten Istanbul. The prime minister then suggested that Stalin take up the Montreux Convention with the United States.<sup>27</sup>

The question of the straits came up at the Yalta Conference in February 1945 when Moscow suggested that the subject be placed on the agenda of the first meeting of foreign ministers after Yalta. The Western powers agreed after observing that Turkey should be informed and assured that its independence would be guaranteed.<sup>28</sup> And that is where the matter rested until the end of the war.

Conventional wisdom concerning Turkish-Soviet relations after the Second World War informs us that Soviet demands and pressure on Turkey forced Ankara to seek Western support and to become an active participant in the Cold War.<sup>29</sup> There may be some truth to this interpretation but it fails to consider domestic factors that led to a radical shift in Ankara's foreign policy. After the war both parties, the ruling Republicans and the opposition Democrats, believed that the fastest way to develop Turkey's economy and modernize its society was by injecting large doses of capital into the economy. Since the country lacked such resources, necessary investment could come only from the United States. Washington would be more forthcoming, analysts in Ankara argued, if Turkey were to be a willing participant in a U.S.-led Cold War. This, then, was the policy the government adopted and it soon began to pay off. The Truman Doctrine and the implementation of the Marshall Plan in Turkey were the first installments, and membership in NATO the last.

Though diplomatic historians tend not to focus on domestic factors in their discussion of foreign policy, their analysis of new documents is often valuable in revising what passes as conventional wisdom. In Turkey, such revisionist writers as Yalçın Küçük questioned the well-established theses on Turkey and the Cold War. But their work, though useful and provocative, was impressionistic, based as it was on secondary sources. Recent studies by a new generation of U.S. diplomatic historians, based primarily on U.S. archival documents, often recently declassified, shed new light on this murky postwar period and help us re-

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27. Ibid., pp. 198–201.

28. Charles Delzell, "Russian Policy in Central-Eastern Europe," in John Snell, ed., *The Meaning of Yalta* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), p. 118.

29. Bruce Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980) remains the best conventional account of the origins of the Cold War in the Near East. But, as with earlier diplomatic histories of the Eastern Question, the author uses virtually no Turkish sources and treats Turkey as a passive victim.

consider Turkey's foreign policy. Needless to say, what scholars need are Turkish diplomatic documents to provide a fuller picture. But until we are given access to them, we shall be forced to rely on U.S. State Department and presidential archives.

The conventional story of Turkish-Soviet relations after the war is familiar enough not to bear detailed repetition. Relations between Ankara and Moscow were no longer cordial after the war because the Soviet Union was convinced that Turkey's neutrality had favored Berlin.<sup>30</sup> Thus, when the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship of 1925 was due to expire in 1945, Moscow placed conditions on its renewal. These included the joint defense of the straits and the return to Georgia of the territories of Kars and Ardahan, which had been recovered by the Ottomans in 1918. The Soviet, and especially the Georgian, press began an anti-Turkish campaign as a part of a war of nerves. However, it is worth emphasizing that there were no official demands from Moscow, there were only proposals.

At the same time, the growth of Soviet influence in the Balkans and northern Iran made Turkey an important asset for American policy-makers and the dispatch of the battleship USS *Missouri* was a symbol of Turkey's increasing significance in U.S. strategy. The *Missouri* arrived at Istanbul on April 5, 1946, ostensibly to return the body of Münir Ertegün, the Turkish ambassador who had died in Washington. But the visit was arranged by Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal as a show of force in the Mediterranean designed to intimidate Moscow. Forrestal had wanted to send ships of the Atlantic Eighth Fleet into the Mediterranean to accompany the *Missouri*. Initially, James Byrnes of the State Department had agreed with the proposal, but after the start of the Iranian crisis in March he suggested postponement for fear that the dispatch of such a task force might seem a provocative act. Nevertheless, Forrestal made arrangements for two cruisers from the Eighth Fleet to join the *Missouri*.<sup>31</sup> Despite the alarm over the communist threat, Greece, Turkey, and Iran re-

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30. It is well known that neutral Turkey supplied such strategic materials to the Nazis during the war. But it also seems to have supplied the Germans with intelligence on Russia. See Reinhard Gehlen, *The Service: The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen*, trans. David Irving (New York: World Publishing, 1972), p. 64: "From decoded Turkish intelligence cables we were extracting information on Russian armoured brigades. On other occasions the Turkish foreign minister supplied us with information of interest to us about Russia."

31. On the significance of the visit of the *Missouri* see David Alvarez, "The Missouri Visit to Turkey: An Alternative Perspective in Cold War Diplomacy," *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 15 (1974), pp. 225-236; and Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 123.

ceived very little financial assistance: Greece received \$35 million, Turkey \$38 million, and Iran nothing, suggesting that the communist threat was merely for home consumption.<sup>32</sup>

Melvyn Leffler writes that on August 7, 1946, Moscow sent a note to Ankara proposing the revision of the Montreux Convention:

The Soviets advocated a new regime for the Turkish straits limited to the Black Sea powers, and a joint Russo-Turkish defense of the straits. . . . [Ankara] found these terms unacceptable and looked to the United States for support. Because there was no explicit demand for bases on Turkish soil however, Foreign Minister Hasan Saka actually breathed a sigh of relief after reading the Soviet *démarche*. Not so Ambassador Wilson.<sup>33</sup>

Quoting from contemporary official sources, Leffler notes that Moscow “asked Turkey to alter the rules governing ship movements through the Dardanelles. The Russians maintained that the existing regulations had not protected their interests during World War II. They wanted to get together with other Black Sea powers, formulate a new set of rules, and establish a joint defense of the straits.”<sup>34</sup> Interpreting Soviet intentions, the United States embassy in Moscow “did not think that the Kremlin would move aggressively against Turkey. Nor did most other U.S. diplomats, military planners, and intelligence analysts. Moreover reports from Istanbul suggested that the Turks were relieved rather than alarmed by the note.” Leffler continues: “American fears did not stem from aggressive Soviet moves against Turkey. The Soviets had done little more than send a diplomatic note. The real problem was that there loomed gaping vacuums of power in this part of the world resulting from the decline of British power.”<sup>35</sup>

In fact, Turkey’s geopolitical importance was directly related to the evolution of U.S. strategic concepts. On July 27, 1946, Secretary of War Robert Patterson emphasized to President Truman the importance of having “cushions of distance . . . between Soviet areas and areas vital to us.” On August 15, the very day Truman approved a tough response to the Soviet note to Turkey, military planners completed a study,

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32. Chester Pach, *Arming the Free World: The Origins of the United States Military Program, 1945–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 95 and 255, n. 26.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 97–98.

34. Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*, p. 123.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 124

code-named GRIDDLE, that called for "every practicable measure . . . to permit the utilization of Turkey as a base for Allied operations in the event of war with the USSR."

The Pentagon noted:

The Turks could slow down a Soviet advance toward Cairo-Suez, thereby affording time for the United States to inaugurate the strategic offensive. Likewise the Soviets could be denied control of the Dardanelles, their submarines might be bottled up in the Black Sea, thereby insuring much safer lines of communications for Allied forces traversing the eastern Mediterranean. If wartime developments permitted, Turkish airfields might even be used to launch raids against vital petroleum areas within the Soviet Union and Romania. At the very least, fighter aircraft, stationed in Turkey, might protect Allied bombers as they ventured into Soviet territory from bases at Cairo-Suez.<sup>36</sup>

Washington took the Soviet *démarche* to Turkey more seriously than Ankara and used it to fuel the fires of the Cold War at home where the Republicans were reluctant to pay for the arms build-up the Pentagon was striving for. The Soviet *démarche* was soon blown into a Soviet aggression that had to be resisted at all cost. Chester Pach writes that "Truman vastly exaggerated the danger of war. At the beginning of the straits crisis, Stalin asserted that he had no intention of using force to gain Soviet objectives in Turkey, and analyses by the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) confirmed those assertions."

Truman was informed on August 24, 1946

that the Soviets had not positioned their troops to strike against Turkey, but instead had slightly speeded up their demobilization program. . . . On balance . . . the Soviets were conducting an "intensive war of nerves," probably to "test U.S. determination to . . . sustain its commitment in European affairs." The Soviets still showed no inclination towards military action after the United States and Turkey rejected their proposals for defense of the straits. Another exchange of notes followed, but Soviet pressure for the revision of the Montreux Convention subsided by late October 1946. The only significant deployment of force during the straits crisis came not through the Soviet action but through American dispatch of a naval task force to the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>37</sup>

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36. *Ibid.* For the archival sources used see p. 551, n. 119.

37. Pach, *Free World*, pp. 100–101. Truman's biographer, Robert H. Ferrell, in his *Harry S. Truman: A Life* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), writes that President Truman intensified U.S.-Soviet tensions by abruptly canceling Lend-Lease shipments and by overstating his case when announcing U.S. support for Greece and

At the height of the straits crisis, on August 23, 1946,

The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended the sale of defensive armaments to Turkey. They considered Turkey “the most important military factor” in the Near East because of its strategic location and its apparent determination to fight, if necessary, to preserve its independence. Properly equipped, the Turkish army could mount strong resistance against a Russian attack.<sup>38</sup>

American policymakers were sharply divided over the question of military aid to Turkey. The Pentagon lobby supported the policy of providing military aid to Turkey so as to make it an integral part of U.S. Cold War strategy. In the State Department, such officers as George Kennan, the father of Washington’s “containment policy,” objected strenuously to such assistance, emphasizing that Turkey faced neither “serious Communist penetration” nor domestic strife. Kennan wanted “the accent . . . on internal morale and firmness of diplomatic stance, not on military preparations.” He wanted Truman to make it clear that “there was no cause for alarm over the situation in Turkey.”<sup>39</sup>

On February 21, 1947, the British government informed Washington that given their financial woes they could not sustain their assistance to Greece and Turkey. They wanted to pull their troops out of Greece and terminate their aid to both countries. Britain, impoverished by the vast expenditure of the Second World War and faced with a crisis at home, accepted its decline into the ranks of a second rate power. It therefore appealed to the United States government to take over principal responsibility for aiding Greece and Turkey. Leffler observes:

It was taken for granted that Turkey as well as Greece would receive American help. Yet as [Secretary of State Dean] Acheson worked on the draft legislation, he found it difficult to justify assistance to Turkey. Turkey did not need aid for relief or reconstruction, nor was it wracked by financial instability or internal unrest. It was not under any real pressure from the Kremlin. Nevertheless, U.S. officials decided that Turkey must receive assistance. Greece is on the “flank,” conceded [Secretary of the Navy James] Forrestal, but if Tur-

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Turkey. There were domestic economic reasons for fueling the Cold War. Within a month of Japan’s surrender, war contracts worth \$35 billion were canceled, leading to the unemployment of 2.7 million workers. Demobilization also raised fears of rampant inflation and produced a wave of strikes.

38. Ibid.

39. George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950* (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), pp. 316–317; Pach, *Free World*, p. 111. For a critical evaluation of Kennan’s role during these years, see Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

key falls into the Soviet orbit "you will have an impossible military situation."<sup>40</sup>

On March 12, 1947, President Harry Truman went before a joint session of Congress and delivered the most famous speech of his presidency in which he enunciated what became known as the "Truman Doctrine." "I believe," he declared, "that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by external pressures." He requested \$400 million in military and economic aid for Greece and Turkey. Washington had assumed Britain's responsibilities in the region.

In the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs continued to emphasize that Greece, and especially Turkey, were important for controlling the eastern Mediterranean; political analysts added that they were the keys to the future orientation of the entire Near East. This region was considered critical to U.S. interests because of its strategic and economic importance, and because it was the center of vital communications routes and possessed vast oil reserves.<sup>41</sup>

However, Kennan continued to dissent. In his memoirs, he wrote:

I took up the question of Turkey. I pointed out that the situation of Turkey differed quite fundamentally from that of Greece. There was no serious Communist penetration of Turkey—no comparable guerrilla movement. The Turks had nothing to fear but fear: "If . . . the Turks do not lose their nerves, if they keep their internal political life relatively clean and orderly and refuse to become involved in negotiations with the Russians on a bilateral basis over complicated questions such as that of the Straits, they will continue to enjoy a temporary and precarious immunity from Russian pressure." But, I pointed out, should they be increasingly encircled by communist-dominated entities, it would plainly be harder for them to maintain this stance. Aid to Greece was therefore important as a support for stability in Turkey as well.

It should be noted that this view of the problem of Turkey afforded no rationale for the mounting of a special aid program for Turkey itself. The accent was put on internal morale and on firmness of diplomatic stance, not on military preparations. It was for this reason that I was not happy to find in the draft of the President's message to Congress a proposal of aid to Turkey as well as to Greece. I suspected that what was intended was primarily military aid, and that what had really happened was that the Pentagon had exploited a favorable set of circumstances in order to infiltrate a military aid program for Turkey into what was supposed to be primarily a political and economic program for Greece. Since it was important, in my view, that the

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40. Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*, p. 143–144.

41. Pach, *Free World*, p. 88–90.

Soviet threat be recognized for what it was—primarily a political one and not a threat of military attack—it seemed unfortunate that the picture of what was needed in Greece should be confused by association with something that was not needed—or, if needed, was needed for entirely different purposes—in Turkey.<sup>42</sup>

Despite Kennan's arguments, on May 22, 1947, Truman signed into law the Greek-Turkish Aid Act. Some months later, Congress sanctioned the full appropriation of \$400 million. As a result, in 1948, Washington began to implement military aid to Turkey to complement the Middle East strategy envisioned in such military reports as BROILER and HALFMOON. U.S. Army advisers sought to reorganize and modernize the Turkish army, augment its mobility and firepower, improve its communication and transportation infrastructure, and bolster its logistical capabilities. They wanted the Turkish army to retard the Soviet land offensive, thereby affording time for the United States and Great Britain to launch the strategic air campaign from Egyptian bases. The Turkish army was given equipment to blunt a three-pronged Soviet attack across the Bosphorus, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus, to fall back gradually, and to mount a final, large-scale stand in southern Turkey in the Iskenderun pocket. During 1948, the United States also transferred over 180 F-47's, 30 B-26's, and 86 C-47's to the Turkish air force, planes that would assist the Turkish ground forces inside Turkey and help interdict Soviet troops moving toward Persian Gulf oil or sweeping toward Cairo-Suez. The United States also placed a great deal of stress on reconstructing and resurfacing Turkish airfields at such places as Bandirma and Diyarbakir. As a result, Turkey began to develop the ability to attack vital Soviet petroleum resources in Romania and the Caucasus. By the end of 1948 State Department officials endorsed the idea of constructing medium bomber bases in Turkey.<sup>43</sup>

But Turkey's leaders wanted much more than just U.S. military aid; they sought an agreement resembling an alliance. On January 7, 1947, top U.S. military leaders visiting Turkey saw President İnönü and reported that he "wanted a binding commitment either through a political defense pact or through a formal association of military staffs." Later, İnönü wrote directly to Truman stating: "We need assurances now that we would not be abandoned should Turkey be attacked."<sup>44</sup> American diplomats were not eager to make new commitments to Turkey. Yet defense

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42. Kennan, *Memoirs*, pp. 333–334.

43. Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*, pp. 238–239.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 289.

officials were more inclined than ever to use Turkey in the defense of the Middle East. Its willingness to fight the Soviets continued to impress visitors from the Pentagon.<sup>45</sup>

On April 12, 1949, Dean Acheson reported a conversation with Foreign Minister Necmettin Sadak on a visit to Washington in April.

Acheson was struck by his agitated demeanor. The peacetime military preparations undertaken by Turkey in conjunction with the United States aid meant that, if war should erupt, the Soviet Union would attack Turkey preemptively to forestall its use as a base for United States operations. Why should Turkey take such risks, Sadak inquired, if the United States would not promise to defend it? Why provoke the Kremlin if the Soviets might otherwise avoid war with Turkey, as they had done during the Second World War?

This perspective was so logical that diplomats and military officers feared that Turkey might seek a position of neutrality. The United States might then be unable to capitalize on its investments in Turkey. . . . [Acheson and Truman] preferred strategic advantage without military obligations. But they were also convinced of the need to possess Turkey's allegiance. Turkey thus held considerable bargaining power.<sup>46</sup>

Such was the situation at the time of the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. Turkey's willingness to cooperate with Western strategy in the Middle East had become suspect in Washington. After the outbreak of the Korean War, Turkish officials—under a Democrat Party government since mid-May—again tried to ascertain what the United States would do if Turkey were attacked. These overtures agitated Washington. State Department officials could find little evidence that the Kremlin was threatening Turkey. Lewis Jones, one of Paul Nitze's assistants on the Policy Planning Staff, frankly told the first secretary of the Turkish embassy, "Turkey was not being made an object of the Soviet diplomatic offensive or Soviet-inspired pressures."<sup>47</sup>

Although Turkish officials acknowledged that domestic politics had much to do with their insistent demands, there was little doubt among

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45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., pp. 289–290. In James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), there is no mention of this conversation with Necmettin Sadak. In retrospect, it was not seen as having any great significance. The British government came to learn of the possibility of Turkish neutrality from a report submitted by the General Staff in May 1951. The diplomats seemed unaware of Turkish sentiments. See Ayşegül Sever, *Soğuk Savaş Kuşatmasında Türkiye, Batı ve Orta Doğu* (Turkey in the siege of the Cold War, the West, and the Middle East) (Bağcılar, Istanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1997), p. 81.

47. Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*, pp. 419–420.

U.S. policymakers that from a geopolitical and strategic perspective the neutralist option constituted a viable possibility for the Turks. Nevertheless, Washington decided that Turkey and Greece would not be taken into NATO because it was not ready for new commitments.

The Turks felt aggrieved. They were contributing troops to the struggle in Korea. They were participating in the containment of communist totalitarianism. Why should they be left in a vulnerable position? Why should they assent to the desires of the U.S. navy to mine the straits in peacetime and why should they make commitments to allow the Americans to use their airfields in wartime if they were not guaranteed protection in return? An associated linkage to NATO was simply a sop. When George McGhee of the State Department, soon to be ambassador to Turkey, visited Turkey in February 1951, President Celal Bayar bluntly expressed his personal displeasure with the existing partnership. If Turkey were not admitted into NATO, Bayar said he would reappraise Turkey's orientation in the Cold War. McGhee wired Secretary of State Acheson: "There is reason to believe that Turkey will veer toward a policy of neutralism, which will always have strong basic appeal. Until commitment is extended to Turkey, there is no assurance that Turkey will declare war unless attacked."<sup>48</sup>

Bayar's threat of neutrality, couched in terms of reappraising "Turkey's orientation in the Cold War," had the desired effect on Washington. Despite European opposition, in September 1951 the NATO council agreed to admit Greece and Turkey into the alliance and both countries became full members on February 18, 1952. For the time being, the lines of Turkish foreign policy were clearly drawn. Ankara remained totally committed to the U.S.-led alliance into the early 1960s. However, in October 1962, President Kennedy's agreement with Premier Khrushchev to remove missiles from Turkey in exchange for the removal of missiles from Cuba alarmed Ankara. The government realized that Turkey's strategic importance was declining and its role and status within NATO would be revised accordingly.

The following year, in November 1963, President Makarios's proposal to amend the 1960 Cypriot constitution led to the threat of Turkish military intervention and the beginning of a crisis between Turkey and Greece. Ankara was disappointed when Washington failed to support the Turkish position. However, President Johnson's letter of June 1964 proved to be traumatic. He warned Prime Minister İsmet İnönü that Turkey could neither use arms provided by the United States without Wash-

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48. Sever, *Soğuk Savaş Kuşatmasında Türkiye*, p. 420.

ington's consent against Cyprus, nor could it expect the Atlantic alliance to come to Turkey's aid should Moscow decide to support Makarios. The Johnson letter forced Turkey to reevaluate its policy and to diversify it instead of depending entirely on Washington. The task of diversification was facilitated by the re-emergence of Europe as a political force.

After the foreign ministry's re-evaluation of Turkey's foreign policy in 1967, the government decided to tread a middle path between reliance on the United States and Europe. Turkey has continued to pursue essentially the same cautious policy since the end of the Cold War in the 1990s.

Traditionally, Turkey's foreign policy was formulated to rely on two principles; first, "maintaining the established order within the existing borders and balances"; second, "realization of a Western oriented foreign policy formation".<sup>1</sup> Traditional foreign policy principles were determined under the influence of the actual conjunctural and structural factors.<sup>2</sup> These factors were shaped through an actual historical background with pre-given sources. economic fluctuations. Further see, Mustafa AYDIN; "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", Middle Eastern Studies, Vol.35, No.4, 1999, pp.155-156.