

WAR DIPLOMACY AND THE TURKISH REPUBLIC  
A Study in Neutrality, 1939-1945

by  
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## PREFACE

This thesis arose from a general interest in Turkish history and the Kemalist transformation heightened by a brief residence in İstanbul under the auspices of the World University Service of Canada. In this period, the writer became aware of the formidable challenge facing the Turks between 1939 and 1945, and of the considerable diplomatic skill with which they responded. Their foreign policy during the Second World War is a subject worthy of far greater attention than it has yet received, as the appended bibliography will show. There lies in this diplomacy a lesson for all small nations unwillingly cast as pawns upon an international chessboard dominated by the Great Powers.

A pledge by one of modern Turkey's greatest statesmen, made fully two years before the outbreak of war, might well serve as the theme of this study:

The coming war will be of unimaginable horror and will destroy much of civilisation. Nothing shall be left undone to protect our nation from this slaughter and to safeguard that which we have built.

İsmet İnönü, 1937

In this thesis, Russian is transliterated according to the generally accepted standards, and Arabic according to the system used by the Institute of Islamic Studies. Turkish is rendered as the original, except for "ı", which indicates the hard "i" and "ş" or "ç" which represent "s" and "c". The writer apologises for his many deficiencies in all three languages.

M.A.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

P.E.A. ROMERIL

WAR DIPLOMACY AND THE TURKISH REPUBLIC  
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As war approached, Kemalist Turkey sought safety through collective security arrangements. Despite her proclamation of non-belligerency in 1939, she remained during the first phase of the world conflict a willing ally of Britain and France. In the second period she became increasingly cautious, and in the third (that of the Axis zenith) she embraced neutrality. From early in 1943 until the declaration of war, she returned to a pro-Allied partiality, although this was much complicated by Russian presence among the Allies. Indeed, throughout the war her main fear was of Soviet imperialism.

Turkish diplomacy between 1939 and 1945 was conducted in a fashion which should be exemplary to all small states unwillingly drawn into world politics. It was characterised by an overriding realism and a mastery of the techniques of evasion when necessary, firmness when possible, and circumspection at all times. The successful execution of the non-belligerency policy not only safeguarded the Kemalist edifice but also, because of its pro-Western inclination, paved the way for the postwar experiment in democracy.



# I

## TURKEY AND THE GATHERING STORM

### "Peace at Home and Peace Abroad"

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## I. TURKEY AND THE GATHERING STORM

### A. The Diplomacy of the New Republic

#### i

Despite its initial unpopularity among the Powers, the Kemalist régime began well in international affairs. The immediate diplomatic goal was the protection of the new Turkish national identity, an object

... pursued with a level-headedness and steadfastness, a sober acceptance of limitations, and a shrewd assessment of opportunities, that are far from characteristic of all nations that have so recently asserted their sovereignty. <sup>1</sup>

This goal assured, the Kemalists proceeded to establish a network of foreign connexions which soon gave the new Turkey a leading position in both the Balkans and the Middle East. In the tense and uncertain years between the two world wars, Turkey

... already respected for her valour and tenacity on the battlefield, established within the European and international community a solid reputation for reliability, for responsibility in her undertakings, and for devotion to peace - a reputation that was to prove a valuable asset in the future. <sup>2</sup>

The first success of Atatürk's policy of "peace at home and peace abroad" occurred in the east, with a fellow outcast in the international community. On 16 March

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<sup>1</sup> Dankwart Rustow, "Foreign Policy of the Turkish Republic," in R.C. Macridis, ed., Foreign Policy in World Politics, Englewood Cliffs (N.J.), Prentice-Hall, 1958, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

1921, Soviet and Turkish revolutionaries signed the Treaty of Moscow, which extended Soviet diplomatic recognition to the Kemalist régime, fixed its eastern boundaries (confirming Turkish possession of the Kars and Ardahan regions), and affirmed the validity of the Turkish National Pact of 28 January 1920.<sup>3</sup> This striking volte face is explicable primarily in terms of the coincidence of interests between the two states, and of their common opposition to imperialism.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the Treaty assured the Turks of arms and other assistance with which to resist the common enemy.<sup>5</sup> As considerations of security came increasingly to prevail in Moscow

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<sup>3</sup> For the texts of both Treaty and Pact, see Current History, XVII (November 1922), 276-289.

<sup>4</sup> The preamble of the Treaty of Moscow refers to "the common struggle of both peoples...against the intervention of imperialism." For early pro-Soviet sympathy among deputies in the Grand National Assembly, juxtaposing the humanitarian "Eastern ideal" against this imperialism, see M. Philips Price, A History of Turkey from Empire to Republic, London, Allen and Unwin, 1956, p. 124. See also Cevat Açıkalin, "Turkey's International Relations," International Affairs, XXIII (October 1947), 477. The ancient animosity between the Osmanlı and Tsarist Empires is too well-known to require elaboration. The casus belli was not infrequently control of the Straits, described by Tsarina Ekaterina as "the key to our front door", and by the Turks as the "boğaz" - significantly, "throat".

<sup>5</sup> That the Soviets provided munitions and funds to the Kemalists during their War of Independence is often disputed by Western historians. For formal Turkish acknowledgement of such aid, however, see the parliamentary speech of the then Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Turkish Army, in Kazım Karabekir, Hadiseler Karsisinda, Jeopolitik, Istanbul, Cukrova Basımevi, 1946, p. 27.

over ideological considerations, and as both the USSR and Turkey turned their attention to problems of domestic reconstruction, relations continued to improve.<sup>6</sup> By 1 November 1924, Atatürk could report to the Grand National Assembly that since the proclamation of the Turkish Republic (29 October 1923):

Our amicable relations with our old friend the Soviet Russian Republic are developing and progressing every day. As in the past our ... Government regards ... extensive good relations with Russia as the keynote of our foreign policy.<sup>7</sup>

This friendship was strengthened by the Turko-Iraqi dispute over the Mosul region. The demand advanced at the Lausanne Conference by İsmet İnönü that the area be incorporated into Turkey encountered determined British opposition. When on 16 December 1925 the Council of the League of Nations decided in favour of Iraqi claims, Turkey reacted violently and on the following day signed with the

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<sup>6</sup> An excellent account of Soviet self-interest, devoid of ideological factors, in seeking Turkish friendship, may be found in Louis Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs, Princeton University Press, 1951, I, 382-414. The history of the two Turkish communist parties exemplifies the nature of the Turko-Soviet relationship. The first, founded in May 1920 by GNA deputies acting on Kemal's instructions, engaged in no significant political activities; while the second, established in July 1921 and affiliated with the Third International, sought the imposition of a "proletarian dictatorship." Its activities were soon proscribed: the West, not Russia, was Atatürk's model.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in G. L. Lewis, Turkey, London, Benn, 1955, p. 113.

Soviet Union a Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality.<sup>8</sup> This document was renewed on 7 November 1935, by which time the Turks had received a Soviet credit for industrial equipment.<sup>9</sup> Relations between the two states thus remained cordial, if perhaps somewhat formal, illustrating one of the tenets of the Kemalist peace policy: that of reconciliation with traditionally hostile neighbours.

# 11

Another illustration may be found in Turko-Greek relations, where reason soon triumphed, on the diplomatic level at least, over emotion and traditional animosity. The exchange of populations carried out after the War of Independence had proven relatively successful, despite its disruptive economic effect. Prime Minister Venizelos visited Ankara in 1930, and on 30 October a Treaty of Friendship and Conciliation was signed.<sup>10</sup> An even more cordial agreement was concluded on 14 September 1933, demonstrating the determination of the two neighbours to cooperate for their common good.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup>For text, see League of Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 179, no. 4139. Turkey was eventually persuaded to accept the Council decision, and on 5 June 1926 concluded with Iraq and the United Kingdom an agreement to this effect.

<sup>9</sup>For the protocol concerning its signature, see Jane Degras, ed., Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, Oxford University Press for RIIA, 1951-1953, III, 61-65. For further material on Turko-Soviet relations, see also pp. 32-33, 48-61, 103-116, 246-247; and İsmet İnönü, İnönünün Söyler ve Demeçleri, 1919-1946, İstanbul, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946, pp. 320-321.

<sup>10</sup>For text, see Treaty Series, vol. 125, no. 2481.

<sup>11</sup>For text, see ibid., vol. 156, no. 3600.

Rapprochement with Greece was but one aspect of Turkish efforts to promote Balkan cooperation, although it was undoubtedly the most important prerequisite to a wider understanding. Under the joint leadership of Turkey and Greece, and as a reaction against the division of the area between the French and Italian alliance systems, the movement for Balkan unity gained new momentum. An unofficial Balkan Conference met annually between 1930 and 1933, (the latter a year of great Turkish diplomatic activity <sup>12</sup>), but little was achieved in view of divisive factors such as Bulgarian revisionism. The only tangible result was the Balkan Pact of 9 February 1934, by which Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Rumania mutually guaranteed their internal (inter-Balkan state) frontiers. <sup>13</sup> From this limitation arose the fragility of the combination, for the primary aggressive threat - that of non-Balkan powers - was quite ignored. <sup>14</sup> Turkish plenipotentiaries further qualified their signature by insisting that their Republic not be obligated to support Rumania in the event of Soviet aggres-

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<sup>12</sup> Friendship treaties were signed by Turkey with Greece (in September 1933), Rumania (17 October), and Yugoslavia (27 October), for which see A.J. Toynbee, ed., Survey of International Affairs, London, Oxford University Press for RIIA, volumes for 1930 (pp. 145-156); 1931 (pp. 324-340); and 1934 (pp. 508-511). Henceforth, Survey. A comparable treaty had been concluded with Bulgaria on 16 May 1928.

<sup>13</sup> For text, see Treaty Series, vol. 153, no. 3514. Neither Bulgaria nor Albania, unwilling to accept the permanence of their borders, adhered to the Pact.

<sup>14</sup> See Theodore J. Geshkoff, Balkan Union, Columbia University Press, 1940, p. 228.

sion. 15

### iii

Turkish initiative in the Balkans arose partially from fear of Italian aspirations in the Mediterranean area. Having already seized the Dodecanese islands, Italy exploited her rôle in the First World War to obtain the infamous Treaty of London, according to which she was to receive additional territory in the Antalya region of Anatolia. Even greater aggrandisement was envisaged in the Venizelos-Tittoni Agreement of 1919, in exchange for the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece. These predatory arrangements were soon thwarted by the rise of the Kemalist phoenix; Italian troops were withdrawn from Anatolia as a more pacific government in Rome sought an accommodation with the Nationalists. This search was hampered not only by the confirmation of Italian sovereignty in the Dodecanese (by the Treaty of Lausanne), but also by the rise of Fascism.

Turko-Italian relations nevertheless improved somewhat during the buoyant nineteen-twenties. On one hand, there were recurrent Turkish charges that Il Duce was concentrating offensive forces in the Aegean "... with a view to ef-

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<sup>15</sup> The reason advanced was a possible conflict with the 1925 Turko-Soviet Treaty, but a more cogent explanation lay in fears that Soviet-Bulgarian coöperation might place the Red Army on the Turkish frontier. See Survey for 1934, pp. 523-530. For continued Turkish interest in Balkan unity, see ibid., op. cit., pp. 324-325.

fecting a sudden coup de main on the Mediterranean shores of Anatolia ..." <sup>16</sup> On the other, Turkish initiative in 1928 produced both a commercial treaty and a friendship pact with the Italians, both seen in Ankara perhaps more as bulwarks of the Balkan status quo than as manifestations of underlying cordiality. <sup>17</sup> It is significant that the Turks at this time decided to locate their new iron-steel complex at Karabük, and to construct armament plants in eastern Anatolia, equally far removed from Italian bases.

Relations deteriorated precipitately during the nineteen-thirties. The Fascist assault upon Ethiopia confirmed Turkish fears - as did Mussolini himself in his famous speech of 1934 referring to Italy's "historic mission in the Near East." Il Duce's explanation to the Turkish Ambassador that his plans did not include Turkey, a European state, did not noticeably improve the situation. Further tension arose as a result of Italian submarine activity off the Dardanelles. Considering the many avenues open to the Fascists for the improvement of relations with Turkey (the trade connexion, for example, was very close, and Italian

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<sup>16</sup> Açıklık, op. cit., p. 478. This charge (in 1924) seems rather questionable, despite the responsible position held by the author in the Turkish Foreign Ministry, but it does serve to illustrate the intensity of Turkish suspicions. A decade hence these were to prove well-founded.

<sup>17</sup> See Surveys for 1928 and 1930, pp. 158-161 and 157-168 respectively.



snipping accounted for one-third of all calls at Turkish ports <sup>18</sup>) one can only marvel at the astonishing ineptness of Fascist foreign policy. Its main impact, to quote a Turkish statesman, was that

... Turkey and Great Britain, both especially interested in the security of the Mediterranean, found, for the first time since the world war ... [the need of] collaborating ... <sup>19</sup> in a practical field of common interest.

iv

Turkish relations with the United Kingdom after 1919 underwent a transformation quite as striking as did those with Russia. The British and their allies, occupying the Straits area, intervened directly against the Soviet revolutionaries and indirectly against the Kemalists by encouraging Greek expansionist aims. <sup>20</sup> The Treaty of Sèvres affirmed this Allied position astride the Straits, annexed Trakya (Turkish Thrace, including Gelibolu) and most of the northern Marmara littoral to Greece - and was soon nullified by the Kemalist victory. When in 1922 the Turks expelled the Greek invader (for whose presence they held Lloyd George responsible) and advanced upon Çanakkale, they were opposed only by British forces. Conflict was averted by the Mudanya Armistice, a compromise agreement

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<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Monroe, The Mediterranean in Politics, Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 190.

<sup>19</sup> Açıkalın, op. cit., p. 478.

<sup>20</sup> For an admirable summary of Kemalist foreign policy, "from Mudros to Lausanne," see G.A. Craig and Felix Gilbert, The Diplomats, 1919-1939, Princeton University Press, 1953. pp. 172-209. For Lloyd George and Greek imperialism, see p. 175.

restoring Trakya to Turkey and affirming freedom of the Straits.

A further balance between British and Turkish interests was struck by the Treaty of Lausanne, which established a régime précis for the waterway. It marked also the first tangible success of İsmet İnönü's diplomacy: once the weakest of the defeated powers, Turkey now became the first and only one to obtain a negotiated peace. By indirectly recognising the National Pact of 1920, the Treaty heralded

... a decisive stage in the history of the Eastern Question. The ... one-time sick man is in the bloom of health. From now on a new Turkey, based on ethnically Turkish territory, renascent, victorious, and self-confident, faces the world 21 firmly established on the national soil ....

Yet several questions left unresolved at Lausanne still impeded the Turko-British reconciliation implicit in the Kemalist philosophy. Of these the Mosul dispute was perhaps the most important, as it involved the disposition of Turkey's largest minority. When the rather enigmatic British attitude to "Kurdistan" was clarified and Turkish suspicions alleviated, however, relations between Ankara, London, and Baghdad soon improved. 22 Turkish entry into the League of Nations (18 July 1932) and subse-

21 Bernard Lewis, Turkey Today, London, Hutchinson, n.d. [1940?], pp. 29-30.

22 For details of the Mosul dispute, see ibid., pp. 70-72; Philip P. Graves, Briton and Turk, London, Hutchinson, n.d. [1941?], pp. 220-224.

quent election to a seat on the Council reflected this improvement. As the domestic reform programme progressed, Turkish cultural connexions with various British and French institutions grew increasingly intimate. Political relations with France were established by the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement (20 October 1921), but varied with the degree of tension on the Turko-Syrian border.

## v

Just as relations with Britain and France were in the first years of the Turkish Republic primarily of a political and cultural nature, those with Germany were coloured by economic considerations. Once the bitter recollections of Kaiserian aspirations toward Baghdad and of the catastrophic wartime alliance with Germany had faded, diplomatic links between the two states were reestablished. The Weimar Republic displayed no territorial ambitions in the Middle East, constituted a willing source of the technical advisors required in the New Turkey, and soon regained the traditional German position in the Turkish trade pattern. Within eight years of the Treaty of Commerce concluded in May 1930, the value of Turkish trade with Germany exceeded T.L. 133 million, while that with all other countries combined totalled a mere T.L. 106 million.<sup>23</sup> The clearing

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<sup>23</sup> For text of the Commercial Treaty, see Treaty Series, vol. 110, no. 2553. For analyses of Turkish foreign trade between the wars see Max W. Thornburg et. al., ...

and barter agreements negotiated in the nineteen-thirties by the peripatetic Dr. Schacht eased the impact of the world depression on Turkey, and, indeed, did much to stimulate bilateral trade. German bids, often higher than world price levels, caused Turkish deliveries to the Reich between 1933 and 1936 to rise from 19 to 51 per cent of total exports - <sup>24</sup> frequently at the cost of forced Turkish importation of expensive or unnecessary German goods.

This economic situation made the British grant in 1936 of £16 million for industrial expansion more useful than its monetary value alone. The Turkish Minister of Finance appreciatively observed that "Our position has improved immensely in other countries ... [and] competitive prices are now being quoted in Germany and elsewhere." <sup>25</sup> It was the concentration of trade rather than the rise of Hitler which first alarmed the Turks. Many admired the dynamism of the Nazis; few were perturbed by the demise of German parliamentarianism; and some were perhaps "... not prone to shed tears over the ill-treatment of a national

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Turkey: An Economic Appraisal, New York, Twentieth Century Fund, 1949, pp. 164-174; South-Eastern Europe, London, RIIA, 1939, p. 178; and J.K. Birge, "Turkey between Two World Wars," Foreign Policy Reports XX(1 November 1944), 196, from which the figures cited were taken.

<sup>24</sup> Figures from P.W. Ireland, "Turkish Foreign Policy after Munich," The Political Quarterly, X(1939), 193. For slightly divergent figures, see Lewis, Turkey Today, pp. 52-53, and John Parker and Charles Smith, Modern Turkey, London, Routledge, 1940, pp. 135-143.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Ireland, op. cit., p. 194.

minority by another country." <sup>26</sup> Hitlerian revisionism was obviously incompatible with Kemalist emphasis on Mediterranean and Balkan stability, but so long as the Nazis displayed no apparent interest in either area Turkish fears were little aroused. The initial deterioration in Turko-German relations resulted from the Nazi association with Italian expansionism. Turkish support for collective security at the time of the Spanish Civil War, for example, was in glaring contrast to the attitude of the Rome-Berlin Axis.

## vi

In the same year, 1935, Turkey sought to reinforce the failing League system with a second regional security arrangement. After two years of negotiations inspired by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Tefvik Rüstü Aras, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan signed the Saadabad Pact. <sup>27</sup> In it, the signatories undertook to consult on matters of common interest, and to respect their common frontiers: the pact was, in essence, an attempt to avert through mutual guarantee possible aggression by an external Power.

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<sup>26</sup> George Lenczowski, The Middle East In World Affairs, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1952, p. 139.

<sup>27</sup> For text of the Pact, see Treaty Series, vol. 190, no. 4402; for the communiqué accompanying its announcement, see Ayın Tarihi (Ankara), no. 65 (April 1939); for an account of the border disputes delaying its signature, see Survey for 1938, pp. 479-492. These were resolved by the arbitration of General Fahrettin Altay, described in Tefvik Rüstü Aras, Görüşlerim, İstanbul, Semih Lûtfi Kitabevi, 1945, p. 132.

As such it failed utterly. There is no record of its provisions for consultation ever having been invoked; by the time of World War II, the Pact was so defunct as not to merit even denunciation. It was simply forgotten.

In announcing the Pact to the GNA, Atatürk described the four signatories as pursuing the same peaceful aims and sharing a common desire for internal development. Some commentators at the time interpreted the Turkish initiative as a return to some form of Islamic solidarity.<sup>28</sup> Such speculation merely revealed ignorance of the nature and success of Kemalist laiklik (laicism) in the new Republic. Turkey had not supported the Islamic Congresses between 1926 and 1931, and did not view a guarantee of her eastern frontiers as a threat to secularism. Although Atatürk had denied Islamic tradition, even he could not overcome geography: Turkey, as the pundits said, was no longer oriental but she could not help being eastern. The Sa'adabād Pact was a recognition of this, and in conjunction with the Balkan Entente, emphasised the rôle of the Republic as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East. It served further to enhance the reputation of Ankara, for the three other signatories paid increasing attention to the conduct of Turkish

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<sup>28</sup> This is not to say that Turkey had not attained a leading position among her Muslim neighbours. For Egyptian acknowledgement of this status, see B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68; for the strong Turkish influence on Afghanistani foreign policy, see W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan*, Oxford University Press, 1950, p. 250.

diplomacy. The decline of the Pact and of the Entente, was a major blow to that foreign policy.

#### B. The Eve of War

#### vii

The Straits Convention negotiated at Montreux in 1936 brought a more permanent victory for Turkish diplomats. The general darkening of the European situation, rendering worthless the Lausanne guarantees of Republican security, induced them as early as 1933 to press for permission to refortify the waterway. The Turkish case was a cogent one, for as the note circulated by Foreign Minister Aras in 1935 pointed out (in obvious reference to the Fascist threat), "... the situation in the Black Sea is entirely reassuring, but uncertainty has gradually arisen in the Mediterranean." It concluded that Turkey had followed a peaceful policy, honoured her international obligations, and therefore felt entitled to revise the Straits régime in the interests of her security.<sup>29</sup>

All signatories to the Treaty of Lausanne responded favourably to the Turkish note, with the exception of Italy - who neither attended the Montreux Conference nor immediately signed the subsequent Convention, as the limitation of

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<sup>29</sup> Aras, op. cit., pp. 125-127. The contrast between this attitude and the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland is striking. For further details on negotiations preliminary to the Montreux Conference, see James T. Shotwell and Francis Deak, Turkey at the Straits, New York, Macmillan, 1940, pp. 121-123.

her influence was the common aim of Turkish, British, and Soviet policies. (It was later claimed that Montreux brought to an end the era in which Il Duce could speak of his "historic objectives" in the East. <sup>30</sup>)

Briefly, the Montreux Convention of 20 July 1936 affirmed free merchant passage through the Straits; confirmed the unrestricted right of Black Sea Powers to transfer warships to the Mediterranean while imposing limitations on the entry of foreign men-of-war; transferred the authority of the Straits Commission to Turkey; granted Turkey the right to close the waterway in time of war or threat thereof; and permitted the immediate refortification of the Straits area. <sup>31</sup>

These provisions were to the obvious advantage of the Soviet Union. <sup>32</sup> Like that at Lausanne, the conference at Montreux demonstrated an Anglo-Soviet conflict of interest in which Turkey held the balance. Having gained their objective, the Turks sought to conciliate the Russians and found support for this policy in the French delegation. Turko-Soviet relations nevertheless began to cool perceptibly, due in part to the increasingly close Turkish associa-

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<sup>30</sup> Arnold Toynbee, ed., The World in March 1939, Oxford University Press for RIIA, 1952, p. 266. Henceforth, World.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the Conference, see Survey for 1936, pp. 600-645; for the Convention, see Stephen Heald and J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, eds., Documents on International Affairs, 1936, Oxford University Press for RIIA, 1937, pp. 648-667; and Shotwell, op. cit., pp. 124-133.

<sup>32</sup> For Soviet approval of Turkish policy, see Degras, op. cit., III, 188-194, 200-202.



tion with Great Britain, the personal animosity between Atatürk and Ambassador Karahan, and outspoken Turkish revulsion against the bloody purges occurring in Moscow. Four months after the Conference, Litvinov proposed to the Turkish Foreign Minister the conclusion of a pact providing for joint defence of the Straits. Ankara responded swiftly and acidly:

This unexpected testimonial of friendship and interest in the defence of the Dardanelles ... was certainly not a matter to which the Turkish Government could agree. First, it was in contradiction to the Turkish conception of sovereignty, secondly, it seemed abnormal that a party to any international convention should propose to another signatory a bipartite pact of this kind. 33

The Turks concluded that "very friendly Powers could utter very unfriendly proposals" and that "friendly relations could mean exclusiveness." 34 While Turko-Soviet relations remained officially cordial, to a close observer there was growing evidence of Russian bitterness at the rapprochement between Britain and Turkey.

#### viii

British policy at Munich in 1938 met initially with general approval in Turkey, as it did in most other countries. Both the Nazi attack on the Versailles Diktat and the emphasis on "one blood, one Reich" were intelligible to Turkish nationalists and pan-Turkists. The subsequent dis-

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33 Acıkalın, op. cit., p. 479.

34 Löc. cit.

memberment of Czechoslovakia, however, deeply shocked the Turks, "... who were reminded of their own past and of their present position as one of the smaller powers." <sup>35</sup> Despite the tempering effect of a German credit of RM150 million granted on 8 October 1938 and the fact that Italy remained the chief danger, Turkish editors soon realised that the principle of collective security, the very cornerstone of Kemalist diplomacy, had been dealt a shattering blow.

The smaller nations cannot help but be distressed at the alacrity of the Great Powers to save themselves at the expense of others. General peace can never be assured ... until all states enjoy an absolute equality of rights. <sup>36</sup>

The influential daily Cumhuriyet summed up the passage of an era with terrible accuracy: "Collective security, ententes, pacts - all have gone. Only force remains." <sup>37</sup>

An even greater blow struck Ankara on 10 November 1938. The death of Atatürk brought the first break in political continuity since the proclamation of the Republic. His demise was followed by a fleeting period of tension: some observers were apprehensive of a military coup d'état and some of possible foreign intervention. Both fears were groundless. On 11 November, İsmet İnönü was unanimously elected as the presidential successor to the Gazi: the

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<sup>35</sup> Ireland, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>36</sup> Son Posta, 9 October 1938.

<sup>37</sup> Cumhuriyet, 9 October 1938.

stability of the Kemalist order had thus survived its greatest test.

The failure to reappoint Dr. Aras to the Foreign Ministry, a portfolio he had held since 1925, led to speculation of a reorientation in Turkish policy - but it soon became clear that the ministerial changes were due to personal rather than political differences. Turkish objectives had not changed since 1923: to conciliate traditionally hostile neighbours, to promote systems of collective security, and to enhance Turkey's position astride the two continents.

These aims were hampered in the Balkans by Italian efforts to construct an anti-Turkish grouping with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, by playing upon their fears of Turkish hegemony in the area and by encouraging their irredentist sentiments.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the advocates of Balkan unity in Ankara encountered in the post-Munich period increasingly powerful and shrewdly wielded opposition from Berlin. At the Conference of the Balkan Pact Council in Bucharest (February, 1939), the new Turkish Foreign Minister, Şükrü Saracoğlu, emphasised the need for solidarity. In the face of Axis hostility and Soviet reserve, however, his appeal

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<sup>38</sup> See Galeazzo Ciano, The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943, transl. and ed. Hugh Gibson, New York, Doubleday, 1946, pp. 182-83 (henceforth, Ciano Diaries); and Malcolm Muggeridge, ed., Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, London, Oldhams, 1948, pp. 102-105, 152, 214, 271 (henceforth, Ciano Papers).

had little influence. "On the contrary, it ... was received, in some circles at least, with great reticence." <sup>39</sup> The Balkan Pact nevertheless remained the first line of Turkish defence, even though Rumania drew closer to the Axis orbit and Bulgaria remained aloof.

Revisionist and Germanophil elements in Sofia were believed by the Turks to present a constant threat to Trakya, and even to İstanbul. Meeting in that city 8-9 April, Saracoğlu and the Rumanian Foreign Minister discussed the Bulgarian problem. It would appear that Turkish policy at this time envisaged a concerted attempt (including the Western Powers) to secure Bulgarian adherence to the Entente, to be followed by a Turkish offer of good offices to resolve frontier questions. This would make possible a mutual guarantee of external Balkan boundaries, the absence of which constituted the overriding weakness of the Entente. <sup>40</sup>

As the Ministers met, Italian forces were occupying Albania. The Turkish emniyet sahası (security zone) was now directly threatened, as the press anxiously pointed out. The noted commentator Ahmed Şükrü Esmer forecast darkly in

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<sup>39</sup> Acıkalın, op. cit., p. 480. Reference is also made to the ominous Soviet silence concerning the question of Balkan unity.

<sup>40</sup> Little has been published concerning the İstanbul meeting and indeed Turkish Balkan policy generally. See E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds., Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, London, HMSO, 1949-1955, V, nos. 62 and 278 (henceforth, DBFP); for the communique ending the meeting, see Ayın Tarihi, no. 65 (April 1939), p. 58.

the semi-official Ulus that the subjugation of Albania marked the beginning of a long series of aggressive acts <sup>41</sup>; and the dean of Turkish journalism, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, warned that the security of the entire Balkan area had been jeopardised. <sup>42</sup>

## ix

As Saracoğlu revealed to the GNA on 8 July 1938

...the occupation of Albania ... made us decide to strengthen the peace front, abandoning our policy of neutrality. It was then that we made the ... common declaration with the British. <sup>43</sup>

Negotiations with the United Kingdom had begun in mid-March, when in response to a British approach Ambassador Aras had replied that given a pledge of direct military assistance in the event of aggression Turkey "... would be prepared to go to all lengths with Great Britain." <sup>44</sup> On 31 March, however, he observed that according to provisions in the Turko-Soviet treaty "... if there were any idea of forming a larger bloc in which Turkey were to be included ... this could be done only with the consent of the Soviet." <sup>45</sup> Perhaps it was for this reason also that Ankara declined to associate itself with the Anglo-French guarantee extended to

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<sup>41</sup> Ulus, 8 April 1939. For an analysis of the Italian menace to the emniyet sahası, see A.S. Esmer, Siyasî Tarih, 1919-1939, Ankara, Güney Matbaacılık, 1953, p. 249.

<sup>42</sup> Yeni Sabah, 8 April 1939.

<sup>43</sup> Ayın Tarihi, no. 68 (July 1939), p. 56. For the declaration, see below.

<sup>44</sup> DBFP, IV, no. 472, p. 437. Aras had been accredited to London after Saracoğlu became Foreign Minister.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., IV, no. 590, pp. 559-560.

Rumania. <sup>46</sup>

Nevertheless, after the attack upon Albania, the Turks seemed well-disposed to join some form of Allied security system. This readiness did not necessarily indicate any intention of immediately abandoning their neutrality, apparently, for the British reluctance to stand firmly against the Italian aggressor aroused some uneasiness. <sup>47</sup> On the same day that the British Ambassador in Ankara recommended Saracoğlu be given some clear indication of Allied policy, Britain decided to offer Greece a pledge of military assistance. When requested to adhere to this the Turks replied cautiously that such an irretrievable commitment would be impossible "... without some more definite guarantee of Turkish security." <sup>48</sup>

It was at this point that London decided to offer Ankara a treaty of mutual assistance. The Turkish response on 15 April suggested that the most important contribution Turkey could make to collective security lay in the promotion of Balkan solidarity. Ankara inquired what aid in the heavy burden of defending the Straits might be forthcoming from Britain, and proposed that parallel negotiations be initiated with the USSR. <sup>49</sup> Despite this circumspection,

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<sup>46</sup> See ibid., IV, nos. 407, 423, 424; V, no. 25.

<sup>47</sup> This uneasiness was increased by the obscurity of British policy with regard to Greek security. See ibid., V, no. 119.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., V, no. 149.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., V, nos. 219 and 291.

Saracoğlu assured the British Ambassador, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, that "... Turkey would cooperate with Great Britain in a general war, and not merely in a war limited to the Mediterranean and the Balkans." <sup>50</sup>

Satisfied by this response, the British decided to work for a defence treaty, to support Turkish Balkan policy, and to agree that the Soviet Union be kept informed of subsequent negotiations (except for the proposed secret staff conversations). Soon Saracoğlu reported that Soviet diplomacy in no way impeded a Turko-British understanding; further, he had received assurances that a comparable agreement could later be signed with the USSR. <sup>51</sup>

On 25 April, Ankara suggested the goal to be sought: a fifteen-year military alliance. When negotiations reached the point of actual wording, however, considerable difficulty arose - the wily Turks strove to insert a clause permitting a possible return to neutrality. The accepted text of the Anglo-Turkish Declaration of Mutual Guarantee, foreshadowing a later formal agreement, stated that the two parties would

... in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean ... be prepared to cooperate effectively and to lend each other all the aid and assistance in their power. <sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, ed., The Eve of War, 1939, Oxford University Press for RIIA, 1958, p. 117. Henceforth, Eve.

<sup>51</sup> DBFP, V, no. 379.

<sup>52</sup> For the Turkish text, see Ayın Tarifi, no. 66 (May, 1939), p. 215; for the English, as announced by Prime Minister Chamberlain, see Great Britain, House of Commons, Debates, ...

The absence from the text of any reference to neutrality was justified by Prime Minister Saydam when he presented the Declaration to the GNA on 12 May. A neutral policy, he contended, would imperil both Balkan and Mediterranean security and was no longer in the interests of Turkish security. The surest way to prevent aggression was to join those countries uniting for peace, who were prepared to use force to defend their rights. He announced that negotiations were in progress with France, that Turkish and Soviet views were in "complete harmony," and that Turkey would continue her efforts to strengthen the Balkan Entente. 53

The Assembly unanimously approved the Declaration with little further discussion. The press also displayed general approval, pointing out that a guarantee of Turkish frontiers could antagonise the Axis powers only insofar as they opposed Turkish security. 54

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In view of Turkey's strategic location, flanking the major oil centres and commanding the third gateway to the Mediterranean, the Declaration of 12 May was of great importance to Axis plans. Closure of the Straits would curtail

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5th ser., vol. 347, col. 954. For the complexities surrounding adoption of the wording, see DBFP, V, nos. 144, 199, 219, and 286. The draft was approved by the ruling Republican People's Party on 5 May. Two days later it was communicated to Turkey's allies in the Balkan Entente and the Saadabād Pact. For the objections raised by Rumania and Yugoslavia at this time, see Toynbee, Eve, pp. 126-135.

53 Ayın Tarihi, no. 66 (May, 1939), p. 66. See also DBFP, V, no. 506.

54 See Yalcın in Yeni Sabah, 14 May; Asım Us in Vakıf, 13 May; and Sabih Sertel in Tan, 14 May 1939.



Italian petroleum supplies, while Turkish hostility would jeopardise Fascist aero-naval bases in the Dodecanese. In addition, as a prominent member of the Balkan Entente enjoying Allied support, Turkey might succeed in achieving some measure of collective defence - thus thwarting the usual Axis technique of piecemeal conquest.

In British strategy, Turkish coöperation would provide a defence in depth for the Suez establishment, for the Anglo-Iranian oilfields, and for the Basra-Palestine artery. Indeed, Turkey was the "key" to the security of the British Middle East,<sup>55</sup> and she alone among the Balkan Powers was capable of offering really serious resistance to aggression.<sup>56</sup> Even without the extensive military aid which would be required to defend Trakya against attack, it was anticipated that Turkish forces could readily make an effective barrier of the Straits.

Turkey occupied a position of equal importance in Nazi strategy. To forestall any Turkish association with the Allies, Hitler on 18 April appointed the notorious Franz von Papen as his Ambassador to Ankara.<sup>57</sup> Arriving

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<sup>55</sup> For the importance of Turkey in British military planning, see J.R.M. Butler, Grand Strategy, London, HMSO, 1957, II, 66. For a contemporary account, see "Turkey in the European Balance," The Economist, CXXXVI (15 July 1939), 111-112.

<sup>56</sup> For analyses of Turkish military strength in 1939, see Parker and Smith, op. cit., pp. 205-215; and H. Rowan-Robinson, Wavell in the Middle East, London, Hutchinson, n.d. [1942?], pp. 10-11.

<sup>57</sup> Apparently the Turks had resisted this appointment for some time. President İnönü and several other leaders ...

amid widespread press speculation of a rumoured alliance with Britain, von Papen immediately called on the Under-Secretary at the Turkish Foreign Ministry (Numan Menemencioğlu). He warned that such a treaty would increase the risk of war, and proposed instead that Italy enter the Balkan Entente - which would then receive a Nazi guarantee of its external frontiers. Menemencioğlu retorted that it was Italian aggression that had driven the Turks into British arms; to admit Italy into the Entente "... would be the last straw." 58

When President İnönü himself stressed Turkish fears of Italy, von Papen requested Hitler "... to use his influence on Mussolini with a view to easing the situation." 59 To this the Fascists agreed, and on 3 May the Turkish Ambassador in Rome was assured that "... Italy has neither economic, political, nor territorial aims with respect to his country." At the same time, Il Duce remarked to Foreign Minister Ciano that the Turks "... deserve an act of aggression because of the mere fact that they fear one." Italian efforts to construct a "bloc of an anti-Turkish character" were intensified. 60

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58 DEFP. V, no. 414, p. 464. Von Papen also proposed Bulgarian admission into the Entente, a project Turkey finally abandoned in mid-June. See *ibid.*, VI, nos. 28, 40, and 65.

59 Franz von Papen, *Memoirs*, transl. Brian Connell, New York, Dutton, 1953, p. 447. For a perceptive account of these fears, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, London, HMSO, 1956, Series D, VI, no. 226.

60 *Ciano Diaries*. pp. 76-77.

As the summer months passed, both Turkish foreign policy and the unfriendly tone of the Turkish press aroused increasing concern in Berlin.<sup>61</sup> In view of German dependence on various Turkish goods, this anxiety could not be confined to political matters alone. As a memorandum of the Economic Policy Department pointed out, Turkish exports to the Reich constituted 29 per cent of vital raw materials, 43 per cent of important goods, and 28 per cent of non-essentials. Chrome ore, in particular, was "...absolutely essential for the manufacture of steel for armaments."<sup>62</sup>

Nazi suspicion resulted on 16 August in the suspension of all contracts to supply Turkey with war materials. The reaction in Ankara was swift: Menemencioğlu warned von Papen that chrome exports would be terminated. This stiff resistance to their economic pressure soon induced the Germans to resume arms shipments on a provisional basis.<sup>63</sup> The Turks, however, had drawn conclusions of their own: thereafter, they began to bargain very shrewdly indeed in the apportionment of their valuable exports between the opposing camps.

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<sup>61</sup> When von Ribbentrop complained to the Turkish Ambassador of the critical attitude of Turkish journalists, M. Arpag bluntly defended their anxiety over the Nazi insistence on Lebensraum. Ribbentrop later told the Russians the Turks had obviously been bought by British money. DGFP, VI, no. 496, pp. 671-672.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., VI, no. 782.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., VI, nos. 472, 475, 489; VII, no. 141.

The initial Soviet reaction to the Anglo-Turkish Declaration stood in marked contrast to that of the Nazis. Deputy Foreign Commissar Potemkin visited Ankara in late April, while Russian policy was still in the Litvinov period of support for collective security arrangements. Potemkin therefore expressed complete approval for both Turkish Balkan policy and the negotiations with Britain.<sup>64</sup> He not only pledged material assistance in the event of aggression, but also paved the way for a mutual aid pact - which Saracoğlu later visited Moscow with the intention of negotiating. While the Commissar was in Ankara, however, Litvinov was replaced as Soviet Foreign Minister. Potemkin described this as merely a change in personnel: yet in fact it signalled the reversal in policy which later resulted in the Nazi-Soviet Pact. His departure from Ankara was marked on 7 May by a communiqué announcing the two Powers would "pursue their parallel efforts for security" and "... continue to exchange all information bearing upon their common interests."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>For İnönü's address on the arrival of Potemkin, see İnönü, op. cit., p. 338. For an account of İnönü's views on Balkan policy at this time see Grigore Gafencu, The Last Days of Europe, transl. E. Fletcher-Allen, Yale University Press, 1948, pp. 192-197. For the conversations with Potemkin, see Gafencu's Prelude to the Russian Campaign, transl. Fletcher-Allen, London, Muller, 1945, p. 53. Footnotes henceforth refer to this volume.

<sup>65</sup>Ayın Tarihi, no. 66 (May 1939), pp. 216-217; The Bulletin of International News, XVI (1939), 530. Henceforth, Bulletin. For press satisfaction with the Commissar's visit, see Etem Benice in Son Telegraf, 8 May, and Sadri Ertem in Vakit, 9 May 1939.

The publication five days later of the Anglo-Turkish Declaration was applauded in Moscow as "one of the links in that chain which is the only sure means of preventing the extension of aggression to new parts of Europe" and as "a valuable investment in the cause of world peace." <sup>66</sup> A comparison between this breathless announcement and the frigid reaction to the similar Franco-Turkish Declaration of 24 June illustrates the change in Soviet policy. The laconic official comment on the later accord was merely that it "... had brought a change in the general situation." <sup>67</sup>

## xi

Conclusion of a defence treaty with France was predicated on a satisfactory solution of the Hatay (Alexandretta) dispute which had for several years troubled Franco-Turkish relations. In 1921, having unsuccessfully resisted the establishment of a mandate over Syria, the Kemalists agreed to the inclusion of the sanjak (province) in the French-administered territories. Special provision was made for the cultural autonomy of the Turkish-speaking inhabitants.

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<sup>66</sup> Izvestia, 15 May 1939. For an account of Soviet negotiations with the Western Powers at this time, see Max Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941, Oxford University Press, 1946, II, 224-257. For their relation to Turkish security, see also W.L. Langer and S.E. Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940, New York, Harper, 1952, p. 120. Henceforth, Challenge.

<sup>67</sup> Cited in Acikalin, op. cit., p. 486. See also Degras, op. cit., III, 335.

When in 1936 France and Syria concluded an agreement envisaging an independent Syrian republic, however, fears were expressed in the Turkish press for what was believed to be the Turkish majority in the sanjak.<sup>68</sup> Ankara placed the question before the League of Nations Council, whose report (in January 1937) suggested an autonomous Hatay united economically with Syria, in which Turkish would be an official language. Disorders in the sanjak were followed by Syrian rejection of the Council Report and Turkish denunciation of the Turko-Syrian Friendship Treaty of 1926.

Turkey had thus achieved her first objective - the principle of a special Hatay régime - and thereupon set out to attain the second - a dominant position for the Hatay Turks. As the Syrians were unwilling to concede this,<sup>69</sup> the Turks turned directly to the French, who (in view of the ominous international situation) were unwilling to jeopardise their broader European interests for the sake of a

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<sup>68</sup> For Atatürk's speech on the subject, see Esmer, *op. cit.*, p. 235. At this time the Gazi allegedly was preparing to march on the sanjak, but was dissuaded by İnönü and Aras.

<sup>69</sup> For the Turko-Syrian negotiations, see N. al-Armanāzī, Muhadarat al-Suriya..., Cairo, Arab League Institute for Higher Arabic Studies, 1954. It has been claimed that Iraqi mediation resulted in a compromise providing for division of the sanjak, which the Turks later rejected when they secured French permission to introduce military forces. See Majīd Khaddūrī, Qadiyat al-Iskandarūnah, Damascus, Maṭba'at al-Maktabat al-Kubrā', 1953, pp. 114-116.

nearly terminated mandate. On 1 July 1938, therefore, a Franco-Turkish condominium was proclaimed, followed three days later by a new Treaty of Friendship. Turkish troops entered the sanjak on 5 July, ostensibly to supervise the elections scheduled for the following month. The final electoral lists showed a Turkish majority of 63 per cent ( in contrast with the 1936 census figures indicating a 36 percent minority). <sup>70</sup> The Turks were therefore allocated 22 of the forty seats in the legislative assembly convened on 2 September, which swiftly chose an all-Turkish ministry, proclaimed Hatay an independent republic, and dispatched a delegation to Ankara to seek union with the motherland.

For all practical purposes the third step - annexation - had already been taken, and awaited only official confirmation. Hatay adopted the Turkish monetary, postal and legal systems, despite the continued presence of French troops. In view of hints from Ankara that only the Hatay problem prevented signature of a mutual assistance agreement similar to that with Britain, and in view of British urging that any delay would work only to Axis advantage, <sup>71</sup> the French soon confirmed the de facto situation. The Franco-Turkish Declaration of Mutual Assistance was announced at the same

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<sup>70</sup> See Survey for 1938, p. 484.

<sup>71</sup> For the parallel Hatay and defence agreement negotiations with France, see DBFP, V, nos. 415, 497, and 505.

time (23 June) as the Agreement for the Cession of Hatay.<sup>72</sup> On 29 June, the Hatay Assembly voted for union, French forces withdrew, and the sanjak became the sixty-third vilayet of the Turkish Republic.

The last remaining grievance with France had now been removed, and the way paved for the Anglo-Franco-Turkish Pact of October 1939. That they should have paid the price for the revival of the old association between the crescent and the lily naturally enraged Syrian nationalists. The President of the Republique Syrienne resigned in July in protest against the cession, and rumours spread in Damascus of further Turkish territorial demands. Tension was alleviated in March 1940 by a Turko-Syrian Friendship Treaty, but the Hatay dispute continued to impede a close Turkish association with Syria.

## xii

The weeks following the Hatay agreement comprised a period of international tension and diplomatic manoeuvre. During their continuing negotiations with the Allies, the Turks proved reluctant to undertake further commitments until their demands for military and financial aid were at least partially met. Both the British and French greatly underestimated the Turkish capacity to drive a hard bargain. Not only did the Turks refer pointedly to the fact that no

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<sup>72</sup> For the official announcement of both, see Ayın Tarini, no. 67 (June, 1939), pp. 88-90.



arms had yet been received, but also they made clear their expectation that the Allies should make good any deficiency in military supplies arising from the Nazi curtailment of shipments - and indeed should contribute generously to freeing the Turkish economy from its dependence on the Reich. While the British Ambassador warned that failure to meet these demands would imperil the Turkish connexion, it was estimated in London that scarcely more than ten per cent of Turkish defence requirements could be supplied within the next year. Shortly after the astonishing revelation on 23 August of the impending Nazi-Soviet Pact, however, Saracoğlu agreed to study a preliminary draft treaty. <sup>73</sup>

The Nazi-Soviet "thunderbolt" came as a terrible blow to Turkish hopes of a united front against the Axis. Editorial writers in İstanbul warned with a united voice that the totalitarian powers would now be emboldened to further aggression. <sup>74</sup> Yet official circles in Ankara maintained a curious silence, leading one to conclude that the Government had some grounds for expecting yet another reversal in Soviet policy. <sup>75</sup> By 17 September, when the Red

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<sup>73</sup> For the course of these negotiations, May-August 1939, see DBFP, VI, nos. 82, 98, 128, 134, 168, 218, 242, 246, 292, 321, 330, 342, 388, 395, 413; VII, nos. 338, 550, 598.

<sup>74</sup> See Sertel in Tan, and Nadi in Cumhuriyet, both of 25 August 1939.

<sup>75</sup> See DBFP, VI, nos. 188 and 308; and D.J. Dallin, Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-1942, Yale University Press, 1942, p. 107. It is known that in mid-August the Turks had accepted a Soviet proposal to begin negotiations for a defence alliance. In the encouraging nature of this correspondence during the balance of the month perhaps lies the reason for the Turks' otherwise inexplicable optimism. See DBFP, no. 341, p. 712.

Army entered Poland, this hope must have been dim indeed.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact ended the tradition of friendship existing since the days of Lenin and Atatürk. Turkey's formidable neighbour had joined with the expansionists and militarists, the opponents of Turkish coöperation with Britain and France. Ankara therefore could no longer be both pro-Soviet and pro-Allied, for the latter had overnight become "warmongers." The Anglo-Turkish Declaration which Izvestia once praised as "an investment in peace" was now described by Stalin to von Ribbentrop as having been concluded without Soviet agreement. The two had no difficulty in resolving that "... something should be done with Turkey, whose politicians were corrupt, bought by the British, and whose foreign policy was vacillating." <sup>76</sup> Both the Reich and the Soviet sought the exclusion of Allied interests from the Straits area; on 2 September, therefore, Foreign Minister Molotov informed Ambassador von Schulenburg that the USSR was prepared to work for permanent Turkish neutrality. <sup>77</sup>

#### C. The First Months of War

##### xiii

Nazi and Soviet interest in the Straits during the first days of the Second World War illustrated two factors

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<sup>76</sup> J.A. Lukacs, The Great Powers and Eastern Europe, New York, American Book Company, 1953, p. 314; and James Sontag and J.S. Beddie, eds., Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, U.S. State Department pub. no. 3023, 1948, p. 73. Henceforth, NSR.

<sup>77</sup> NSR, pp. 86-87.

important in considering the Turkish position. One was the deterioration in Turkish-Soviet relations, resulting not so much from new Russian objectives as from the appearance of more favourable circumstances in which these aims might be achieved. Turkey's ancient enemy had only recently regained the power (perhaps even the inclination was temporarily absent during the nineteen-twenties) to pursue the traditional Tsarist policy. Secondly, concern for the Straits underlined Turkey's strategic position among the three great power blocs. Commanding vital arteries between the continents stood a nation of twenty million, economically and industrially weak, but with a strong sense of national identity and a brave and determined army.

This combination of circumstances would make any belligerent power pause before invading Turkey to see whether it could not get at least part of its objective by diplomatic means... 78

On the other hand, the Kemalists were understandably reluctant to jeopardise in any way their achievements since 1923. Turkish policy, especially after the rape of Poland, therefore became increasingly prudent. Exemplary of this caution was Prime Minister Saydam's statement to the GNA after the outbreak of war.

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<sup>78</sup> A.J. Toynbee, ed., The War and the Neutrals, Oxford University Press for RIIA, 1956, p. 345. Henceforth, Neutrals.

Our relations with the two belligerent powers are normal ... Our relations with Germany conform to international rules ... [and display] no question of direct difference ... With Britain and France we have an association of interests and principles which are well known ... Our relations with the USSR are and will remain friendly ... We are out of the war today. Let us hope that it does not ... involve our country. 79

He described the partial mobilisation taking place as purely precautionary and reported that the nation possessed supplies sufficient to sustain itself for the next twelve months. To ensure this the Government would announce anti-inflationary measures, designed to prevent a repetition of the tragic crises between 1914 and 1918. The Prime Minister concluded by defining the Turkish attitude as "harbîn haricinde," ("outside the war" or "non-belligerency," as opposed to neutrality). In the context of 1939, this distinction was later explained by Dr. Aras to mean that Turkey

... inclined toward the Allies ... and would not join the aggressors in any way ... It was made clear by this attitude that if she were attacked ... or otherwise entered the war. Turkey would find herself with the democratic front. 80

In his annual presidential address, İnönü pledged that Turkey would strive to remain nonbelligerent, without endangering her security or violating her obligations. 81

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79 Ayın Tarihi, no. 70 (September 1939), pp. 19-27. For influential press comment, see Atay in Ulus and Yalçın in Yeni Sabah, both of 2 September.

80 Aras, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

81 İnönü, op. cit., p. 341.

His generation doubtless recalled bitterly the tragedy of German exploitation during World War I and entertained a lingering suspicion of the Western Powers - a natural heritage of the abortive imperialist partition of Anatolia after 1918. Above all, the Turks saw their impending alliance as an assurance of their territorial integrity, and not as invitations to national disaster. With the conclusion of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the outbreak of war, clearly the Anglo-Franco-Turkish Declarations had shifted toward the latter category. It was this fear of conflict that drew the Foreign Minister to Moscow before the signature of a treaty with the Allies. There, Saracoğlu hoped to reconcile Stalin to the impending agreement and to draw him closer to the Western Powers. <sup>82</sup>

## xiv

In addition to these objectives the Foreign Minister intended to press for a mutual assistance pact with the USSR, and to explore Soviet intentions in the Balkans. Regarding the latter, he was to find "... an atmosphere completely different from that which his conversations with Potemkin had led him to expect." <sup>83</sup> This reception was disappointing to others as well as to the Turks, for it was

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<sup>82</sup> "No government was better qualified for this office [of seeking an Anglo-Soviet accord] than Turkey."

<sup>83</sup> Dallin, op. cit., p. 107.  
 Gafencu, op. cit., p. 53; see also Langer, Challenge, pp. 314-317.

generally believed that Saracoğlu represented the "... goodwill and spirit of solidarity of all the Balkan States."<sup>84</sup> The primary Turkish aim nevertheless remained a contractual relationship with the Soviet Union similar to that pending with the Allies and a topic of continuing discussion in Ankara with Ambassador Terentiev.

During the very first conference (27 September), Molotov presented the main Soviet proposals, which were: a mutual assistance pact, including joint defence of the Straits; closure of the waterway to warships of non-Black Sea Powers; and a reservation excluding Soviet obligations in the event of a Turkish conflict with Germany.<sup>85</sup> These suggestions starkly illustrated the divergent aims of the two powers. Turkey sought a reaffirmation of Soviet support for the Black Sea status quo, thus confirming her territorial integrity and clearing the way for the pact with the Allies (the signature of which had been delayed until Saracoğlu's return). The USSR, on the other hand, sought the neutralisation of Turkey and the Black Sea area to avoid hostilities on her borders and to forestall Allied assistance - through the Straits - to Rumania.<sup>86</sup> Further,

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<sup>84</sup> For the request of the Entente Governments that Saracoğlu explore Soviet attitudes (notably with regard to Bulgaria) see Gafencu, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-61.

<sup>85</sup> Acıkalın, *op. cit.*, p. 481. The author, as Associate Director of the Foreign Ministry, was a member of the Turkish delegation. All other sources are in agreement with his description of the Soviet proposals, except for the suggestion in Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 108, that they included a demand for actual bases on the Straits.

<sup>86</sup> The Kremlin at this time was contemplating the annexation of Bessarabia. Article 19 of the Montreux Conven-...

the Soviets were anxious to appease their Nazi allies who were determined to prevent a Turkish link in the chain of "encircling" alliances.<sup>87</sup> German emphasis on neutralising Turkey, in fact, was one of the reasons for von Ribbentrop's appearance in Moscow two days before the arrival of the Saracoğlu delegation.

When the Turks rejected their proposals, the Soviets transferred their attentions to the Germans. Saracoğlu prepared to leave Moscow on 1 October, amid rumours of Russian demands for bases on the Straits. Apparently anxious to avoid an open break with Turkey, Molotov suggested resumption of negotiations. On 20 October he and Stalin himself met with the Turkish Minister, who produced a draft text of the Allied treaty and "... refused to make a single move... without first consulting London and Paris."<sup>88</sup> As a result, Saracoğlu spent the next ten days in complete diplomatic inactivity, which the Nazi press interpreted as foreshadowing the neutralisation of Turkey and the closure of the Straits.<sup>89</sup>

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tion would oblige Turkey to permit the passage of vessels going to the assistance of Rumania, who had received an Anglo-French guarantee. Ironically, this Article had originally been inserted at Soviet insistence.

<sup>87</sup> Von Schulenburg was informed of the Soviet proposals before their presentation to Saracoğlu. For German pressure on the Kremlin regarding Balkan and Black Sea strategy, see NSR, pp. 97, 110-113, 117-120.

<sup>88</sup> Açıklan, op. cit., p. 481; Dallin, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>89</sup> See the Völkischer Beobachter report, cited in Dallin, op. cit., p. 109.

At the next meeting, the Turks announced their willingness to exclude from the draft pact with the Allies the possibility of a Turko-Soviet conflict, if a similar treaty were to be concluded with the USSR. It has been suggested that Stalin was willing to accept this arrangement; indeed, signature of some such agreement was expected in diplomatic circles.<sup>90</sup> German pressure prevailed, however, and in the final encounter Molotov returned to his original demands.<sup>91</sup> The official communiqué issued on Saracoglu's departure, with its references to a "cordial and comprehensive exchange of views," belied the fact that the era of Russo-Turkish friendship had passed.<sup>92</sup>

The Minister's statement to the Ankara press on his return was masterly. After paying tribute to the traditional friendship between the two Powers, he observed that

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- <sup>90</sup> Dallin, op. cit., p. 110; The Times, 16 October.
- <sup>91</sup> One report describes a progressive reduction in these demands. According to this source, Stalin first suggested a treaty providing for joint defence of the Straits, then an exchange of letters to this effect, and finally any sort of bilateral agreement concerning the waterway whatsoever. The Kremlin thus sought, through an arrangement distinct from the multilateral Montreux Convention, to insert the thin edge of the Tsarist wedge. See Michael Sokolnicki, The Turkish Straits, Beirut, American University Press, 1950, pp. 18-19.
- <sup>92</sup> For text, see Degras, op. cit., III, 384-385. The Soviet tone soon changed. For later, and exceedingly enigmatic, Russian accounts of Saracoglu's mission see B. Dantsig, Turtsia, Moscow, Voennoye Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Sil Soyuza SSR, 1949, p. 278; and A.F. Miller, Ocherki Noveishei Istorii Turtsii, Moscow, Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk, 1948, pp. 200-201.



he "... was able to admire among other things the Metropolitan Railway and the Volga Canal..." <sup>93</sup> The Prime Minister's report to the RPP caucus was rather more frank. Negotiations had been broken off because the Soviet Union had advanced new proposals incompatible with not only Turkey's obligations to Britain but also her traditional Straits policy. This explanation evoked a very cautious response among Turkish journalists, whose comment ranged from speculation that the Nazi-Soviet Pact had altered the Russo-Turkish connexion to fear that Turkey would now be faced with renewed Tsarist ambitions. <sup>94</sup>

The pilgrimage to Moscow nevertheless had not been entirely in vain, for it doubtless enabled the Turkish Foreign Ministry to reach several conclusions concerning Soviet policy. First, the Kremlin had abandoned its interest in Balkan unity: Molotov had charged that Turkey abetted the Allied aim of involving the area in the war. <sup>95</sup> Secondly, the Russians were concerned for the security of their southern districts in the absence of joint control of the Straits, despite the promised reservation in the draft Allied

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<sup>93</sup> Cited in B. Lewis, op. cit., p. 119. That their Foreign Minister should be enticed away from his capital for nearly a month, and then left for long periods to partake of the Moscow sights, incensed the Turks.

<sup>94</sup> Atay in Ulus, 18 October; Nadi in Cumhuriyet and Sertel in Tan, 19 October; and Yalçın in Yeni Sabah, 5 November, 1939.

<sup>95</sup> Açıkalin, op. cit., p. 481. Molotov had by raising the question of Russian pre-1914 frontiers aroused Saracoğlu's suspicions of a Nazi-Soviet "deal" in Eastern Europe. See Gefencu, op. cit., p. 276.

treaty. Thirdly, and perhaps most important, the Turks perceived the ominous extent of Nazi-Soviet coöperation, It was not surprising that Ankara should move to reinforce its position in the West even before Saracoğlu returned to his capital.

xv

The Treaty of Mutual Assistance with Britain and France was signed by Prime Minister Saydam on 19 October 1939.<sup>96</sup> The period between the respective Declarations with the Allies and this signature had been one of active negotiation. Turkish aims were to obtain an extensive Allied security guarantee with as few reciprocal commitments (especially outside the Mediterranean area) as possible. Indeed, some distrust of the Western Powers was indicated by Turkish insistence that the Treaty be of fifteen year's duration (rather than renewable quinquennially); that it be signed between the three Heads of State (rather than by transient governments); and that it be also of a bilateral nature (rather than solely tripartite, and thereby annulled if one signatory withdrew).<sup>97</sup>

The text as finally approved provided for mutual defence in event of aggression by a European Power against Turkey (Article I), or leading to war in the Mediterranean

<sup>96</sup> For text, see Treaty Series, vol. 200, no. 4689; for the signature ceremony, see Ayın Tarihi, no. 71 (October 1939), p. 91.

<sup>97</sup> DBFP, VI, nos. 270, 551, 641; VII, nos. 413, 474.

(Article II). Turkey pledged to "collaborate effectively" in the event of Anglo-Turkish hostilities arising from the guarantees to Greece and Rumania (Article III), and to maintain a "benevolent neutrality" if the two other signatories were otherwise attacked or involved in conflict (Article IV). In Protocol 2 appended to the Treaty, however, Turkey was absolved from any obligation which would draw her into war with the USSR.

Yet there was another reservation, inserted into the accompanying economic agreements. By this secret suspensive clause, the Treaty was not to come into force until Turkey had received the stipulated military aid and financial credits. It was not until 8 January 1940 that it was agreed this provision should be cancelled as soon as a promised £15 million gold loan reached Ankara.<sup>98</sup> In addition to this loan, the economic agreements pledged a £25 million Anglo-French credit for armaments and a £3.5 million grant for the transfer of outstanding Turkish debts into clearing accounts. When these figures are compared with the original Allied offers, it must be concluded that after war had broken out, the Treaty "... seemed worth buying at a price not very much lower than that named by the

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<sup>98</sup> See ibid., VI, nos. 535, 745; Langer, Challenge, p. 317; Toynbee, Eve, pp. 145 and 150; and Butler, op. cit., II, 67. The turks had originally but unsuccessfully demanded that the Treaty should come into force only after being ratified (thus giving them a further period in which to bargain).

Turks in July." <sup>99</sup> Later British inability to meet this price was to prove a decisive factor in the Turkish decision to remain neutral irrespective of obligations assumed in the Treaty.

In presenting the Treaty to the GNA, Prime Minister Saydam stressed above all that its purely defensive nature could not impair relations with Russia. <sup>100</sup> İnönü in his annual presidential address on 1 November echoed this theme, and perhaps inferred that hope of a similar agreement with the USSR had not been entirely abandoned. <sup>101</sup> Reaction in the press was generally favourable: most commentators praised the contribution made to the security not only of Turkey but also of the Balkans and indeed the entire Middle East. <sup>102</sup>

The question of military aid loomed large in the Turko-Allied conversations begun on 19 October by Generals Wavell and Weygand and the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, Fevzi Çakmak. <sup>103</sup> In recognition of their decision that Salonika held the key to the defence of Trakya, Turkey (in the case of hostilities envisaged by the Treaty) undertook "... to facilitate the transport of Allied forces across her

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<sup>99</sup> Toynbee, Eve, p. 149.

<sup>100</sup> Ayın Tarihi, no. 72 (November 1939), pp. 109-111.

<sup>101</sup> İnönü, op. cit., pp. 341-342.

<sup>102</sup> Atay in Ulus, Yalçın in Yeni Sabah, 20 October; Sadak in Aksam, 21 October, 1939.

<sup>103</sup> For these negotiations, see R.J. Collins, Lord Wavell (1883-1941), London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1947, p. 220; and "The Treaty of Ankara," The Economist, CXXXVII (28 October 1939), 121-122.

territory and the Sea of Marmara." <sup>104</sup> She agreed also to permit Allied reconnaissance of potential bases and studies of transport facilities within her borders. <sup>105</sup> Throughout the talks the question of actual military aid remained paramount: Wavell concluded that the sooner the Turks were well-equipped, the better they could fulfil the terms of the Treaty. <sup>106</sup>

## xvi

The military conversations with the Allies were given added urgency by Molotov's foreign affairs address of 31 October 1939, in which he referred to the visit of Saracoğlu. Turkey, having rejected the Soviet offer of a pact, had

... definitely rejected the cautious policy of neutrality and has decided to enter the orbit of the spreading European war ... Whether Turkey will come to regret it, we shall not try to guess.

Even more ominously, Molotov went on to deny that the USSR had demanded cession of the Kars and Ardahan districts, a revision of the Montreux Convention, and "a privileged position as regards the Straits." <sup>107</sup> On 3 November, the Turkish Government replied that Soviet demands did indeed vio-

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<sup>104</sup> Maxime Weygand, Recalled to Service, London, Heinemann, 1952, p. 22.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 8. The Turks nevertheless were at first unwilling to incur German or Russian enmity by allowing the bases to be actually prepared. Butler, op. cit., II, 70.

<sup>106</sup> I.S.O. Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East, London, HMSO, 1954, I, 52.

<sup>107</sup> Degras, op. cit., III, 397-398; V.M. Molotov, Soviet Peace Policy, London, Lawrence and Wishard, 1941, pp. 42-43.

late the Convention; but pro-Russian sources continued to maintain that the draft pact had been rejected solely because of Soviet unwillingness to underwrite Turkey's association with the Allied guarantees to Rumania. 108

Probably the most interesting feature of Turkish foreign policy in the last weeks of 1939 was this alarming deterioration in relations with the USSR. Soviet operations against the Finns in November provoked a great wave of sympathy among the Turks who - because of their curious preoccupation with linguistic affinity and their conception of Finland as "the Turkey of the north" - felt specially concerned. Press editorials inveighed against the new Russian imperialism, while communist organs displayed equal polemic prowess.

It is no secret that during the Moscow negotiations ... the Turkish delegation ... sought to drive a wedge between Germany and the USSR ... Everyone knows that the Turkish régime has little to do with true democracy. Owing to the rapprochement between Turkish ruling classes and the Anglo-French imperialists, Turkey's independence ... is now seriously threatened. 109

To avert this threat Turkish diplomats intensified their struggle for unity in the Balkans. Saracoğlu stressed the search for collective defence when in December the Soviet Ambassador inquired what action Turkey would take if the USSR were engaged militarily against Rumania. The For-

108 See for example, "Quaestor," "The USSR, Turkey, and the Allies," Labour Monthly, XXII (April, 1940), 222.  
109 Comintern, 7 December 1939.

eign Minister led him to understand that any threat to Rumania would constitute a common danger, in the face of which Turkey would respect her obligations related to the Allied guarantee.<sup>110</sup> Obviously, Turkish statesmen were optimistic in the closing days of 1939 that their Balkan policy might yet prove itself. They now enjoyed the enthusiastic support of Britain and France,<sup>111</sup> and had achieved some slight success even with revisionist Bulgaria. Italy maintained a policy of neutrality and seemed to exhibit some support for a Balkan bloc. Turkey's efforts in the spring of 1940 were to fail, however; and by mid-summer her French ally would be replaced in the Mediterranean by a hostile Italy.

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- <sup>110</sup> Gafencu, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-277. Another Rumanian diplomat, however, reports that the Turkish response to the same question posed by Rumania was less categorical, and indicated the intended invocation of Protocol 2 (of the Allied treaty). See Alexandre Cretzianu, *The Lost Opportunity*, London, Cape, 1957, pp. 33-35. Divergences such as this in reporting the attitudes of Turkish statesmen occur frequently between 1939 and 1945, and often testify eloquently to the subtle competence of their diplomacy.
- <sup>111</sup> Allied policy in the Balkans had recently shifted from the intended provision of some visible token of military support to utmost encouragement of Turkish diplomacy. Reserves were to be built up in southern areas of the Middle East, so as not to antagonise Balkan neutralists. See Playfair, *op. cit.*, I, 50; and Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

## II

### TURKEY AND THE AXIS TRIUMPH

"Live in Peace but be Ready to Fight in the Morning"

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## II. TURKEY AND THE AXIS TRIUMPH

### A. The Quiet Months

#### i

The primary objectives of Turkish diplomacy during the first winter of war were to maintain the neutrality and sovereignty of the Republic, and to reinforce the Balkan Entente. The Balkans, in fact, formed such an integral part of the Turkish emniyet sahası that the latter was but the corollary of the former aim.

Despite the reversal in Soviet Balkan policy (from support for the status quo to ambitions in Bessarabia and patronage of Bulgarian irredentism), the most immediate danger was that of Nazi domination. Since the outbreak of war, therefore, the Balkan States had drawn perceptibly closer together - although hardly enough to encourage the Turks, whose own view of the Rumanian guarantee was by no means unequivocal.<sup>112</sup> Much depended upon the attitude of Mussolini, not yet a military partner of Hitler. The Fascist promotion of an anti-Soviet Balkan bloc<sup>113</sup> intrigued the Turkish press, wherein articles advocating Turko-Italian coöperation to maintain the peace could be found in January 1940.<sup>114</sup> It is highly improbable that official

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<sup>112</sup>Rumania in particular had been impelled by the fear of invasion to support Turkish policy. See Lukacs, op. cit., pp. 267-269, and above, pp. 45-46.

<sup>113</sup>For these efforts, see Ciano Diaries, v. 179.

<sup>114</sup>E.R. Vere-Hodge, Turkish Foreign Policy, 1918-1948, Université de Genève (Institut de Hautes Etudes Internationales), 1950, p. 131.

circles in Ankara shared this interest, for Allied approaches to Rome on the subject evoked an unsympathetic response.

On 8 January the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry departed for Sofia in the hope of repairing Turko-Bulgarian relations, seriously disturbed in the autumn by troop concentrations in Thrace. Five days later Menemencioğlu and the Bulgarian Prime Minister issued a communiqué announcing a mutual withdrawal of forces from their frontiers and declaring "...the determination of the Turkish Government to respect the neutrality of Bulgaria, and that of the Bulgarian Government to safeguard this neutrality." <sup>115</sup> On his return to İstanbul, Menemencioğlu warmly expressed his satisfaction with the firm Bulgarian attitude.

This visit was an essential preliminary to the annual meeting of the Balkan Pact Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Beograd from 2 to 4 February. At its first session, Saracoğlu proposed that the General Staffs of the four Powers should immediately prepare a common defence plan. He soon found his colleagues reluctant to consider closer alignment with Turkey and unwilling to discuss specific provisions for their mutual security. This caution may be attributed to determined Nazi opposition; to what seemed the provocative Turkish connexion with the Allies; and to growing indecision

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<sup>115</sup>Ayın Tarihi, no. 74(January 1940), p. 241.

regarding the primary menace to the Balkans. All four Ministers feared Germany, but the Yugoslav and the Greek seemed preoccupied with the Fascist threat while the Rumanian and the Turk were particularly apprehensive of Soviet designs.

Warning that German and Russian conquests since September left "no more doubt about the fate which would befall the Balkan peninsula," Saracoğlu stressed the "necessity of a common decision and attitude" in the face of danger.<sup>116</sup> The warning went unheeded, and the communiqué closing the meeting was a meaningless masterpiece of evasion. It observed meekly that the four Powers had a common interest in maintaining order in Southeastern Europe and recommended a continued policy of non-belligerency.<sup>117</sup> The Ministers nevertheless decided to invite Bulgarian association with the Entente, to which end Saracoğlu visited Sofia once more. That King Boris' final refusal was yet another blow to Turkish Balkan policy is demonstrated by the fact that Ankara

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<sup>116</sup> Açıkalın, *op. cit.*, p. 482. The author bitterly observes that the Ministers' vacillation was at first attributed by the Turks "...to an excess of caution. Much later we learned that some Balkan statesmen ... considered the Turkish endeavours as provocative manoeuvres undertaken with the object of drawing [them]... into the Anglo-French orbit. In their suspicion they went so far as to think seriously of creating a new Balkan Entente, including Bulgaria, against the Turkish menace."

<sup>117</sup> For text, see *Ayın Tarihi*, no. 75 (January 1940), p. 140. The fact that the term neutrality did not appear in the communiqué has been attributed to Saracoğlu's insistence on the Turks' official phrase of *harbîn haricinde*. See Cretzianu, *op. cit.*, p. 38, for the irony of this dispute.

was at that time willing to press Bucharest to strike some compromise with Sofia regarding Bulgarian territorial claims. 118

As Saracoğlu reached Ankara, the misguided Turkish press was discussing the Council meeting with approval and optimism. One editor gloated on the failure of German efforts to foster suspicion of Turkish leadership in the Balkans: Saracoğlu, he observed, had sought not hegemony but a common peace policy. 119 Such comment demonstrated at least an awareness of widespread fears that Turkey sought the belligerency of the Balkan States on behalf of her Western allies. Soviet as well as Nazi propaganda strove to brand the Turks as Allied puppets, as editorial accounts of the Council meeting in Izvestia clearly indicated. For the second time since the Kemalist revolution, the journal drew a distinction between the toiling masses of Anatolia and their "war-mongering" government. 120

Certainly the first months of 1940 marked the peak of Turkish bellicosity, for the catastrophic events in June were to reverse completely Saracoğlu's euphemism of "not

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118 Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, Diplomat in Peace and War, London, Murray, 1949, pp. 156-157. Henceforth, Knatchbull.

119 Yeni Sabah, 7 February 1940. See also Aksam of 5 February. Sometime later, the noted commentator Esmer discounted the meeting as an ignoble example of brazen hypocrisy. See Esmer, op. cit., p. 245.

120 Izvestia, 15 February 1940.

neutral but outside the war." In February it was reliably reported in one paper that

If Germany attacks the Balkans she will have to face us on the side of the Allies. Such an aggression would menace us directly. Our nation will not stand with arms folded while the Balkans are crushed. 121

Other journals strongly advocated a united front in South-eastern Europe and a firm Turkish stand against further aggression. On the domestic scene there was growing evidence of this determination. The GNA unanimously approved a National Defence Act giving the Government sweeping authority over the entire field of economic and commercial activity. Special provisions were included to assure internal order and safeguard the national interest in time of crisis.

"All these steps led to great nervousness throughout the country and forebodings as to Turkey's entry into the war." 122 Sedative speeches were delivered by the Prime Minister and other leaders during February, but the war fright abated only slightly.

# ii

During this period of initiative in the Balkans, military staff talks continued with the Allies. The British, despite their earlier pledges of assistance in the Black

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121 Yeni Sabah, 21 February 1940

122 Vere-Hodge, op. cit., p. 133.

Sea area,<sup>123</sup> in mid-January sought to limit these talks to preparatory studies for the defence of Trakya (Turkish Thrace). With the coöperation of the Turkish General Staff, investigations began immediately; by 31 January it was agreed that in the event of a general attack on the Balkans French forces would operate in Greece, and British in Turkey. A large reconnaissance programme was thereupon begun by British agents, who penetrated all parts of the Republic except the Soviet frontier areas.<sup>124</sup> In Cairo on 10 February, Generals Wavell and Weygand considered a Turkish General Staff report on the Marmara defence perimeter, in which the Thracian area was cunningly reserved for Anglo-French forces. They decided that at least six months would be required for improvement of the limited transport facilities available and for various other preliminary arrangements. A paper embodying the recommendations of the reconnaissance teams was drafted as a basis for discussion with the Turkish General Staff.

On 15 March 1940, senior officers from all three nations met in Aleppo to discuss Turkish defence requirements. The delegation from Ankara was led by Azim Gündüz, assistant to

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<sup>123</sup> As early as 1 November, Britain had announced that in certain circumstances she would "... come to the aid of Turkey with naval forces superior to those of Russia in the Black Sea." Winston Churchill, The Second World War, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1948, I, 703.

<sup>124</sup> These were placed out of bounds by the Turkish authorities. Collins, op. cit., p. 228.

the Chief of Staff (Marshal Çakmak), and Cevat Açıkalın of the Foreign Ministry. Apparently the conference nearly foundered at its very outset as the Turks desired particularly to discuss defence arrangements in the event of Italian belligerency, a situation the Allied officers were - curiously - not permitted to discuss. Once such authorisation was given, it "...became evident the Turks had some exaggerated ideas of the scale of attack they might have to meet and of the help that the Allies might be able to provide." <sup>125</sup> General Gündüz estimated that Turkey would be menaced by fifty Axis divisions, whereas the British figure was only twenty. As for Allied assistance,

... with no ports, no landing grounds, and only one railway running north ... even had there been adequate British and French forces available, they could neither have been deployed where the Turks required them, nor <sup>126</sup> maintained when there.

With a British warning that so long as Italian belligerency were possible only limited assistance could be extended to Turkey, the conference ended after seven trying days "...with no definite plans agreed upon and on an unsatisfactory note." <sup>127</sup>

By the time of the next meeting between the Allied and

<sup>125</sup> Playfair, op. cit., I, 53. This was to become an Allied view held consistently throughout the war. For the Turkish attitude at this time, see Halide Edib, "Turkey and her Allies," Foreign Affairs, XVIII(April 1940), 442-449.

<sup>126</sup> Collins, op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>127</sup> Loc. cit. Yet Weygand (op. cit., p. 31) later claimed the Turks gave explicit assurance that they would consider their frontiers threatened the moment Germany entered either Yugoslavia or Rumania.

Turkish staffs, the situation was even less encouraging. Weygand was recalled in May to command the faltering army in France: one of Turkey's allies seemed most unlikely to fulfil her treaty obligations. The Beirut conference convened later that month achieved virtually nothing. The French delegates (doubtless in a vain attempt to impress the Turks) called for the reduction of the Dodecanese if Italy entered the war; the British emphasised the value of sea power based on Egypt. A discussion of the "worst possible case" - the belligerency of Italy, Russia, and Bulgaria - evoked a French pledge of three divisions to Turkey. It was then observed that the Turks "... showed no disappointment at the meagreness of the help ... offered to them, though they were naturally noncommittal," 128

This report was wildly optimistic, despite the favourable impression made on Marshal Çakmak by Allied candour. More accurate was the opinion of the British Commander-in-Chief (Mediterranean) that Turkey's main concern was to remain neutral. In any case, he concluded, the Turks were determined not to be "... taken charge of and told what to do." 129

A fascinating - if questionable - source of information on Turko-Allied conversations, and Turkish policy generally

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128 Playfair, op. cit., I, 90.

129 Viscount Cunningham, A Sailor's Odyssey, London, Hutchinson, 1951, pp. 212-215, 218, 221-223.



was provided on 3 July 1940 by the publication of the Sixth German White Book. This volume purported to contain captured French diplomatic correspondence for the months of March and April, and precipitated a minor crisis in Ankara.<sup>130</sup> In January, the French military had investigated several schemes to deny Germany access to Caucasian oil, all of which required at least covert Turkish cooperation.<sup>131</sup> Soviet intelligence apparently feared the worst, for Izvestia alleged Turkey was laying a military railway to Erzurum and fostering anti-Soviet activity in Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan.<sup>132</sup> A week later all Russian technical personnel in Turkey, many of whom had spent years in the Republic, were ostentatiously recalled. Following persistent rumours that Soviet forces had crossed the frontier and refused to withdraw, Prime Minister Saydam broadcast reassurances on 29 February. The press, nevertheless, continued to hint at a possible Allied naval assault on Batum, and warned against any Turkish commitment to a war on two fronts.<sup>133</sup>

### iii

The White Book begins its account of Turkish complicity in Allied designs against the Soviet Union with a report from General Weygand describing a plan to bomb the Baku-

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<sup>130</sup> For which, see below p. 64.

<sup>131</sup> For the French plans, see Paul Reynaud, Au Coeur de la Melée, Paris, Flammarion, 1951, pp. 368-374.

<sup>132</sup> Izvestia, 15 February 1940.

<sup>133</sup> Tan, 17 March 1940.

Batum oilfields. Towards this goal, preparation of Turkish aerodromes in the Kars-Di yarbakir-Erzurum triangle was to begin in March. Reference was made to an Allied decision that all operations in the Caucasus area be placed under the command of the Turkish General Staff, in view of the fact that they would be expected to provide the bulk of land forces in the event of hostilities. When during an interview on 14 March with the French Ambassador, Saraco glu mentioned Soviet fears of possible attack, M. Massigli reported that he

... told the Minister that the aeroplanes will have to cross Turkish and Persian territory. "Do you anticipate objections on the part of Iran?" asked the Foreign Minister. This is as far as he went in making clear that there would be no difficulties on the part of Turkey. His <sup>134</sup> statement is quite characteristic...

It seems highly improbable that this statement, if indeed it was made at all, was "characteristic." Not only do other French sources indicate Turkish anxiety not to become involved in the Allied scheme, <sup>135</sup> but also the White Book itself subsequently describes an increasingly reserved Turkish attitude. Under the date of 27 March, for example,

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<sup>134</sup> The Sixth German White Book, cited in Dallin, op. cit., p. 169. (The original was not available to the present writer.)

<sup>135</sup> According to Reynaud (op. cit., pp. 368-374), the Turks were unwilling even to permit the reconnaissance of Anatolian aerodromes described by Weygand. One may wonder, from the latter's recommendation that such investigation be done by agents in civilian clothes, who was to be deceived, the Russians or the Turks.

there appears a report by the British chargé d'affaires which may be summarized as follows:

(a) The Turkish attitude has developed to the point of envisaging a defensive war against the USSR, but not yet of discussing with the Allies an offensive operation;

(b) Turkey would not consider such an attack until an agreement regarding Italian belligerency had been concluded with the Allies;

(c) Turkey could not enter into hostilities with the USSR until at least late summer, and then only with maximum Allied military assistance;

(d) Once these two conditions were fulfilled, Turkey would be an appreciative spectator of an Allied assault from Iran upon Baku, and "would not require much asking" to participate. <sup>136</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting of all is the report filed by Ambassador Massigli on the following day. He observed that it

... would be useless to try to push the Turks forward against the Soviet Union, but ... in certain circumstances we might succeed in drawing them after us in a stand against Russia ... The Turks are gradually becoming accustomed to [Soviet] unfriendliness ... [but will not] be drawn into an adventure whose result would not be certain.

The Turkish Government are at present convinced that Germany will not be victorious ... [but] many people in Turkey are not persuaded ... [the Allies will] win a decisive victory. Many believe ... that the war will end in a compromise

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<sup>136</sup> The White Book, cited in Kirk, op. cit., p. 447.

peace. Consequently they must naturally consider what would happen if ... Turkey found herself alone facing Russia ...

The conviction of the majority is that their fate is linked with that of the Western Powers; the Government are certainly resolved to abide by their undertakings to us; but there is not in public opinion that spirit which could encourage them to take the bull by the horns. 137

This last report seems the most credible of the series, for it gives a fairly accurate portrait of Turkish opinion in the spring of 1940. Even the rash suggestion of possible hostilities against the USSR may be explained by optimism arising from the Soviet military débâcle in Finland. It stands in glaring contrast with the account of Saracoğlu's tête-à-tête with Massigli, and deflates the conclusion drawn from the White Book that "World opinion was not aware of the extent to which Turkey was ready to fight her traditional Soviet ally." 138 The Turks were not prepared to abandon their non-belligerency unless actually attacked, and the events during the summer merely lent added wisdom to this position.

#### B. The Growing Crisis

#### iv

As the Nazi invader swept westward in May 1940. Turkish policy became increasingly cautious and watchful of develop-

137 The White Book, cited in Kir, op. cit., p. 447.  
138 Dallin, op. cit., p. 168.

ments in Europe. On 2 June Prime Minister Saydam delivered a foreign affairs address of impressive circumspection, in which he quite omitted any reference to the tripartite Treaty. Two days later an editorial in the pro-Allied Tan commented that if Italy were to enter the war yet confine her belligerency to the western front, then the Balkan and Mediterranean emniyet sahası might still remain neutral. Whether this article reflected any trend in official opinion is a matter for speculation, however, for publicly the Foreign Ministry maintained that Italian neutrality "must be secured." 139

This neutrality was abandoned within the week. The astonishing Nazi successes induced Mussolini to join in the spoils, and on 10 June Italy declared war on the Western Allies. The European conflict had thus spread to the Mediterranean theatre, an event the İstanbul press had repeatedly warned would bring Turkey into the war. Although press comment on the declaration was bitterly imputative, it was portentous that the most violently anti-Fascist of these papers was temporarily suspended on the following day. 140 On 12 June Ankara merely broke commercial relations with Rome and ordered all Turkish shipping into the nearest domestic port to await developments. Mobilisation was inten-

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139 Açıkalin, op. cit., p. 482.

140 Yeni Sabah, for its leading articles on 7 and 11 June 1940.

sified, and artisans conscripted to expedite the fortification of the Straits.

President İnönü, inspecting Turkish forces in Trakya, rushed to Ankara where a Cabinet meeting was immediately convened. On 13 June, the British and French Ambassadors requested that Turkey declare war, according to the terms of the tripartite Treaty. Should this prove unacceptable, they continued, Turkey should at least break diplomatic relations with Italy, grant military and naval facilities to the Allies, and close the Straits to Axis shipping. The Ambassadors were apparently acting on instructions in their possession for some ten days - <sup>141</sup> and were to wait another ten before receiving a reply.

On 17 June a leading article by the influential Necmed-din Sadak (later to become Foreign Minister) elucidated the Turkish position. While Turkey respected her obligations to the Allies, her geographic location limited her possible usefulness. Turkish entry into the war would merely extend the theatre of operations and thereby fruitlessly dissipate Allied resources. The most advantageous policy, therefore, would be to remain neutral, thus conserving Turkish military potential for a more opportune occasion. <sup>142</sup> All

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<sup>141</sup> Knatchbull, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>142</sup> *Aksam*, 17 June. Something of a non-sequitur appeared on the same day in *Yeni Sabah*, wherein Yalçın maintained the firmness of Turkey's stand had precluded Italy's entry into the Balkans at the time of her war declaration. He warned that the unexpected difficulty in defeating Britain might eventually draw Hitler towards the Middle East, at which time Turkey would have a critical rôle to play.

writers stressed the weakness of this potential, for the army was "ill-equipped even with obsolete weapons" and the airforce "almost nonexistent." <sup>143</sup> Even the British Ambassador admitted later that military aid supplies were "far behind either Turkish needs or expectations." <sup>144</sup>

Despite the long delay in their reply, the Turkish Cabinet apparently had resolved on 13 June to maintain their neutrality. <sup>145</sup> This decision may be attributed largely to the disaster in the West, of which Saracoğlu had been kept well-informed by his Embassy in Paris. <sup>146</sup> (That capital, it might be added, was declared an open city on the very day of the Allied request and the Turkish decision.) The cloud of pessimism which descended in Turkish press circles reflected a frightened awareness that Britain was about to be isolated and Germany thus freed to act in the southeast.

The Turks were neither equipped nor organised for war. To plunge thus handicapped into the *melée* at a moment when one of their Allies was down ... and the other in deadly danger might have earned for Turkey imperishable memories of heroic self-sacrifice, but it would have done little good. <sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> J.C. Hurewitz, Middle East Dilemmas, New York, Harper, 1953, p. 188. For the Turkish military position in 1940, see also B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

<sup>144</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>145</sup> See DGFP, IX, nos. 431, 434, pp. 566, 568.

<sup>146</sup> So well so that even before the fall of the Reynaud government the Turks had expressed great concern for the future of French North Africa, according to Graves, op. cit., p. 247. A full understanding of these critical events in June must await the publication of the relevant official documents.

<sup>147</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 166.

Even the British Ambassador thus realised that Turkish belligerency would invite national immolation, either at the hands of the Nazis or the Soviets.

Molotov had been asked his views on the Allied request by the Turkish Minister in Moscow, and his reply was so "negative and indeed menacing"<sup>148</sup> that it was hardly surprising the Turks should invoke Protocol 2 of the tripartite Treaty. This was the theme of Prime Minister Saydam's reply to the Allies, announced to the GNA on 26 June. It would be unrealistic, he said, for Turkey to rush headlong into battle; the Government therefore would "... preserve their present attitude of non-belligerency for the security and defence of our country."<sup>149</sup>

The Prime Minister's "realism" was justified by increasingly ominous events in the Balkans and the Middle East. As he spoke to the Assembly, a Soviet ultimatum demanding Bessarabia and northern Bukovina was presented to Rumania.<sup>150</sup> That country renounced the Balkan Entente and

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<sup>148</sup> Langer, Challenge, p. 647.

<sup>149</sup> The Times, 27 June 1941. This statement was generally approved by the press, including the pro-Allied Yeni Sabah, 28 June. Approval also was voiced (despite the fulminations of that tireless Turcophobe Lloyd George) in the British Parliament. Foreign Minister Halifax expressed "full appreciation" of the Turkish decision. The Turks had "kept in close contact" and still acknowledged the Treaty as "... a fruitful basis for constructive cooperation between us, both as long as the war continues and in the years of peace to come." House of Lords, Debates, 5th ser., vol. 116, col. 889.

<sup>150</sup> For the Turkish response to Rumanian inquiries concerning this ultimatum (indicating both foreknowledge and equivocation), see Cretzianu, op. cit., pp. 48-51.



collapsed into the Axis camp. Turkey's ancient foe drew nearer the Straits, and actively sought hegemony in the Black Sea.<sup>151</sup> In the Levant, French forces adhered to the Vichy régime, thus depriving Turkey of vital land communications with, and the nearest source of military assistance from, the Allies.

With von Papen in Ankara to underline these facts, it was clearly the moment for the British to reassure the Turks with a pronouncement on military policy. One was duly delivered by the Chiefs of Staff on 3 July, but was rather more encouraging in tone than in content. The attack on the Vichy fleet was of much greater interest to the Turks, who interpreted it as an indication of British determination to maintain naval supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

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By 3 July, it might have seemed that the startling spectacle of Axis power would induce Turkey to seek some form of reinsurance with the USSR. Yet recent Soviet actions recalled the days of Tsardom, giving rise to fears

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<sup>151</sup> In an interview with the Italian Ambassador on 25 June, Molotov complained of an unfriendly Turkey threatening Batum and "... claiming she is sole mistress of the Straits." He then sought Italian recognition of Soviet hegemony in that area, in exchange for approving Fascist control of the Mediterranean. Degras, *op. cit.*, III, 457-458; *NSR*, pp. 160-161.

of demands for Kars and Ardahan and of renewed suggestions for a "joint" régime in the Straits. Von Ribbentrop chose that day to avert any possible Turko-Soviet détente by publishing the Sixth German White Book.<sup>152</sup> Despite its falsifications, the publication instantly provoked the wrath of Soviet polemicists, who fulminated against the Turkish wheels on the "chariot of foreign imperialism."<sup>153</sup> Ambassador Terentiev was recalled and Molotov accused the Turks of aerial reconnaissance of the Batum area.<sup>154</sup>

Ankara reacted with embarrassed consternation. Saracoğlu immediately extracted from Massigli and published a letter<sup>155</sup> admitting the Caucasian scheme but denying any Turkish complicity in it, and sent an uncoded telegram describing the whole affair as fictitious to his Minister in Moscow. After von Ribbentrop repeated the charges, von Papen was compelled to warn Berlin that Turkish relations with Germany had been as severely impaired as those with Russia. London made the final entry into the fray with a categorical denial of the whole alleged operation.<sup>156</sup> Just as the dust began to settle around the White Book controversy, however, a new rumour arose. It was alleged that Russo-German

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<sup>152</sup> For its contents see above, pp. 54-58.

<sup>153</sup> Pravda, 5 July 1940.

<sup>154</sup> For his foreign policy address, see Degras, op. cit., III, 461-469; for a later Soviet account of Turkish "war-mongering", see Dantsig, op. cit., pp. 280-282.

<sup>155</sup> For its text, see Avin Tarihi, no. 80 (July 1940), pp. 38-39.

<sup>156</sup> See the statement in House of Commons, Debates, 5th ser., vol. 367, col. 1359.

conversations had been taking place in İstanbul, in which the Soviets had been promised bases in the Straits. Germany would then guarantee Turkish security, but would first require a concrete demonstration of Turkish sympathy - such as the dismissal of the supposedly anti-Nazi Foreign Minister. 157

A state of emergency was declared, and partial mobilisation ordered. On 12 July Prime Minister Saydam spoke angrily about certain foreign propagandists:

There is only one reply to those who, on the basis of documents so published, accuse Turkey and try to compromise Turkish statesmen who will not serve their designs. It is to turn away in scorn ...

[The] maintenance or replacement of a Turkish official may take place only by the decision and approval of the GNA ...

Turkey will remain faithful to her commitments ... and will not bow before threat or insult ... Kemalist Turkey is not the Ottoman society of vizirs; no longer can Ministers be dismissed at the express desire of foreign governments. Let this be clearly understood 158 everywhere.

He pledged that the Government would in due course publish the true texts of the alleged documents (but the appropriate moment apparently never did arrive). After this outspoken speech, von Papen discreetly returned to Berlin for consultation.

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157 There exists substantial documentation for this rumour. See Vere-Hodge, op. cit., p. 135, and Aksam, 13 May 1948, for an interesting tale of intrigue.

158 Ayın Tarihi, no. 80 (July 1940) pp. 42-48.

Always in tune with official policy, the Turkish press sounded a note more cordial to the USSR. It was suggested that since Russia need fear no menace from the Straits, the only potential danger came from the Axis position in the Balkans. The two states thus shared parallel interests.<sup>159</sup> Perhaps reflecting this cordiality, but more likely indicating the fact that the Soviet Union could no longer afford to act in the Balkans without Axis agreement, Turko-Soviet relations entered a three-month lull.

These halcyon days were not interrupted until the beginning of the second year of war, when the North African conflict threatened to engulf the Middle East, and the Reich began diplomatic preparations for a Balkan campaign. In September 1940, Turkey seemed almost the mid-point in the ever-widening struggle. Istanbul and Ankara became mysterious centres of diplomatic intrigue, espionage, and propaganda. The former in particular enjoyed a booming "cloak and dagger" prosperity as "the most important neutral city in the world," from which "... the war could perhaps be more clearly seen than from any other position."<sup>160</sup> Turkey be-

<sup>159</sup> Yalçın in Yeni Sabah, 16 and 17 July 1940.

<sup>160</sup> L.C. Moyzisch, Operation Cicero, London, Allan Wingate, 1952 (Pocketbook ed.), p. 2. For colourful accounts of this activity see Ian Colvin, Chief of Intelligence, London, Gollancz, 1951, in toto; Leon Dennen, Trouble Zone, New York, Ziff-Davis, 1945, pp. 46-47; G.C. Young, Outposts of War, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1941, pp. 136-141.

came a major battleground for hordes of propagandists, yet one on which the most frequent casualties were members of the Turkish press. Using suspensions as their weapon, the Government displayed great talent in maintaining an expedient balance of foreign sympathies in both Ankara and İstanbul papers. <sup>161</sup>

German activities in the Balkans, the "guarantee" to Rumania, and the concentration of Nazi troops in Bulgaria in September all had their effect on Turko-Soviet relations. Turkey was now joined in her support for the Balkan status quo by the USSR - in contrast to the situation in the spring, when Germany had sought southeastern stability in order to forestall Soviet expansion. The Russians having accepted the good offices of the British Ambassador for the improvement of relations, a détente of sorts was indicated on 8 October by the return (from leave following the White Book affair) of Ali Haydar Aktay as Minister to Moscow. The Turkish diplomat was instructed to ascertain the Soviet attitude regarding the Nazi approach to the Black Sea and the apparent Fascist preparations against Greece. The USSR

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<sup>161</sup> Generally impartial papers were Aksam (Necmeddin Sadak ed.), and Vakıf; usually pro-Allied were Yeni Sabah (Hüseyin Cahid Yalcın, ed.), Haber, Tan, Son Telegraf, and Vatan (A.E. Yalman, ed.); often pro-Axis were Son Posta, Tasviri Efkar, Ikdam, and Cumhuriyet (with the largest circulation in Turkey). Tanin often reflected Government policy, whereas Ulus was the acknowledged semi-official mouthpiece. See R.O. Türkkan, "The Turkish Press," Middle Eastern Affairs, I (1950), 142-149.

would not forcibly oppose German aggression in the Balkans, he reported, but was ready to give assurances that Turkey need fear no problems on the Soviet frontier should she become involved in hostilities elsewhere. This pledge was reiterated by the new Russian Ambassador when he presented his credentials to President İnönü on 12 October. <sup>162</sup>

In announcing the Nazi entry into Rumania on the same day, Ankara radio warned that "... two million bayonets would bar the road through Turkey." <sup>163</sup> Reference was once again made to the value of Soviet friendship; one paper sanguinely reported that "... amicable relations between the two nations have resumed their former character." <sup>164</sup>

While this was an untenable view, certainly the mere absence of Soviet demands did much to strengthen the Turkish position in the Balkans. Within the month, however, Turkey was to be the subject of renewed bargaining between Molotov and von Ribbentrop.

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- <sup>162</sup> Sadak, op. cit., p. 455; Beloff, op. cit., p. 345. Ambassador Terentiev, recalled after the White Book disclosures and identified with Soviet Germanophilism (he was known by the Turks to have been a close friend of von Papen), never returned to Ankara. His successor, Sergei Vinogradov, had already made a favourable impression as Counsellor in the Soviet Embassy, Ankara. See The Times, 14 September 1940.
- <sup>163</sup> Cited in The New York Times, 12 October 1940.
- <sup>164</sup> Tan, 9 October 1940. Perhaps the fact that this paper's editors were later imprisoned for pro-communist activities indicates something of its viewpoint.

## vi

The Italian entry into Egypt during September aroused keen Turkish apprehension that the war might spread to the Levant. Late in the month a senior military delegation was dispatched from Ankara to Cairo, ostensibly to study air defence methods but doubtless primarily to assess British ability to defend Suez. The Turks had repeatedly been told that Allied military assistance could not become appreciable until the Italian threat were reduced. It was natural, therefore, that the Turkish General Staff sought an opportunity to measure the magnitude of that threat. Equally obvious was the effect that the delegation's report would have on the general Turkish attitude to the British connexion. Official British sources maintained that the Turks were favourably impressed and "... expressed their confidence in the eventual outcome of the war." <sup>165</sup> A less partial observer in Cairo, however, reported that the complexity of modern warfare had amazed the delegation and convinced them that their ill-equipped Republic must at all costs remain neutral. <sup>166</sup>

Turkish attention then shifted from Egypt to Greece, where the possibility of an Italian attack was increasing. The Fascists were convinced that no Turkish intervention on

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<sup>165</sup> Playfair, *op. cit.*, I, 215.

<sup>166</sup> Robert Parker, *Headquarters Budapest*, New York, Farrar and Rhinehart, 1944, p. 273. Henceforth, Budapest.

behalf of her neighbour would be forthcoming,<sup>167</sup> because of possible complications on the Soviet frontiers. The tenor of a final, eloquent appeal in the press for Balkan unity indicated the Turks were about to abandon all hopes of maintaining peace on their northern borders. The expected attack came on 28 October. Turkey was thus committed, by not only the tripartite Treaty but also the Balkan Entente, to come to the assistance of Greece.

A few hours after the invasion, Ankara announced that no Greek request for aid had been received.<sup>168</sup> A black-out was then imposed in principal towns and a state of siege proclaimed throughout Trakya, following which the Prime Minister broadcast that "... the situation is becoming increasingly grave. We are sure of our power ... and will not hesitate to defend ourselves."<sup>169</sup> Despite a chorus of sympathy in the press for the heroic Greek resistance, it was apparent the Government had decided not to intervene. The

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<sup>167</sup> Ciano Diaries, pp. 302-303. Washington had doubtless drawn the same conclusion from an interview with Ambassador Münir Ertegün (9 October), in which he remarked that the Axis advance into the Balkans could be stopped only by active Soviet support for a united Turko-Bulgar-Greek front. See W.L. Langer and S.E. Gleason, The Undeclared War, 1940-1941, New York, Harper, 1953, pp. 113-115. Henceforth, War.

<sup>168</sup> A contradictory account may be found in Parker, Budapest, p. 262, where reference is made to a frantic telephone appeal from Athens which was never returned. The present writer has found no substantiation for this claim.

<sup>169</sup> Bulletin, XVII (1940), 1465.



promise made to the British Ambassador that Turkey would abandon her neutrality should Italy move against Saloniki was perhaps nothing more than mere political chicanery.

Knatchbull-Hugessen at once reported that

...to require Turkish co-belligerency ... would prove a very negative advantage. It would have been impossible for Turkey to denude herself of defence to the extent of sending an expedition to Greece, nor would it have been possible ... to provide the necessary naval support or to participate in action in the Dodecanese. Nor was there yet sufficient progress in the building up of equipment for Turkey. 170

Ankara therefore was not requested to take immediate action; instead the Turks were asked to maintain as benevolent a neutrality as might be possible without provoking attack.

Obviously relieved, President İnönü expressed before the GNA on 1 November Turkish regret that Greece

... has been drawn into the present war. Together with our British ally, we are carefully studying the situation which has now ensued. We hope that the political principle [of harbîn haricinde] which has kept our country out of war ... will in the same manner maintain our security in the future.

Normal foreign relations would continue: the alliance with Britain was "firm and unshakeable" while the connexion with Russia, having undergone "a short period of crisis for which neither of us was responsible," was now once again "mutual

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<sup>170</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 167. This opinion was by no means universal in British circles, See Butler, op. cit., II, 372-374.

ly beneficent." Turkey would not permit her territory to be used by any of the belligerent powers; nevertheless, the President announced an increase in conscription, an expansion of air defences, and economic assistance to the Greek armed forces. 171

Ankara rightly believed that determined Greek resistance could achieve significant results, and realised that a strong Turkish stand would permit the transfer of Greek forces from the Thracian to the Albanian frontier. For this reason, it was announced (perhaps only as a bluff, but if so, a successful one) that Bulgarian belligerency would bring Turkey into the war; further, Greece was assured that her forces could safely be withdrawn from Thrace. This policy contributed significantly to the humiliating Fascist defeat, and served to harden Turkish opinion against the Axis. It has even been claimed that this defeat "... cost Hitler whatever chance he may have had of forcing the Turks into an agreement that would permit him to send troops through the Middle East against Suez." 172

# vii

The German plan was considered by Hitler and Mussolini in October, during two conferences in which Turkey was revealed as the key factor in the traditional Drang nach Os-

171 Inöndü, op. cit., pp. 349-350. For the favourable British response to this address, see House of Lords, Debates, 5th ser., vol. 117, coll. 587-588.

172 Langer, War, p. 115. In addition, Turkish policy materially assisted King Boris' desire to maintain Bulgarian neutrality. See Graves, op. cit., p. 252.

ten (now directed toward the Mosul oilfields).<sup>173</sup> In a subsequent meeting with von Papen and the Italian Foreign Minister, von Ribbentrop proposed the abolition of the Montreux Convention, the recognition of Soviet hegemony in the Black Sea, and a guarantee of free Russian passage through the Dardanelles.<sup>174</sup> These proposals were to be made acceptable to the Turks, perhaps by offering an Axis-Soviet guarantee of territorial integrity and a modification of the Bulgarian frontier in Turkey's favour. Turkey would then be detached from the Allied camp and bound to the Axis, a prospect considered quite feasible in view of her continuing neutrality contrary to obligations solemnly assumed in several treaties. Von Papen believed such a detachment could readily be effected "... in the course of the next few weeks."<sup>175</sup> The Turkish stage was thus set for the arrival in Berlin of Molotov, summoned "to divide the world."

The Foreign Commissar, however, ignored von Ribbentrop's grandiose divisions, and pressed concrete demands. He questioned whether revision of the Montreux régime would provide real rather than "paper" security to the USSR, and suggested

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<sup>173</sup> Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

<sup>174</sup> *Ciano Papers*, p. 406. In this way, Germany sought to avoid a Soviet attempt to establish bases in the Straits area.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407. The artful von Papen (*op. cit.*, p. 466) however, claims that a few days later he impressed on Hitler "the desirability of maintaining Turkish neutrality" in order to exclude Russia from the Balkans.

instead a Soviet "understanding" with Turkey and Bulgaria.<sup>176</sup> Von Ribbentrop countered with the suggestion of a quadripartite pact recognising that Russian territorial aspirations were directed south towards the Indian Ocean; replacing the Straits Convention with an agreement ensuring Soviet hegemony in the Black Sea; and aiming eventually at bringing Turkey into the Axis. The Soviet reply on 25 November accepted such a pact provided that the USSR secure a base within range of (in Rayon) the Straits; one for light land and naval forces on (am) the Straits by means of a long term lease; and Axis support to obtain these objectives.<sup>177</sup> On the same day, the Russians offered a mutual assistance pact to Bulgaria, and suggested that (in the event of joint military action against Turkey) Bulgaria should be awarded Trakya as far as the Straits littoral, which would be annexed by the USSR. King Boris, acquainted by the Nazis with Soviet demands for bases in Bulgaria, not only rejected this offer but later revealed it to the Turks.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> NSR, p. 245.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., pp. 250, 258-9. See also A.J. Toynbee, ed., Hitler's Europe, Oxford University Press for RIIA, 1954, pp. 386-391. Henceforth, Europe. There is also a report that Molotov at this time demanded the retrocession of Kars and Ardahan, a claim to be found in one source only. See Office of the U.S. Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Washington, USGPO, 1946, VI, 99. Henceforth, Nazi Conspiracy.

<sup>178</sup> Sokolnicki, op. cit., p. 21. The Soviet offer was revealed publicly by Professor Nihat Erim in Ulus, 11-12 April 1947. The Government announced, but has never executed, the publication of a White Book on the subject.

The Soviet reply in effect meant that the USSR would cooperate in dividing the world only at the price of possessing the Straits and dominating both Bulgaria and Turkey. That this price proved exorbitant to Hitler (his reaction was to plan Operation Barbarossa) was at first unknown to the Turks. In view of previous well-substantiated rumours concerning Russo-German understandings, it must be assumed that they "... had a fairly shrewd idea of the nature if not of the exact content of the talks between Molotov and [von] Ribbentrop." 179 A state of emergency was proclaimed throughout Turkey not long after Molotov left Berlin; air-raid alerts became nightly events in Istanbul and everywhere feverish defensive preparations were to be seen. Ankara radio broadcast that the international situation summoned the nation to total preparedness; the watchword for every Turk was to "... live in peace but be ready to fight in the morning." 180

#### C. The Struggle for Turkey, 1941

##### viii

The return of von Papen to Ankara heralded the beginning of an intensive struggle during 1941 for Turkish friendship. Nazi policy now sought to enlist Turkey in the containment of Russia as well as the defeat of the Allies. Von Papen launched a veritable peace offensive including the revelation

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179 Vere-Hodge, op. cit., p. 140.

180 28 November 1940, cited in Graves, op. cit., p. 252.

of Molotov's demands in Berlin.<sup>181</sup> With the help of the Japanese Ambassador he circulated rumours that the Allies had offered even more than this for Soviet coöperation. On their side the British continued actively to develop Anatolian aerodromes, to provide technical assistance, and to press for a strong Turkish stand in the Balkans. This pressure evoked yet another warning from Ankara to Sofia against permitting the entry of Nazi troops and perhaps also an offer of a firm alliance to Beograd.<sup>182</sup> Both Briton and Turk were apparently preparing for the German advance into Bulgaria, expected before spring.<sup>183</sup>

Turkey agreed that Greece should have first claim on military aid but were dissatisfied with British inability to arrange a longterm programme, even for the supply of aero-

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<sup>181</sup> A widely-quoted editorial in Critica Fascista (December 1940, cited in Dallin, op. cit., p. 309) indicated to the Turks an Axis dispute with the USSR concerning the Straits. Apparently the Nazis provided the Turks with tape-recordings of Molotov's insatiability in Berlin, although exactly when remains obscure. It was certainly no later than the end of February. See Sadak, op. cit., p. 457 and Abbas, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>182</sup> If it were indeed made, the offer was at any rate quickly rejected by the equivocating Prince Paul. See R.L. Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time, Harvard University Press, 1956, p. 198.

<sup>183</sup> This expectation was substantially correct. See Ulrich von Hassell, The von Hassell Diaries, 1938-1944, New York, Doubleday, 1947, p. 172. Details of Anglo-Turkish Balkan diplomacy during this period have not yet been revealed, even in the Churchill memoirs. See Churchill, op. cit., III, 10; and Butler, op. cit., II, 382-385.

planes long on order for the Turkish airforce. Because of this, several squadrons had been grounded and training had been seriously delayed. Yet the improvement of ports and aerodromes, so vital to British planning, had been considerably expedited in the hope that supplies would be increased. Above all, the Turks wanted anti-aircraft artillery; and were naturally hesitant to take any provocative action before their air defences were adequately equipped.

This problem, and the Nazi threat to Bulgaria, were the subject of a letter from the British Prime Minister to President İnönü on 31 January 1941. Churchill warned that from Bulgaria the Germans would menace all Trakya including İstanbul; would dominate the Straits and the important port of İzmir (Smyrna); and would soon "... complete the encirclement of Turkey in Europe on three sides." He "knew" that Turkey would under such circumstances declare war, but suggested this could be avoided by admitting ten Royal Air Force squadrons to Turkish bases. This would force the Germans to withdraw from Bulgaria, would menace the Rumanian oilfields, and would threaten Baku, thus forestalling possible Soviet aid to the Reich. Finally, Churchill pledged one hundred anti-aircraft guns as a step to a "... far more direct and immediate measure of aid." 184

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184 Churchill, op. cit., III, 33-35.

This letter was received with little enthusiasm by the Turks, who reportedly wanted ten times as many aircraft as had been offered, and who were unwilling to oppose a Nazi advance unless the Bulgarians themselves did so.<sup>185</sup> The most pro-Allied of the Istanbul dailies nevertheless warned that

... any power which penetrates our security zone [emniyet sahası] is giving notice of her intention not to respect Turkish integrity. Turkey will take all necessary measures before the enemy is actually at her gates.<sup>186</sup>

Whatever determination Ankara may have had to resist aggression vanished as the German threat increased and the prospect of Soviet support faded. A Tass report of 4 February denied a rumoured agreement by which the USSR would assist Turkey against a Nazi advance in the Balkans.

The decisive factor in deciding the Turkish attitude was undoubtedly the Nazi-Bulgarian agreement of 9 February, which laid the political bridge for the German crossing of the Danube. The Turkish press denounced this "infamous" agreement and proclaimed that "... the hour of decision had struck in the Balkans."<sup>187</sup> Such comment was no more representative of official policy than the broadcast on Ankara radio piously warning Germany against any attempt to relieve

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<sup>185</sup> Langer, War, p. 399. For Allied plans to reinforce the Turks "esprit de resistance" at this time, see Georges Catroux, Dans la Bataille de Méditerranée, Paris, Juillard, 1949, pp. 85-90.

<sup>186</sup> Yeni Sabah, 5 February 1941.

<sup>187</sup> Cumhuriyet, 12 February 1941.



the beleaguered Italians in Greece.

On 17 February, continuing Turko-Bulgarian conversations ended with the announcement of a Pact of Neutrality and Non-Aggression.<sup>188</sup> While Saracoğlu described it as a modest document designed to forestall new problems in the Balkans,<sup>189</sup> the treaty in fact marked Turkey's abdication of her leading position in that area. Von Papen had achieved his first major success; and by obtaining the assurance of unimpeded transit for the Wehrmacht, had administered a coup de grace to the Greek patriots. In exchange for their abandoning Thrace, he had doubtless assured the Turks their frontiers would be respected by the occupation forces.<sup>190</sup>

# ix

Despite attempts in the Turkish press to interpret the Pact as strengthening Bulgarian integrity,<sup>191</sup> the British naturally saw it as "a great disappointment" to their Balkan

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- <sup>188</sup> For text in English, see Bulletin, XVIII(1941), 204; in Turkish, see Ayın Tarihi, no. 87(February 1941), p.26.  
<sup>189</sup> A.K. Meram, İsmet İnönü ve İkinci Cihan Harbi, İstanbul, Ahmet Sait Matbaası, 1945, p. 64.  
<sup>190</sup> Von Papen (op. cit., p. 471) had recommended Hitler make such an assurance even before German forces entered Bulgaria. It might also be pointed out that the Turko-Bulgarian agreement was announced simultaneously in Ankara, Sofia, and Berlin - perhaps indicating tripartite architecture.  
<sup>191</sup> Yeni Sabah (18 February) claimed the Pact would bring Greek victory "... because the other way for the aggressor is now closed." Tan on 20 February described it as a reassurance to Bulgaria of Turkey's peaceful policy.

policy,<sup>192</sup> A last effort for unity was made by Foreign Minister Eden and General Dill, who visited Ankara at the end of February. Their objectives were to gain Turkish approval for preferential assistance to Greece (believed to be Hitler's next victim), to make a final attempt for Yugoslavian adherence to the Entente, and to bring the Turks into the war. The British arguments for and against this last aim now "... were fairly evenly balanced, but the feeling was that on the whole, it would be best if [Turkey] ... would agree to do so."<sup>193</sup> In reply, the Turks approved maximum aid for Greece, expressed readiness to press Yugoslavia once again, and undertook to enter the war "at some stage." Unless Turkey were directly attacked, they felt their belligerency would prove only a liability; they needed time for reëquipment, following which Turkey would "... make war at a moment favourable to the common cause, when her weight can be used with real effect."<sup>194</sup>

Eden and Dill parted from Saydam, Saracoğlu and Çakmak on the same day as Nazi troops entered Bulgaria. The adroit von Papen then presented to İnönü a personal letter from

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<sup>192</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 160. In deference to this view, Ankara apparently warned Sofia once again that Bulgaria's becoming soiled (entachée) by German entry would seriously affect Turkey's attitude.

<sup>193</sup> Playfair, op. cit., I, 376-377.

<sup>194</sup> Churchill, op. cit., III, 97, quoting Eden's report. For the platitudinous communiqué on his departure, see Ayın Tarihi, no. 87 (February 1941), pp. 62-63. For press approval of the visit, see Aksam and Yeni Sabah, 27 February.

Hitler (drafted in January at the Ambassador's suggestion), which warned rather colourfully of British designs against Turkey, denied any Nazi ambitions in the Straits area, and urged closer Turkish collaboration with the New Order. Most important of all was its pledge - given informally by von Papen a few weeks before - of respect for the Turko-Bulgarian frontier, at least sixty kilometers from which German forces would be halted. İnönü, gloated the Ambassador, was "... surprised and clearly grateful. The assurance ... enabled the President to justify, both to his own country and to the world, Turkey's policy of neutrality." <sup>195</sup> The Turks may have trusted in God, but they first tied their camel: on 13 March, it was announced the army had been fully mobilised and deployed in defensive positions between the Bulgarian frontier and the Straits.

Even with the Nazi advance and von Papen's astute diplomacy, the Turks clung tenaciously to their alliance with Britain. They were painfully aware of both their contractual obligations and their martial inability to fulfil these commitments in an adequate manner. This awareness was shared by British military strategists; General Wavell, for example, believed Turkey "... would be safer herself and could best help the British cause as an allied neutral, if such a con-

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<sup>195</sup> İnönü's reply in mid-March allegedly confirmed the German conviction that Greece and Yugoslavia could be subjugated without heeding Turkey. Von Papen, op. cit., p. 473.

tradiction in terms is permissible." <sup>196</sup> Yet there were on the political side possible advantages to be gained from Turkish belligerency. On the eve of the German descent upon Greece, Eden was prepared to request Ankara to declare war if this would encourage the wavering Yugoslavs to stand firm.

Thus, it was conceivable that the diplomatic benefits of such belligerency could outweigh the military liability of precipitating a Nazi assault on Turkey. This juxtaposition was discussed between Eden and Saracoğlu on 18 March at Nikosia. Here Saracoğlu declined a British request that he inform Yugoslavia a Nazi attack on that country would be regarded by the Turks as a casus belli. He agreed only to draft a note reaffirming Turkish determination to resist aggression and expressing the conviction that Yugoslavia would do the same. It has been suggested that even this pious note was never communicated to Beograd, due to the opposition of more cautious Ministers in the Turkish Cabinet. <sup>197</sup> On the other hand, a responsible Turkish diplomat refers to

... a last appeal to the only remaining country on which we hoped to be able to rely. Turkey proposed to the Yugoslav Government the adoption of a common decision and attitude in the face of the advancing danger. <sup>198</sup>

The final communiqué "affirmed once again the identity of

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<sup>196</sup> Collins, op. cit., p. 336.  
<sup>197</sup> Butler, op. cit., II, 449.  
<sup>198</sup> Açıkalin, op. cit., p. 483.

views" existing between Saracoğlu and Eden. <sup>199</sup> However identical these may have been, they never reached fruition: on 25 March Yugoslavia followed Bulgaria into the Axis orbit.

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On the same day, an official communiqué was issued in Moscow heralding a Turko-Soviet détente. Rumours of improving relations had been current since the signature of the Turko-Bulgarian treaty, which (according to these stories) had been encouraged by the Soviets to forestall a Nazi assault upon Turkey. Despite the Tass denials, <sup>200</sup> it seemed logical to assume the Kremlin favoured a sovereign Turkey as part of the southern cordon sanitaire; and certainly, the German advance in the Balkans did much to draw the USSR, Turkey, and Britain together.

On arrival at Ankara in February, Eden had summoned Ambassador Gripps from Moscow. With Vinogradov and the Turks, it seems likely that a serious tripartite exchange of views took place. <sup>201</sup> Soon after this meeting, Molotov secretly informed the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow that Turkey, whether neutral or belligerent, need fear no Soviet hostility. Fears of suffering the fate of Poland, expressed to Eden and

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<sup>199</sup> For text, see Aydın Tarihi, no. 88(March 1941), p. 40.

<sup>200</sup> For which, see above p. 78.

<sup>201</sup> The ever-present Gafencu (op. cit., p. 134) remarks that if ever there had been a moment for such an exchange, "it was in those days at Ankara."

Cripps a few days before, were thus somewhat eased.

After the Yugoslav capitulation and in response to continued Turkish appeals, the Soviets made public their pledge at Ankara on 22 March. This disclosure was followed in Moscow by the announcement referred to above, stating in part that

Should Turkey be attacked ... she would be able by virtue of the Turko-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact [of 1925] to rely on the complete understanding and neutrality of the USSR. In taking cognisance of this declaration the Turkish Government have ... declared that should the USSR find itself in a similar situation, it can rely on the same understanding and neutrality of Turkey. 202

Soviet promises were nevertheless no match for the Nazi forces now deployed a scant hundred miles from İstanbul. Von Papen made skilful use of arguments such as this, with the result that on 9 April Saracoğlu summoned the British, Greek, and Yugoslav representatives to his Ministry, where he informed them that Turkey would maintain her neutrality. By this time the barbarous "Operation Punishment" had begun, of which reports were arriving from the Turkish Embassy in Beograd. As Hitler said, the rape of Yugoslavia was "likely to deter Turkey" from joining the hard-pressed Allies. 203

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202 For English text, see Bulletin, XVIII(1941), 451-452; for Turkish, Ayın Tarihi, no. 88(March 1941), p. 49. For favourable press reaction, see Yeni Sabah, Vakit, and Ulus, of 26 March.

203 Nazi Conspiracy, IV, 275.

## xi

April and May of 1941 were perhaps the most critical months for Turkey during the entire war. The Turks were appalled by the speed of the Nazi advance, terrified by the collapse of the Balkans, and disenchanted by the failings of their British ally. By the end of May, the Germans were masters in Greece, Crete, Thrace, and the islands off the Dardanelles. The conquest of the Dodecanese followed swiftly; there were fears for Cyprus and Syria; rebellion was threatening in Iraq; and the Allies had suffered defeat in North Africa. Turkey was militarily isolated. Defensive measures were undertaken: the bridges across the Meriç (Maritsa) were destroyed; all railway connexion to Europe was severed; martial law was proclaimed in Trakya and in Anatolia as far as İzmir; and the evacuation of İstanbul was begun.<sup>204</sup> Turkey lived in terror of a German attack.

There are some grounds for believing such an attack was indeed considered in early 1941. According to these sources,<sup>205</sup> a Blitzkrieg assault was to be launched from the Bulgarian and Greek frontiers, following which Turkey, Iran, and Iraq were to be occupied. Whatever the veracity

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<sup>204</sup> By 13 April, 100,000 residents of the city had already departed for Anatolia. Bulletin, XVIII(1941), 530.

<sup>205</sup> Dallin, op. cit., p. 278; von Hassell, op. cit., p. 172.

of this claim, by 20 April the Führer had "ruled out the possibility of attempting the operation by force," in view of warnings that any attempted occupation of Anatolia would be "suicidal." <sup>206</sup> Preparations for Operation Barbarossa were by now well under way; Nazi military plans in the Middle East were therefore set aside, and von Papen summoned to Berlin for consultations. Hitler was obviously preparing to bargain with the Turks and - by a judicious mixture of bribery and intimidation - to lure them from their British ally.

Turkish diplomats were unaware that Nazi strategy would give them a few months' respite. Menemencioğlu remarked anxiously to the British Ambassador "... that he was rack-ing his brains to know how to get through till the autumn." <sup>207</sup> One solution apparently found was that of appeasement. In April, sixteen Nazi military transport vessels were permitted through the Straits, despite Turkish knowledge of their Greek destination, <sup>208</sup> and a new trade treaty signed with the Reich. In May, Vichy arms were transported on the Aleppo-

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<sup>206</sup> Ciano Papers, p. 435.

<sup>207</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>208</sup> This passage signalled a radical change in the Straits situation. During the initial phase of the war, the scrupulous Turkish adherence to the Montreux Convention was of decided advantage to the Allied cause. When the Axis conquered Greece and the Aegean islands, however, the situation was reversed: Britain was unable to exploit the right of free passage for merchantmen. As the Allies had done previously, the Axis could now send through the Straits arms and troops suitably disguised as civilian cargo. See Sokolnicki, op. cit., pp. 23-24.



Mosul railway through Turkey to the rebels in Iraq.

Amid great cordiality in the German press toward Turkey, and bearing a second personal letter from his Führer, von Papen returned to Ankara. Once again the Turks were enjoined to adhere to the New Order, but this time threats and demands were absent; instead, Germany would guarantee Turkish territorial integrity. Obviously impressed, İnönü replied that if the Reich pledged to conclude no agreements directed against Turkey, then Turkey would adopt a similar attitude. In his jubilation over the apparently successful interview, von Papen allegedly reported to Berlin that Turkish permission for the transit of Nazi arms to the rebels in Iraq could be considered as guaranteed. <sup>209</sup>

If this allegation be true, then the German Ambassador for once failed (as his British colleague frequently did) to take into account the propensity of Turkish statesmen for pledging in the vaguest terms concessions far in excess of those which they were actually prepared to grant. (In this, they were to achieve great proficiency by 1945.) Von

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<sup>209</sup> Madeleine and Michel Eristov, transl., La Politique Allemande, 1941-1943: Documents Secrets du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères d'Allemagne, II, Turquie, Paris, Dupont, 1946, p. 16. (A translation of the publication by the Arkhivnoe Upravlenie Ministerstva Inostranikh Del SSSR, Dokumenty Ministerstva Inostranikh Del Germanskaya Politika v. Turtsii, 1941-1943, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1946, which was not available to the present writer.) Such transit is to be distinguished in importance from the relatively minor movement of Vichy war material described above.

Ribbentrop proved equally credulous, and replied that in return for transit privileges, Turkey would be compensated by territorial rectification in Thrace and the Aegean. <sup>210</sup>

The bait was soon refused, and transit rights denied, on the grounds of conflict with Turkish obligations to Britain (who was kept fully informed of the negotiations). <sup>211</sup>

Von Papen's request had been the price of a Turko-German non-aggression pact, the possibility of which he had paraded before İnönü. With the failure of the Iraqi revolt, he was authorised to proceed with the negotiations despite the Turkish refusal, and even despite the Turks' insistence that any treaty contain a reservation in favour of existing obligations. <sup>212</sup> The Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression, announced on 18 June, provided in three short clauses (there were no secret protocols, much to Nazi disappointment) for reciprocal respect of territorial integrity, mutual consultation on common problems, and the recognition of existing contracts. <sup>213</sup> Notes exchanged at the same time

<sup>210</sup> Eristov, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>211</sup> The wily Turks were, however, prepared to give Knatchbull-Hugessen no more than a verbal assurance that German arms would be refused transit.

<sup>212</sup> It was von Papen who frequently dissuaded von Ribbentrop from coercive policies toward the Turks. German policy in Ankara thus was a great deal more flexible - and successful - than it doubtless would have been with a less masterful Ambassador at the post. See ibid., pp. 24-35. İnönü was sufficiently encouraged by this mildness to inform von Papen that Turkey was prepared to mediate between the two belligerent camps if Hitler would consider reasonable terms. (Von Papen, op. cit., p. 478.) This offer to negotiate an early peace, especially after the Soviet recovery in 1942, was to become a recurrent Turkish theme.

<sup>213</sup> For text in English, see J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in ...

foreshadowed closer economic relations between the two Powers.

Although the alliance with Britain thus took precedence, the Treaty was received in British non-governmental circles with great alarm. Few commentators seemed to realise that Whitehall was privy to its negotiation and that, considering the Anglo-Turkish position, it was by no means catastrophic. A Turko-German alliance had been prevented and the link with Britain retained; although at the price of a Turkish return from non-belligerency to a more genuine neutrality. <sup>214</sup>

In Germany the Treaty was heralded as a major triumph restoring traditional friendships. An important objective had been achieved: Turkey had been neutralised and Russia thus isolated on the eve of the eastern offensive. It is doubtful that by this time the Turks were ignorant of Nazi preparations; certainly they were well aware of the anti-Soviet implications of the Treaty. <sup>215</sup> It thus marked an

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<sup>214</sup> the Near and Middle East, Princeton, Nostrand, 1956, II, 231; and Franklin Watts, ed., Voices of History, New York, Gramercy, 1942-1946, I, 287-289 (where the appended Economic Note and Press Declaration are also given); in Turkish, see Türk-Alman Pakti, İstanbul, Nûmûne Matbaası, 1941 (where an apologia is provided). For a realistic defence of the Treaty, see Foreign Secretary Eden's announcement in House of Commons, Debates, 5th ser., vol. 372, coll. 975-976. For the critical American reaction, see Langer, War, pp. 512-513.

<sup>215</sup> Von Papen (op. cit., p. 478) had "hinted" at the coming offensive. For virulent Soviet accusations that the Treaty paved the way for Operation Barbarossa, see below, p. 94 and Dantsig, op. cit., pp. 283-285. Contrary to their previous practice, the Turks never informed the USSR of the negotiations leading to its signature.

important shift in German diplomacy. During the preceding two years, Berlin had sought only benevolent Turkish neutrality; but now von Papen could press for closer economic, political, and military ties between Berlin and Ankara, as for a corresponding deterioration in those with London.

In Turkish eyes, the Treaty was above all a political reflection of the military situation in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. Saracoğlu was merely acknowledging reality when he warned that henceforth the Turkish press must act "... in the spirit of friendship and mutual trust which characterises Turko-German relations." <sup>216</sup> Few, however, went so far as the Minister himself, who spoke of the Führer's

... beautiful words about this country ... and above all, about the great Atatürk. Hitler, who knows well how to appeal to the heart and conscience in these open declarations ... set the feeling of the Turkish nation in motion. <sup>217</sup>

Many Turks were not particularly proud of the Treaty, but at least they had the consolation of British admission that it "... was dictated by the necessity of circumstances and our desire to maintain peace. That was a unique demon-

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<sup>216</sup> Bulletin, XVIII(1941), 782. A noticeable change in tone occurred in the obedient press, and continued for approximately three months. Indicative of a restoration of the original situation was the suspension on 10 July 1941 of the daily İkdam for following the Foreign Minister's advice too enthusiastically.

<sup>217</sup> From a speech before the GNA on 25 June, in ibid., p. 933.

stration of confidence." 218 Two other recurring theses may also be found in the commentary appended to the official Turkish text: 219 Turko-German comradeship in World War I and the peaceful intent of the Treaty. The Turks saw it more as a declaration of their (perhaps readjusted) neutrality than as a passport to political servitude. They consoled themselves with the argument that it diverted the furor teutonicus from the Middle East to a more deserving recipient. Their relations with Britain became rather more delicate in succeeding months, but their conviction of an ultimate Allied triumph was virtually unshakeable. 220

In this light it was not difficult for Turkish statesmen to describe the Treaty as providing time for the improvement of national defences and the concomitant reduction of the risk of becoming a military liability when Britain was sorely tried elsewhere. Indeed, Turkey had no sensible alternative except to walk the diplomatic tight-rope between domination and disaster.

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218 From a speech by President İnönü on 4 July, in Bulletin, XVIII(1941), 934.

219 See note 213, pp. 88-89. See also Ayın Tarihi, no. 91 (June, 1941), pp. 69-81 for the debate in and unanimous approval by the GNA.

220 Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 171.

### III

#### TURKEY AND THE WIDENING CONFLICT

"The Germans in the Hospital and the Russians in the Grave"

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### III. TURKEY AND THE WIDENING CONFLICT

#### A. The War in the East

##### 1.

That Turkey, having greatly modified her previous policy of non-belligerency, remained on the tightrope of neutrality was due to more than diplomatic skill alone. First, as already stated, many Allied strategists viewed Turkish belligerency as a potential military liability. Secondly, possession of Anatolia was not essential to the Axis despite its strategic location (further enhanced by the assault on Russia). Hitler therefore contented himself with the Treaty of 17 June, all that could be obtained unless the imminent Russian campaign were to be jeopardised by a diversion of Nazi troops at least to the Turkish frontiers. By neutralising Turkey, he isolated the Soviet Union and gravely impeded possible Allied assistance to the Russians.

The Nazi thunderbolt struck eastward on 22 June 1941. On its eve (appropriately at midnight), von Papen was instructed to inform the Turkish Foreign Minister of the "reasons" for the attack; Hitler's broadcast of the following day strove to rally the Turks against the Soviet menace. He revealed that the Turks had been apprised of Molotov's demands, and described these as having been foiled by Ger-

man firmness. <sup>221</sup> Von Papen reported that Saracoğlu was delighted to have the weight of a possible Russo-German attack on the Straits lifted from his shoulders, and remarked in astonishment, "Ce n'est pas une guerre, c'est une croisade." Menemencioğlu shared this relief, yet feared the possible implications for Turkey if the Soviet Union were destroyed. <sup>222</sup>

On 23 June, the representatives of Germany, Britain, and the Soviet Union were summoned to the Foreign Ministry, and requested to respect continued Turkish neutrality. The unanimously favourable press reaction which greeted the public announcement of this continuance referred to the inevitability of what the Turks significantly called "the other war." <sup>223</sup> One foreign correspondent sensed the vital distinction when he speculated that if the Turks were to choose between a British or a German victory "... three-quarters would vote for Britain. If the same question were put regarding Germany and Russia, the vote would be unanimous in favour of Germany." <sup>224</sup> The Turks, to quote a proverb popular at the time, wanted "the Germans in the hospi-

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<sup>221</sup> The speech is partially reproduced in Gafencu, *op. cit.*, p. 110. Its success in exacerbating Turkish fears was considerable; henceforth during the war, despite Anglo-American mediation, there was to be a gaping divergence between Turkish attitudes to the Western Allies and to the USSR.

<sup>222</sup> Von Papen, *op. cit.*, p. 479; *Ayın Tarihi*, no. 91 (June, 1941), p. 256.

<sup>223</sup> See *Yeni Sabah*, *Vatan*, and *Cumhuriyet*, 23 June 1941.

<sup>224</sup> *The Times*, 24 June 1941.



tal and the Russians in the grave."

Despite a barrage of Tass denials, the Nazi revelations of Soviet ambitions were given spectacular treatment in Turkish newspapers. In the midst of the polemical fray, Maxim Litvinov suddenly reappeared to denounce "... the countries which still carried on a miserable and quasi-independent existence under the illusion of neutrality and faith in pacts with Hitler." <sup>225</sup> Prime Minister Saydam, replying to Soviet charges that the treaty with Germany betrayed complicity in the attack on Russia, described it before the GNA as

... a pillar of peace amid the storms of war. It benefits the Turkish people ... and has met with universal approval. The whole world is now bound by treaties and alliances to maintain peace with Turkey. 226

Von Papen lost no time in exploiting the dichotomous Turkish view of the war, and even suggested Ankara urge London to withhold aid to the USSR. His approach was simple enough: either the Reich or the Soviet Union must triumph; if the former, territorial and other advantages would accrue from Turkish adherence to the Axis; if the latter, Turkey

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<sup>225</sup> From a broadcast cited in Kirk, op. cit., p. 450. For Soviet views on what overnight became the "two-faced neutrality of the Turkish bourgeoisie," see Quaestor, "Turkey and the USSR," Labour Monthly, XXIV (May 1942), 154-157; and L. Rovinsky, "Documents on Turkey's Foreign Policy," New Times (Moscow), 15 August 1946, pp. 26-30.

<sup>226</sup> From a speech on 25 June, cited in von Papen, op. cit., p. 480. See also Ayın Tarihi, no. 92 (July 1941), p. 16.

would be destroyed. The Führer himself believed at this time that Turkey might be seduced "... by offering her some reward and by trading on her military sensibility." Although he suspected Turkish policy would be determined by the Russian campaign, it seemed expedient to offer "... a slight frontier rectification on Bulgarian territory ... some future concession, in Syria ... and an offer of German armoured forces." <sup>227</sup> Saydam allegedly retorted with a suggestion that Scotland be included as well. <sup>228</sup>

# 11

Allied diplomacy was now on the defensive in Ankara. Following the Anglo-Soviet Alliance Agreement of 12 July, Stalin was induced by Ambassador Cripps to favour İnönü on 28 July with a personal letter disclaiming any ambitions in the Straits area. Of greater impact on the Turks was the Russo-Polish boundary agreement two days later, which they interpreted as a possible abandonment of Soviet expansionist designs. Yet on 1 August an editorial in The Times, presuming the USSR would not "remain aloof from the future ordering of Europe," provoked blunt inquiries in the Turkish press whether the infamous Anglo-Russian Straits agreement of World War I had been renewed. To ease the tense situation, the two Allied Ambassadors in Ankara presented

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<sup>227</sup> Ciano Papers, pp. 449-450.

<sup>228</sup> Graves, op. cit., p. 252. For Turkish replies to Nazi offers, see also A.J. Fischer, "Turkish Foreign Policy," Free Europe, VI(October 1941), 249-250.

on 10 August identical notes pledging respect for the Montreux Convention, Turkey's territorial integrity, her desire to remain neutral, and assistance in the event of aggression. <sup>229</sup>

This declaration improved Anglo-Turkish relations to the extent that Ankara requested a resumption of secret staff talks, this time on Cyprus. When Nazi intelligence unearthed the plan, however, the Turks recanted; informal conversations were later held in Ankara. <sup>230</sup> It was there agreed that no German attack on Turkey was likely before spring; if it came, Britain was prepared to provide four divisions, four fighter squadrons, and perhaps additional forces. <sup>231</sup> The talks then followed their hackneyed course (with the British insisting on transport improvements and

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<sup>229</sup> For text, see The Times, 13 August; Ayın Tarihi, no. 93 (August 1941), p. 40. Reserved comment in the press (see Aksam, Ulus, and Yeni Sabah of 15 August) made the obvious point that the Declarations contained nothing new in view of existing treaties with Britain and Russia. For charges of a renewed Anglo-Russian Straits agreement, see Son Telegraf, 11 July, and Aksam, 12 July. These have never been proven, but the fact that Stalin suggested to Eden Turkey should be given the Dodecanese, part of northern Syria, and districts in Bulgaria seems to indicate some expected "concession" on the part of the Turks. See Churchill, op. cit., III, 628, and Eristov, op. cit., pp. 51-59. On the other hand, Allied sources maintain the Turks were kept fully informed of all Anglo-Soviet conversations affecting their interests. See Kirk, op. cit., p. 452. A conclusion here must await publication of relevant documents.

<sup>230</sup> Claude Auchinleck, "Operations in the Middle East, 5 July 1941 - 31 October 1941," London Gazette (Supplement), 37695 (21 August 1946), pp. 4218-4219.

<sup>231</sup> For details, see Playfair, op. cit., II, 251.

the Turks on arms deliveries <sup>232</sup>) and concluded on a cordial note. Relations with Britain were nevertheless to suffer another mild setback in the last week of August.

The Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran provoked virtually unanimous criticism in the Turkish press. Even if that country had complied with the Allies' demand for the expulsion of Axis personnel, wrote one commentator, they would still have attacked in order to obtain oil resources and a secure supply route to the USSR. <sup>233</sup> Their action against a friendly neighbour was therefore "... incompatible with the ideals of right and justice." <sup>234</sup> Most important of all, Turkey now faced the USSR on the east as well as the north, and doubtless feared the impact of the Soviet presence in Persian Kurdistan on the tribesmen of Anatolia.

### 111

Turkish reaction to the invasion of Iran was in marked contrast to the favourable impression made by Allied activities in Iraq and Syria. The growth of Axis sympathies in Baghdad had increasingly perturbed the Turks, who were dependent upon Iraqi fields for their petroleum supplies. Ironically, they themselves were partially responsible for this growth, in view of the advice given the Iraqi Foreign Minister during his visit to Ankara in June 1940. Saracoğlu's

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<sup>232</sup> Transport problems had indeed become pressing. With the Aegean in Axis hands, only Mersin and Iskenderun (with neither adequate port nor railway facilities) could receive Allied supplies.

<sup>233</sup> Necmeddin Sadak in Ulus, 24 August 1941.

<sup>234</sup> Ankara radio, cited in Bulletin, XIX(1942), 783.

recommendation that Baghdad adopt a watchful neutrality and his reluctance at the time to sever diplomatic relations with Italy apparently confirmed the Rashid 'Ali Government in their decision to temporise with the British.<sup>235</sup> When, in December 1940 the Turks learned of the impending Iraqi recognition of Germany, however, they became alarmed: their original advice had been tendered in the interests of Middle Eastern stability, while recent Nazi pandering to Arab aspirations showed little promise of tranquillity.

The coup d'état of 2 May 1941 and subsequent Anglo-Iraqi hostilities canalised Turkish fears into an official offer on 4 May to mediate the dispute. Press comment (at a time when Germany was invading the Balkans, menacing Egypt, and Vichy was controlling Syria) referred darkly to the dangers of an Axis wedge to the south, blocking British military aid via the Persian Gulf.<sup>236</sup> The Baghdad régime announced acceptance of the Turkish offer and dispatched to Ankara the Minister of Justice, who (upon his arrival on 8 May) declared that Iraq sought Turkish advice on her relations with Britain. After several conferences with Saracoğlu he nevertheless retained demands unacceptable to London and therefore began talks with von Papen - perhaps his primary reason for visiting Ankara in the first place. Bri-

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<sup>235</sup> Majid Khadduri, Independent Iraq, Oxford University Press, 1951, p. 163. For the communiqué ending the visit, see Ayın Tarihi, no. 79 (June 1940), p. 30.

<sup>236</sup> Aksam, 5 May; Ulus, 7 May 1941.

tain thereupon rejected the Turkish offer and proceeded to suppress the revolt, to the obvious satisfaction of the Turks.

It was at this time that von Papen requested transit privileges for German arms to Iraq.<sup>237</sup> When this proved unsuccessful, an attempt to supply the rebels was made by way of the Aleppo-Mosul railway (passing in part through Turkey). Several trainloads of arms did indeed pass along this route, defended by the Turks against British protest in terms of the Franco-Turkish Agreement of 1921.<sup>238</sup> In addition, the Turks after a long delaying action acceded to Nazi requests for the transshipment of aviation petrol to Syria, but refused passage for other goods more easily classified as war materiel. They then massed large troop concentrations along the southern border, doubtless to avoid further pressure on their neutrality.

The Anglo-Free French invasion of the Levant was warmly welcomed by the Turkish Government, to whom a joint occupation of northern Syrian aerodromes was suggested by the British Ambassador.<sup>239</sup> On 2 June, Ankara rejected this request but refused also to permit the transit of Vichy

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<sup>237</sup> See above, p. 87.

<sup>238</sup> Which provided for military transport facilities. For details, see Kirk, op. cit., p. 93; and the report of the Axis agent responsible: Otto Rahn, Ruheloses Leben, Dusseldorf, Diederichs Verlag, 1949, pp. 155-157.

<sup>239</sup> Playfair, op. cit., II, 203. For a popular account of Allied operations, see Christopher Buckley, Five Ventures: Iraq, Syria, Persia, Madagascar, Dodecanese, London, HMSO, 1954.

forces sent from France by rail. This refusal was repeated during the visit on 25 June of the Vichy Secretary of State to Ankara. An attempt was then made to send forces by sea; a French transport vessel subsequently set out from Salonika, following the Turkish coast to evade interception. Although it was sunk in Antalya harbour by British aircraft; the Turks did not go through even the motions of a formal protest against this territorial violation. Rather, they greeted enthusiastically the Levant Armistice Convention of 14 July, which brought them once again into direct contact with the Allies and ended months of anxiety along the southern borders.

Turkish policy during these anxious months had been determined by three distinct interests. Initially there was the desire not to antagonise the Iraqi rebels to the extent that the British supply route might be impaired. Later there was the need for elasticity in the face of strong Axis pressure, particularly from Germany. With von Papen the Turks temporised, made minor concessions, and finally signed the Treaty of 17 June. With the Vichy régime, they could be (and displaying their characteristic realism, were) more firm.<sup>240</sup> Finally, there was the problem of retaining the

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<sup>240</sup> This distinction may have been seen in the remark of a Turkish diplomat in Washington to the effect that Turkey could refuse transit privileges to France but could resist German pressure only at her peril. See W.D. Leahy, I Was There, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1950, p. 42.

connexion with Britain. Turkish diplomacy in the Middle East during May and June 1941, despite considerations arising from the first two factors, contributed signally to the restoration of the Allied position in both Iraq and Syria.

#### B. The Economics of Neutrality

##### iv

The British Foreign Office had appraised the Turko-German Treaty as the least of possible evils, and felt that any public loss of faith in Turkish loyalty would merely serve to drive the Republic into Axis arms. The American State Department, on the other hand, had contended that military aid should be curtailed and a guarantee obtained to ensure fulfilment of chromium shipments contracted by the Turks.<sup>241</sup> Yet both the British and the American Ambassadors in Ankara described the decision temporarily to suspend arms assistance as "... reducing Turkish confidence in support by the democratic cause."<sup>242</sup> There followed a warm debate between Washington and the U.S. Embassy regarding the exact degree of Turkish culpability. The State Department was finally drawn to the British view, and agreed with some misgivings to the diversion of British lend-lease aid to the Republic; as for direct American assist-

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<sup>241</sup> See below, p. 107.

<sup>242</sup> Telegram of 7 July 1941, in Langer, War, p. 513.



ance, however, Turkey was to be placed in the same category as the Latin American states. The burden of meeting Turkish military needs thus fell to the British.

This dispute serves to underline the intimate connexion, evident throughout the war, between Allied aid, Turkish trade patterns, and political pressures on the Republic. Turkish diplomacy since 1939 was greatly influenced by the need to find not only export markets but also sources of industrial and military equipment. It was not unnatural that relations with the two belligerent camps were conditioned by their respective abilities to satisfy these needs. At the same time, the most characteristic feature of Allied (as far as it concerned Turkey mainly British, but including French until 1940, and American after 1941) foreign economic policy was the attempt to wean neutral states from possible dependence on the Axis economy. Commercial inducement and preëemptive purchase thus replaced the World War I pattern of economic coercion and blockade. This policy delighted the Turks, who during 1939 (when the Nazi menace was more remote) used it to move toward economic freedom from Germany. They refused to renew the Turko-German trade treaty which expired on 31 August 1939 and partially implemented a British programme to deny essential imports to the Reich; in return, Ankara expected London and Paris not only to purchase Turkish export goods but also to provide the armaments prom-

ised previously by Berlin.

After a period of what may best be described as pazarlık (the fine Turkish art of bargaining), a group of tripartite economic agreements was signed in Paris on 8 January 1940.<sup>243</sup> These provided for various loans and credits, Allied purchase of certain agricultural exports for the duration of the war, and - most importantly - for the Allied right to all Turkish chromium production during the next two years. Five days later, Tan reported the opening in Ankara of an Anglo-French office to preëempt all products destined for the Reich<sup>244</sup>; announcements of large orders followed. The United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, a preëemptive purchasing organ established in April, thereafter did much to stimulate Anglo-Turkish trade. Other developments, such as payments difficulties with Germany, the Allied blockade in Europe, and the transfer of Turkish contracts from Nazi to British firms<sup>245</sup>, reinforced the trend. As a result, Turkish shipments to the Reich fell sharply - reportedly from fifty to a mere two per cent of total exports.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> See above, p. 42.

<sup>244</sup> Tan, 13 January 1940.

<sup>245</sup> Officially for "security reasons" and thus indicative of the close connexion between Turkish economic and foreign policy. See Parker and Smith, op. cit., pp. 144-146.

<sup>246</sup> In the 1939-1940 period. There are glaring divergencies in Turkish trade statistics at this time: these (from Bulletin, XIX(1942), 779) may be somewhat exaggerated.

## v

This situation was transformed by the fall of France and the entry of Italy into the war. Preemptive purchasing continued with moderate success and measurable quantities of war materièl reached Turkey, despite other urgent demands on the overtaxed British and the interruption in sea communications. Yet within a week the repercussions were clear: on 18 June 1940 lengthy Turko-German negotiations resulted in a new trade agreement. Valid for one year and valued at TL21.4 million, it provided for the exchange of Turkish agricultural products and German industrial equipment. A Nazi request that chromium be included was rejected by the Turks, on the grounds the ore was reserved for the repayment of British credits. (It was becoming obvious, however, that the Allies had been misguided in limiting their chrome contract to two years when the Turks had initially offered a three year option). The hard-bargaining Turks also thwarted German attempts to secure an advantageous exchange rate and successfully insisted that the Reich provide transport for both nations' goods.

To counteract Nazi economic inroads, London in July submitted to Ankara an extensive programme for increased trade. On 22 November a new Anglo-Turkish financial agreement was signed, providing for partial payment in gold for British purchases; another on 5 December granted the Turks

a major price increase for their chrome shipments. As if in compensation for this concession, Ankara temporarily suspended all exports to the Reich on the pretext of German inability to deliver contracted supplies on schedule.

By the summer of 1941, it was possible to estimate roughly the success of Anglo-Turkish efforts to diminish German economic influence. Trade between the Reich and the Republic, although still considerable, was far below prewar levels: Britain had very nearly replaced Germany as the primary customer.<sup>247</sup> The Nazi share of total Turkish trade had fallen from its prewar half to a mere ten per cent, although a suspicious increase in Turkish exports to Germany's vassals rendered this figure somewhat questionable. Transport constituted a major difficulty for the Nazis, as the Turks had severed the railway link between Istanbul and Sofia during the Greek campaign. To remedy this problem Carl Clodius (Chief of the German Foreign Trade Office) had visited Ankara, but discussions collapsed after the Turks refused to permit Nazi reconstruction of roads, railways, and bridges across Trakya. This rejection was doubtless prompted by captured documents, thoughtfully presented by the Soviets, indicating German plans to invade Turkey once the necessary facilities had been constructed.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Figures are inconsistent here. Toynbee (Neutrals, p. 31) claims British preëminence; whereas in Bulletin, XIX (1942), 783, calculations indicate a slight German lead.

<sup>248</sup> For the grandiose "Plan Orient", see above pp. 85-86 and Churchill, op. cit., III, 553, 658.

In September 1941, Dr. Clodius returned to Ankara. By this time the Turks were bearing the full pressure of Nazi presence in the Balkans; British inability to meet arms requirements; the closure of the Mediterranean; a general collapse in foreign trade <sup>249</sup>; and growing dependence on the Reich to ease acute domestic shortages of industrial and pharmaceutical products. Using these pressures to redirect Turkish chromium shipments to their prewar destination, Clodius first sought the transfer to Germany of that portion of production originally intended for France. This the Turks refused to do, but after protracted negotiations they agreed to supply ninety thousand tons annually for the two years following expiry of the British agreement.

The chrome clause was the most important item in the "Clodius Agreement" signed on 9 October 1941. It provided for the exchange, valued at TL100 million, of Turkish raw materials and agricultural products for German industrial, military, and pharmaceutical goods during the eighteen months ending 31 March 1943. The Turks retained their wildly unrealistic currency conversion rate, forced the Germans to provide all transport at their own expense, and predicated

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<sup>249</sup> In 1941, Turkish imports were only 37, and exports 28, per cent of 1938 levels. E.R. Lingeman, Turkey: Economic and Commercial Conditions, London, HMSO, 1948, p. 41. For a contemporary account of Turkey at this critical time, see "Turkey in the Balance," The Economist, CXLI (27 September 1941), 374-375.

the first chrome shipment on the prior delivery of arms valued at TL18 million. In addition, the Reich was compelled to fulfil before January its obligations in several prewar contracts and thereafter to provide military supplies in exact equivalent to chromium exports. <sup>250</sup>

## vi

Thus did Turkey at a critical time divide her strategic exports between the two warring camps - an allocation readily defensible in terms of realism and self-interest. As the Nazis were more concerned with strategic minerals than economic warfare, the Clodius Agreement was obviously to their advantage despite its costly price. Britain nevertheless adopted a sympathetic attitude, in recognition of the Turkish need to temporise and in the hope of an improvement in the political climate by 1943. The British Ambassador, in fact, interpreted the Agreement as a defeat for the Axis; his American colleague drew quite the opposite initial conclusion. <sup>251</sup> London eventually obtained agreement in Washington that everything possible be done to hold Turkey, but even then differences over procedure continued. The State Department insisted that American aid be delivered directly, while the Foreign Office argued that Turkish needs be viewed

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<sup>250</sup> For details of the agreement, see Ayın Tarihi, no. 95 (October 1941), p. 47. For press reaction, emphasising earlier British refusal of an (expensive) three year chrome contract, see Yeni Sabah, 9 October, and Aksam, 10 October 1941.

<sup>251</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 172.

in the larger Middle Eastern context in which British predominance should be strengthened. Secretary of State Hull finally conceded that American assistance be channelled so as to "... give the British the maximum of influence in regard to Turkey." 252

The United States and Britain then began to concert their efforts to reduce Turkish economic dependence on the Axis. American entry into the war vastly increased the purchasing programme of the Allied Preemption Committee: during the first three months of 1942 plans were formulated for a major effort to deprive Germany of essential imports. In February, for example, Washington undertook to buy Turkey's entire chromium output for 1942. (It was vital that none should remain in Turkey on 8 January 1943 when the British would be replaced by the German agreement.) Transportation and other unfavourable conditions notwithstanding, the preemption programme achieved a limited success. 253 Exports to Germany were appreciably reduced, but it proved impossible fully to undermine the Clodius Agreement.

The Turks were the real beneficiaries of Allied-Axis economic competition, not only because of greatly inflated prices but also because they often secured payment - at an

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252 A memorandum of 22 October 1941, in Langer, War, p. 801. The first American aid shipment had reached Turkey in July.

253 Turkish imports (exclusive of military aid) from the sterling area, for example, rose from £3.6 to £15 million between the first halves, 1940 and 1942. Bulletin, XIX (1942), 784.

exceedingly favourable exchange rate - in goods or in gold. Turkey was declared eligible for American Lend-Lease on 7 November and formally granted such aid on 3 December 1941. An Anglo-American Supply Committee was established in Ankara to coördinate military assistance, the importance of which was indicated by the appointment in January of Laurence Steinhardt (formerly in Moscow) as Ambassador to Turkey. Five months later he reported that the Turks were "... contrasting the unfulfilled German promises of armaments with our steadily increasing deliveries ... which have materially strengthened our position here." <sup>254</sup>

In view of the almost complete Nazi monopoly of Turkish trade, however, this comment was rather optimistic. In the first half of 1942, Turkey concluded trade treaties with several German allies including Italy. On 2 June, a new agreement was signed with the Reich providing for the exchange of goods valued at TL55 million, which began two weeks later when railway links with Europe were finally reopened. With this restriction on Nazi commercial activity removed, the way was paved for more expeditious implementation of the Clodius Agreement.

### C. The Turkish Pendulum

vii

Clodius left Ankara in October 1941 convinced the Turks

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<sup>254</sup> From a report in May, in R.E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, New York, Harper, 1948, p. 553.



hoped for a compromise peace, " ... an exhausted Russia, and a Europe in which a balance of power remains between Britain and Germany." <sup>255</sup> The entry into the war of the United States and Japan greatly disheartened them, for they believed it diminished the prospect of a negotiated settlement. <sup>256</sup> Their fears of the USSR increased, forcing repeated assurances from Britain that her Soviet ally (needful of a strong and independent Turkey) supported the Turkish desire to remain neutral.

Turko-Soviet relations were not much improved by these gestures, nor by several conciliatory Turkish moves. On 23 January 1942, an Axis espionage ring linked to the German News Agency was broken; simultaneously, the importation of Nazi propaganda journals in Russian and Turkish was prohibited. Anglo-Turkish relations, however, regained something of their former cordiality. The first halkevi (people's house) outside Turkey was opened in London, where a new Ambassador - the former Prime Minister Rauf Orbay - replaced Dr. Aras. Ties with both Russia and Britain were nevertheless strained by numerous indiscretions such as the remark by Ambassador Cripps in Moscow that the USSR would "... end the war sitting in Berlin." <sup>257</sup> It was at this

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<sup>255</sup> Cited in Ciano Diaries, p. 295.

<sup>256</sup> Report of 5 January 1942 by von Papen, in Eristov, op. cit., pp. 51-52. For the Ambassador's hope of exploiting an unsuccessful offer of mediation to obtain Turkish adherence to the Axis, see von Hassell, op. cit., p. 248.

<sup>257</sup> The Times, 10 and 13 February 1942.

time that von Papen sanguinely reported that Menemencioğlu had asked the Cabinet for authority to explore ways by which Turko-German negotiations might be improved. <sup>258</sup>

Alleged Soviet complicity in the attempted assassination on 24 February of von Papen strained relations with Russia to the breaking point. Prime Minister Saydam immediately announced his Government would not permit Turkey to become a haven for assassins, and ordered a full investigation regardless of the political considerations. (The Gestapo, the NKVD, and the British Secret Service all were suspected.) Subsequent arrests led to police raids on Soviet non-diplomatic offices in Ankara and the virtual circumvallation of the Consulate in İstanbul. A diplomatic rupture was averted only when the Russians sourly delivered up a trade official and an alleged secret agent; both accused of complicity in the bomb outrage. Several other Turkish prisoners confessed to being agents provocateurs trained by Soviet consular officials in the indelicate art of assassination. The Embassy in Ankara vehemently denied the whole affair, and pressed for release of the suspects; the Soviet press fulminated against " ... German provocateurs before the Turkish court." <sup>259</sup> Turkish editors were restrained from reciprocal polemics, but Ambassador Aktay

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<sup>259</sup> Report of 16 February 1942, in Eristov, op. cit., p. 65. Pravda, 5 April 1942.

was recalled from Moscow.

The trial concluded on 17 June with severe sentences for both Soviet and Turkish prisoners. The judgement stated that despite the lack of material evidence the Court was convinced of Soviet inspiration in the unsuccessful plot.<sup>260</sup> During the course of the trial, one witness revealed its chief aim to have been a major incident in Turko-German relations. Perhaps the Soviets were aiming even as high as the diversion of the scheduled Nazi spring offensive. In protest against what the Russian press denounced as the Ankara trial comedy, the Soviet Ambassador was recalled on 27 June. The Turks, anxious to improve relations, thereafter made full use of the good offices of Anglo-American diplomats, equally interested in a Turko-Soviet détente. On 1 July Cevat Açıkalın, third in rank at the Foreign Ministry, was posted as Ambassador to Kuibyshev.

#### viii

Despite his reports on the anti-Soviet mood in Ankara, von Papen seems never to have obtained any binding commitments from Turkey's leaders. He, like his British opposite, was repeatedly put off with vague arguments for absolute neutrality unless Turkish sovereignty were threatened. During the spring and summer of 1942, the Turkish pendulum swung to and fro constantly, maintaining a delicate balance between the belligerent blocs and even between the Western

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<sup>260</sup> For details, see Ayın Tarihi, no. 104(June 1942), pp. 57-59.

Allies and the USSR. Its arc not infrequently was a sensitive index of the military situation, particularly on the Eastern front; the impressive Nazi spring offensive, for example, brought in February and March Turkish overtures for "enlarging the scope" of relations with Germany and for the renewal of arms deliveries.<sup>261</sup> The domestic press reflected faithfully the official equilibrium, while delegations were sent abroad with studied impartiality. As İnönü said,

The policy of neutrality is not an easy one, but we are doing our best ... to maintain our relationships with the belligerents, and we mean to carry out those relations, based on the agreements we have signed, with ... loyalty. 262

Even Turkish loyalties were thus divided. Nazi dissatisfaction with this situation, especially during the zenith of their power in the spring of 1942, was shown by the bitter complaint of Dr. Goebbels on 19 March that "... Ankara doubtless has the intention of deciding in favour of one side or the other only when victory is absolutely sure."<sup>263</sup>

At this time, the Reich tried unsuccessfully to force a Turkish decision. Arms shipments were suspended; military manoeuvres were ominously held in Thrace; and Bulgaria was prodded into occupation of the no-man's land pledged by Hitler

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<sup>261</sup> See Eristov, op. cit., pp. 64, 71-75.

<sup>262</sup> From a speech at Izmir, 19 March, in Bulletin, XIX(1942), 312.

<sup>263</sup> L.B. Lochner, ed., The Goebbels Diaries, 1942-1943, New York, Doubleday, 1948, p. 128.

in his letter to İnönü. Rumours of a German attack were current in March, but in spite of support for such a project among the warmongers in Berlin, no concentration of forces along the Meriç (Maritsa) could be detected.

The climax to the months of crisis came in June when the Nazis entered both Egypt and the Caucasus. Turkey's political position was now alarmingly delicate and her impartial neutrality gravely imperilled. Now threatened from north, east, and south, the Republic was forced to make economic concessions to the Reich <sup>264</sup> and to adopt a more cautious policy toward the Allies. A British request for the closure of German consulates in Adana, Antakya, and İskenderun, for example, was rejected as ostentatiously as possible. <sup>265</sup>

A further blow struck Ankara on 8 July, when the death of Refik Saydam was announced. This loss nevertheless did not foreshadow a change in Turkish foreign policy, as the Prime Minister had concerned himself with domestic issues, leaving external affairs in the hands of Saracoğlu, Menemcioglu, and - above all - of İnönü. İsmet Paşa was known in Ankara diplomatic circles to be inflexible, exceedingly re-

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<sup>264</sup> See above, p. 109. Menemencioğlu in August was reported to believe Rommel would soon move against Suez, Syria, and Cyprus. See Eristov, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>265</sup> All three were "hotbeds of espionage," according to General Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, London, Hutchinson, 1950, p. 123. Henceforth, Overseas.

served, and an intense nationalist. His authority was believed to derive mainly from his prestige as Atatürk's colleague and his distinguished military record. He was as representative of the Ottoman élite as Şükrü Saracoğlu, the new Prime Minister, was not. Şükrü Bey was typical of the New Turkey, from peasant stock and proud of it. After receiving an education in Switzerland, he became a career politician; by the time of his appointment to the Foreign Ministry, he had held nearly every other portfolio. By nature modern, cosmopolitan, and democratic, he possessed outstanding intellectual ability. His stewardship of Turkish foreign policy had been masterful and his appreciation of strategic realities discerning. Saracoğlu retained this stewardship until 13 August, when Numan Menemencioğlu relinquished the Secretaryship-General of the Ministry to assume the Cabinet portfolio. Numan Bey, although of aristocratic background, also owed his position entirely to his own abilities which "... made him irreplaceable in these troubled times." 266

In his first major address, the new Prime Minister described Turkish policy as one of continuity and stability. Absolute neutrality would be maintained, and no territorial claims advanced. The alliance with Britain and the pact

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266 Cretzianu, op. cit., p. 112. For brief sketches in English of the three leaders, see P.F. Drucker, "Turkey and the Balance of Power," Atlantic Monthly, CLXVII (April 1941), 462-469; and Derek Patmore, "Turkey on the ... Path of Neutrality," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, XXXI (1944), 285.

with Germany demonstrated "equal friendship for both camps."

To live as a strong entity, on which we are concentrating all our attention, to see our army grow stronger every day, will remain the aim for us all ... Turkey could not [in the past] and cannot in the future safeguard her position by a passive neutralism. Turkish neutrality is the outcome of a system of general policy which is clear and reassuring-  
ly simple in every respect. 267

The Turkish Ambassador to Britain repeated these reassurances in a speech before a Birmingham audience. Although Turkey was twice as strong as a year ago, one false step would be ruinous; he therefore advised the British not to be misled by Nazi attempts to divide the two countries. 268

# ix

The timeliness of this advice was shown by the very success of the German efforts described by the Ambassador in his own country. One aspect of these was the raucous revelation of Soviet designs upon the Straits. 269 Another was the exploitation of pan-Turkist sentiment following the Nazi attack on Russia.

Romantic ideals of all-Turk unity may be traced back to the days of Enver Paşa, before the establishment of Kemalism. Following the revolution, political aspects of the

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267 From a speech to the GNA, 5 August, in Bulletin, XIX (1942), 767. İnönü revealed in 1945 that during these critical days Turkish troops had been concentrated along the Black Sea Coast and the Soviet frontier to meet a possible Nazi attack from the south.

268 From a speech in ibid., p. 673.

269 See above, p. 94.

Turkish unity movement faded in the glow of Turko-Soviet friendship (and later in the shadow of Soviet power). A cultural movement nevertheless remained, for it was inconsistent with neither the programme of Westernisation nor the Kemalist emphasis on national self-consciousness. Pan-Turkism thus left its mark on the intellectual life of the Republic, even though its political aim "... became a secretly cherished goal, a force which could possibly be of use in the future." 270

This situation changed radically after the eastern invasion. In July 1941 Zeki Velidi Toğan, a University of İstanbul history professor long active in pan-Turkist circles, established a secret society whose aims were to organise Turkic prisoners in Nazi hands, to spread Turanist propaganda, ultimately to replace the Ankara régime with a racist government, and to unite all Turks in one racially pure state. Toğan's associate, Reha Oğuz Türkkan, began at the same time to reissue Bozkurt, (Grey Wolf), a racist magazine previously suppressed. Yet another group published

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270 C.W. Hostler, Turkism and the Soviets, London, Allen and Unwin, 1957, p. 169. See by the same author "Trends in Pan-Turanism," Middle Eastern Affairs, III(1952), 3-13; The Turks of the World and their Unifying Objectives, Washington, Georgetown University, 1955 (unpublished dissertation); and "The Turks and Soviet Central Asia," The Middle East Journal, XII(1958), 261-269. All citations henceforth refer to the first mentioned. See also Alexandre Henderson, "The Pan-Turanian Myth in Turkey Today," Asiatic Review, XLI(1945), 88-92; John Parker, "Turkey's International Relations," Political Quarterly, XV(1944), 148-158.



Tanrıdağ (Holy Mountain) and Orhun, both of which Toğan attacked as Fascist <sup>271</sup>; while the expatriate Turkish Cultural Union proceeded to hold meetings in İstanbul and put out Türk Amacı (The Turkish Goal). Numerous other tracts appeared suddenly and vanished as swiftly; youth organisations were formed to lead brief, unpleasant lives until their suppression by the Government.

Official attitudes to the pan-Turkist recrudescence were exceedingly equivocal, and seemed to be dictated by a combination of sympathetic fascination, considerations of internal order, and the exigencies of the international situation. Much remains to be disclosed, as only portions of the relevant Turko-German diplomatic conversations have yet been published. Those which have appeared, while probably authentic and indicative of sympathies among certain high officials in Ankara, are tendentious and cannot be said to reflect government policy.

As early as 5 August, Ambassador Gerede in Berlin hinted at the desirability of an independent Turko-Tatar state in the Caucasus, to which the Turkish Republic might well act as political and cultural adviser. A report of the same date from von Papen revealed support for such a scheme among leading officials, to whom Marshal Çakmak was later

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<sup>271</sup> See Türkkan, op. cit., p. 144.

added.<sup>272</sup> Pan-Turkist sympathies seemed to be most prevalent in military circles, perhaps because of the popular conviction there that Russia would soon be defeated. The Generals Ali Fuad, Azim Gündüz, and Hüsnü Erkilet (a propagandist undoubtedly in the pay of the Nazis) all expressed themselves as personally interested in the question of the Soviet Turks' future, although none was permitted to offer official support. As early as November, nevertheless, the Government permitted the departure of emigrés from the USSR to join special Turko-Tatar brigades in the Wehrmacht.

Turkish statesmen were apparently far more cautious than their military colleagues, yet even they were much impressed by the German advance in 1942. In May it was intimated that should this operation progress successfully, Turkish personnel might be given leave to assist in the administration of conquered Turkic territories.<sup>273</sup> Throughout the summer, Ankara prepared for a possible Soviet defeat by continuous consultation with von Papen on the future of the Crimea and the Caucasus. Saracoğlu went so far as to inform the Ambassador that as a Turk he "passionately desired the annihilation of Russia," but dared not by overt action provoke Soviet reprisals against still captive Turkic

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<sup>272</sup> Eristov, op. cit., pp. 36-49.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., pp. 74-75. Chief of Staff Çakmak was reported (p. 76) to believe Turkish entry into the war on the Axis side was "almost inevitable."

citizens. <sup>274</sup> At this time the anti-Soviet campaign in the press had reached its zenith, and Turkish troops allegedly concentrated along the Caucasian border. <sup>275</sup> Turkey seemed ready to exploit her opportunity, although no evident commitments had been made.

This readiness, if it indeed ever existed, vanished when the Nazis began to suffer military reverses in the Caucasus. Even the rabidly Germanophil *Erkilet*, who contributed daily war columns to *Cumhuriyet*, was compelled to admit that Axis prospects at Stalingrad were declining with the approach of winter; further, American contributions were transforming the Allied war potential and would soon force the *Wehrmacht* to withdraw from the eastern morass. <sup>276</sup> Turkey, reported the German Consul-General in Istanbul, still hoped for a Russian defeat, but was

... less ready than ever to aid us in this campaign for the Turks see the question of ultimate victory as very much in doubt ... Turkey will not abandon her neutrality even should the Axis be on the point of collapse. <sup>277</sup>

It is clear that the rapid decline of pan-Turkism dates from this turn of the military tide. Yet the ebb of racist feeling began earlier, when the true nature of the Nazi pol-

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<sup>274</sup> Eristov, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-94.

<sup>275</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 206. For another Soviet account, see Dantsig, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-289.

<sup>276</sup> Not dated, in Kirk, *op. cit.*, p. 455. Soviet sources date the decline of pan-Turkism at the battle of Stalingrad. See Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>277</sup> Report of 9 September, in Eristov, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

itical programme in Central Asia became known. This knowledge was spread by disenchanted emigrés, returning from voluntary administrative service with German occupation authorities in areas such as the Crimea. The notorious "Ostministerium in Berlin imposed brutal domination by Nazi Gauleiters; it vehemently opposed Turkish suggestions for some form of autonomous Turkic confederation.<sup>278</sup> Faced with this opposition at home, interminable evasion in Ankara, and impatient with "the stubborn Turkish attitude of neutrality," von Ribbentrop on 12 September instructed von Papen to break off the Turanian talks.<sup>279</sup> The end of these conversations on a diplomatic level was later to be accompanied on the domestic scene by the politic suppression of all Turkish pan-Turanist activity.<sup>280</sup> Meantime, Turkey remained, grim and determined, on the perilous path of non-belligerency.

In opening the fourth session of the sixth Grand National Assembly, President İnönü described the sacrifices being made to maintain this neutrality. Turkey faced an internal

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<sup>278</sup> Nazi stupidity included even a visit to Ankara by the arrogant "Gauleiter of Tiflis," much to the annoyance of the Turks and the mortification of von Papen, who saw his carefully cultivated contacts with pan-Turkish circles being impaired by the power-mad clique in Berlin. The visit led to a "really unpleasant" interview with the heretofore sympathetic Menemencioglu, and caused "a noticeable estrangement with the Turkish Foreign Office," Moyzisch, op. cit., pp. 5-7. See also Eristov, op. cit., pp. 79-82.

<sup>279</sup> Eristov, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

<sup>280</sup> See below, p. 164.

crisis, arising from shortages and inflation, of such proportions that national security was endangered. He warned that the situation would become even more precarious in 1943, requiring further restrictions and sacrifices.<sup>281</sup>

The nation was not able, because of her special needs and transport problems, to benefit fully from the fierce competition for Turkish exports. The scarcity of industrial imports blocked economic expansion, and indeed had reversed the inter-war trend of Kemalist development.

The result was increasing governmental intervention in all areas of commercial activity; industries were requisitioned, prices controlled, exports and imports strictly regulated, hours of work increased, and general austerity introduced. The burden of mobilisation transformed Turkey into a net food importer: by January 1942 even bread was rationed. In June there took place in protest against shortages the first public disorders in twenty years.

When the Saracoğlu Cabinet took office in July, a change in the previous interventionist policy was indicated by the replacement of the Ministers of Commerce and Agriculture. It was then announced that henceforth foodstuffs would be

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<sup>281</sup> An address of 2 November, in Bulletin, XIX(1942), 1056. For a useful survey of economic conditions, see ibid., pp. 825-829; "Effect of War on Turkey's Foreign Trade," and "Turkey in 1943," in Foreign Commerce Weekly, V and XV(13 December 1941 and 1 April 1944), 4-5 and 10-11 respectively. Perhaps most useful of all are the frequent notes in Great Britain and the East throughout the war.

sold on a free market, supervised only by municipal authorities to ensure equitable distribution. Yet inflation soared <sup>282</sup>; the gap between rich and poor widened; shortages multiplied; corruption increased; and the Karabursa (black market) became a grudgingly accepted part of the economic scene. Inevitably there emerged from this neo-Osmanlı atmosphere an unscrupulous class of war profiteers.

On 12 November 1942, the GNA approved the Varlık Vergisi (capital tax). According to its preamble it was

... aimed at those who have amassed inflated profits by exploiting the difficult economic situation but do not pay commensurate taxes. Its purpose is to compel them to join in the sacrifice demanded by the extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves, to an extent commensurate with their profits and capacity. 283

In design and intent therefore, the Varlık was readily defensible - indeed admirable - and comparable to measures in other hard-pressed countries. Saracoğlu in an interview at the time contended that there were only two possible sources of additional revenue to maintain the million man

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<sup>282</sup> The general price level rose in 1943 to 590 percent of the 1938 figure. In the same period, defence expenditures quintupled to devour half the total budget. Ayın Tarihi, 108(November 1942), pp. 25-41; no. 112(March 1943), p. 16.

<sup>283</sup> Cited in G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 118. The full text may apparently be found in Faik Okte, Varlık Vergisi Faciası, Istanbul, pp. 217-221, which was not available to the present writer.

army: the rich and the peasants. The latter were already forced to surrender over twenty per cent of their crop revenues to the government and could not be taxed further. The Cabinet had then considered a continuous shift for state industrial enterprises, but found coal supplies to be inadequate. <sup>284</sup> A capital tax seemed the only solution. It had the added advantage of circumventing the normal collection system, which "... always poor at best and now more widely evaded than ever, was entirely unable to reach the war profiteers." <sup>285</sup>

Many of this group came from the minorities, who controlled a large proportion of the commercial life of Istanbul. Unfortunately, separate assessment lists were prepared for Muslims and non-Muslims, and no minority representatives were appointed to the collection boards. For foreign businessmen, on the other hand, a special committee was established, which proved susceptible to diplomatic intercession. <sup>286</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> In Ernest Jackh, The Rising Crescent, New York, Farrar and Rhinehart, 1944, p. 195, note 6.

<sup>285</sup> L.V. Thomas and R.N. Frye, The United States and Turkey and Iran, Harvard University Press, 1951, p. 95.

<sup>286</sup> As a result, levies on foreign capital were reduced from TL80 to TL50 million. About TL33 million was actually collected, according to assessment rates which seemed to reflect rather baldly the political influence of the various embassies in Ankara. See Y.A. al-Abbas, Turkey in the World Conflict, 1939-1942, University of Minnesota, 1956 (Doctoral Thesis), p. 243, where reference is also made to Okte, op. cit., pp. 124-127.

The full brunt of the Varlık thus fell upon Greeks, Jews and Armenians.<sup>287</sup> No appeal was permitted, and non-payment brought transportation to Eastern Anatolian road building projects. Approximately TL300 million was collected in this way, at the cost of about 2,000 deportations - and at the price of Turkey's hard-won reputation for Kemalist equality.<sup>288</sup>

Indeed, the Varlık constituted a tragic return to the atmosphere of the Capitulations and a reversion from İstanbul to Constantinople. True Kemalists, while they could not question the principle of the tax, were shocked by the method of its application. Discussion of the tragic affair was nevertheless suppressed in the Turkish press and avoided in the Anglo-American, doubtless for reasons of foreign policy.<sup>289</sup> All prisoners were released in 1943 and in March 1944 the law itself was repealed by the same Cabinet that had drafted it. The impact of the Varlık was domestic rather than international; but the unfortunate tax demonstrates starkly the magnitude of the economic crisis facing Turkey in 1942 and 1943.

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<sup>287</sup> They were taxed, respectively, at 165, 239, and 289 percent (whereas the figure for Turks was under five percent) according to the peripatetic John Gunther, D. Day, New York, Harper, 1944, pp. 194-195.

<sup>288</sup> Figures are inconsistent for both revenues and imprisonments. See Okte, op. cit., pp. 157 and 209; Jackh, op. cit., p. 195, note 6; Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 358.

<sup>289</sup> Both the British and American Ambassadors were known to have expressed informal disapproval of the assessment rates. See Thomas and Frye, op. cit., p. 95.



## xi

Beset by internal problems, Turkey in November 1942 was faced with an unpleasant reversal in British policy. Since June 1941, London and Moscow had approached Ankara with opposing strategies; the Soviets seeking Turkish belligerency in order to diffuse Nazi arms, and the British content with a benevolent neutrality shielding their Middle Eastern position. But now Churchill, anticipating victory at Stalingrad and al-'Alamayn, resolved

... to open a new route to Russia and to strike at Germany's southern flank. Turkey was the key to all such plans. To bring Turkey into the war ... [had] been our aim. It now acquired new hope and urgency. 290

To secure this entry, which he scheduled for the spring, Churchill planned an Allied territorial guarantee, a vast increase in arms assistance and defence development, and military preparations in Syria and the Caucasus. 291 There the matter rested until the Casablanca Conference.

During the interval, the prospect of a victorious USSR continued to disturb Turko-Allied relations. In one of his rare articles, Menemencioğlu described rifts already apparent in the Grand Alliance and warned that Russian postwar

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290 Churchill, op.cit., IV, 696.

291 President Roosevelt supported the territorial guarantee only with a reluctance which became typical of the American view of Churchill's struggle for Turkish belligerency. See Maurice Matloff and E. M. Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, Washington, US Department of the Army, 1953, p. 364.

intentions were still obscure. Should an imperialist régime appear in America, Britain or the Soviet Union, he continued (prophetically) there would exist no community of interest to hold the three together in the years of peace.<sup>292</sup> Well-founded rumours persisted of Turkish initiatives toward a separate peace blocking further Russian expansion.<sup>293</sup>

Turko-German relations experienced equally chronic difficulties. Von Papen's massive propaganda campaign was being harassed by the Anadolu Acantasý (Anatolian News Agency), managed by Muvafaak Menemencioğlu, the staunchly anti-Nazi brother of the Foreign Minister.<sup>294</sup> He was supported by the liberal editor A.E. Yalman, who launched an unremitting attack on several pro-Axis dailies, and by the redoubtable Yalçın, who repudiated Nazi propaganda with the recollection that Germany herself had offered the Straits to Russia during World War I.<sup>295</sup> By December, German intelligence seems to have uncovered Churchill's project for Turkey: Völkischer Beobachter warned darkly that "... coun-

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<sup>292</sup> In Aksam, 6 December 1942.

<sup>293</sup> See Ciano Diaries, pp. 561-562; Lukacs, op. cit., p. 490.

<sup>294</sup> For details of the propaganda struggle, see Parker, Budapest, pp. 272-288; Eristov, op. cit., p. 115; Seth Arsenian, "Wartime Propaganda in the Middle East," The Middle East Journal, II(October 1948), 417-429; A. I. Feridum, "The Struggle for the Soul of Turkey," Free Europe, V(5 June 1942), 186.

<sup>295</sup> Yeni Sabah, 12, 22, 29 December 1942, referring to the Warburg-Protopopov conversations in July 1916.

tries planning to become the springboard for an Allied invasion of Europe should meditate on the fate of Poland." <sup>296</sup> The Reich indeed had ample cause for alarm, for the tide of war was about to turn.

At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, Churchill advanced his Eastern Mediterranean strategy, which included Turkish belligerency. American reaction was cool (due to fear that a Balkan campaign would dissipate Allied resources), but the advantages of unrestricted passage through the Straits, the use of Turkish aero-naval bases, and the support of two million armed Turks were undeniable. It was therefore agreed that Britain should "play the cards" in Turkey and do whatever was desirable to obtain a declaration of war. <sup>297</sup> Resolving to set upon İnönü immediately after the Conference, Churchill

... intended to take the line that Turkey should not wait until the last minute, but that if they were recalcitrant he would not hesitate to tell the Turks that in the event of their remaining out, he could not undertake to control the Russians regarding the Dardanelles and that their position would be intolerable. 298

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<sup>296</sup> 23 December, in Bulletin, XIX(1942), 28.

<sup>297</sup> The State Department was not informed of this bargain, which later led to some friction between the two Ambassadors in Ankara. Cordell Hull, Memoirs, New York, Macmillan, 1948, II, 1365.

<sup>298</sup> From Hopkins' notes at Casablanca, in Sherwood, op. cit., p. 683. The British Cabinet had agreed to Churchill's planned request only reluctantly, and feared either "a rebuff or a failure." Churchill, op. cit., IV, 700-702.

In his communication to Ankara, however, the Prime Minister merely referred discreetly to the need for talks on military aid and "... also of touching generally upon the matters affecting the general defensive security of Turkey." 299

President İnönü responded favourably to the suggestion of a meeting, and proposed an official visit to Ankara. The British favoured Cyprus, but as the President objected to leaving Turkey, the two compromised on Adana. Turkey, having maintained successfully her neutrality during the difficult year of Axis triumph, and having thus provided an invaluable barrier to Nazi entry into the Middle East, was now to be pressed by the other belligerent bloc to join the ranks of the Allies. As the British Ambassador observed, 300

Perturbabantur Constantinopolitani  
Innumerabilibus Sollicitudinibus

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299 Churchill, op. cit., IV, 701.  
300 Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 181.

## IV

### TURKEY AND THE ALLIED TRIUMPH

"War on Principle, but Non - Belligerency at Present"

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## IV. TURKEY AND THE ALLIED TRIUMPH

A. The Struggle for Turkey, 1943

## 1

The secret Adana Conference began as scheduled on 30 January. The importance attached to it by the Turks, who doubtless had an inkling of what to expect, was indicated by the impressive size and composition of their delegation. 301 Churchill swiftly presented "an offer of platonic marriage," pointing out that although the Nazi menace had retreated from both Turkey's northern and southern flanks, the need for oil might yet precipitate an attack. To prepare Turkey for this possibility, he proposed a number of measures including further aerodrome construction and the stationing in the Republic of certain specialised military units.

Passing on to political matters, the "wooing letter" revealed immediate Allied aims to be the destruction of Italy and the establishment of direct contact with Balkan resistance movements. The summer months would therefore see major operations in the Mediterranean, agitation in the Balkans, further Russian advances. In addition,

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301 In a secret train bearing what seemed to be "the entire Turkish Government" were İnönü, Saracoglu, Menemencioğlu, Çakmak, and a host of advisers. See Knatchbull, op. cit., pp. 187-190; Wilson, op. cit., pp. 148-150; and for Turkish policy at the time, see A. I. Feridum, "İsmet İnönü, Guardian of the Dardanelles," Free Europe, VII(26 March 1943), 106-107.

Operations across the Black Sea must be considered a possibility ... It is therefore in the summer that ... the need for Turkey to be secure will be paramount. 302

Churchill, with Roosevelt and Stalin, was anxious to see Turkey well-armed and deserving to be "... a full partner in the Peace Conference where all questions of changes in the status quo will have to be settled." 303

Subsequent discussions dealt mainly with postwar organisation and future Turko-Soviet relations. To Saracoğlu's remark that possible Russian imperialism necessitated prudence in Ankara, Churchill replied that Turkish security would be assured by a strong international agency. Pointing out that Europe would be Bolshevised if Germany collapsed, however, Saracoğlu sought "something more real." This, countered Churchill, would best be provided by close association with the Anglo-Americans. President İnönü then stressed again

... the need for bringing the war promptly to an end. The complete defeat of Germany ... would give Russia the chance of becoming a great danger to Turkey and Europe. 304

When Marshal Çakmak remarked that this danger would only be increased if an ill-equipped Turkey entered the war, the

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302 Churchill, op. cit., IV, 706-709.

303 Ibid., p. 709.

304 Von Papen, op. cit., p. 494. The Allied demand for unconditional surrender much alarmed the Turks; it was undoubtedly a major topic at Adana. İnönü later revealed that he had sounded out Churchill on the possibility of immediate peace negotiations in Ankara with von Papen.

discussions then turned to reëquipment of the army. <sup>305</sup>

Turkey was left free to enter the war when she thought fit - but Churchill later reported this was expected before the end of 1943. <sup>306</sup> Thus, despite much cajolery, many promises, and doubtless a few threats, the Turks refused an immediate commitment to the grand Balkan strategy. Churchill's only achievement was the establishment in Ankara of an Allied Military Commission to strengthen the army and "... to increase British influence in the councils of the Turkish Government." <sup>307</sup>

The Conference received enthusiastic treatment in the Turkish press, and Ankara radio reported that Anglo-American-Turkish "... solidarity of thought and opinion was not confined to the present but extended to the postwar period." It quoted the British Ambassador as revealing the primary aim at Adana to have been the rearmament of Turkey, and as warning that if the war spread to adjacent regions Germany might seek to establish a defensive line (the Straits, for example) on Turkish soil. The broadcast concluded with the Ambassador's denial that Turkey had been asked to enter the

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<sup>305</sup> For its strength in 1943, see Ömer Faruk Davaz, "The Turkish Army," Free Europe, VIII(3 December 1943), 188.

<sup>306</sup> Churchill, op. cit., IV, 714. He also expected permission for Allied use of Turkish airfields even before a declaration of war.

<sup>307</sup> W. H. McNeill, America Britain and Russia, Their Cooperation and Conflict, 1941-1946, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 272. Even Churchill's suggestion to Stalin after the Conference, that a friendly Soviet gesture would be helpful, proved futile. For the Russian response, coolly "willing to meet Turkey halfway," see Churchill, op. cit., IV, 715.



war. 308

The Military Commission in Ankara began its labours immediately, with the dual task of arranging military aid and preparing for the entry of Allied forces should Turkey find herself at war. The Commanders-in-Chief (Mediterranean) of the three British services visited Ankara in April, at the same time as a trade delegation led by Dr. Clodius. In their "tortuous and interminable" conversations at the War Ministry with Marshal Çakmak and his Deputy Chief, Azim Gündüz, they soon realised that the Turks had been briefed to limit the talks to defensive measures only. General Wilson later complained of an evasive "inability and unwillingness" to make commitments, combined with an insatiable demand for equipment far in excess of absorptive capacity. 309 Saracoğlu was apparently unwilling to agree even that British forces should enter Turkey in the event of Nazi concentrations on the Bulgarian frontier. 310

# ii

Turkish reticence was due largely to fear of a Soviet victory and to respect for Nazi strength (by no means dim-

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308 2 February, in Bulletin, XX(1943), 179.  
 309 H. Maitland Wilson, "Operations in the Middle East, 16 February 1943 to 8 January 1944," London Gazette (Supplement), 37786 (13 November 1946), 5595-5598. For a colourful account of the "Adana Lists" of Turkish requirements (including three marmalade factories), see Gunther, op. cit., pp. 192-193. The official report is in John Ehrman, Grand Strategy, London, HMSO, 1956, V, 90.  
 310 Wilson, Overseas, p. 157.

inished to the extent that Churchill had sanguinely suggested). Both these factors offered rewarding possibilities for German diplomacy; von Papen accordingly presented a third personal letter from his Führer. Rumour that it contained proposals for reciprocal non-aggression was supported by the mysterious complacency with which the Nazis accepted both the Adana Conference and the subsequent Allied visits to Ankara.<sup>311</sup> On 5 May, the Ambassador returned from Berlin with yet another message, this time apparently threatening retaliation against close military coöperation with the Allies. The prospect of aerial attack appalled the Turks, not only in view of their poor defences but also because the most attractive target - wooden İstanbul - was terribly vulnerable to incendiary attack. The British military team therefore found that

... the Turks had drawn back into their shell. The word "neutrality" reappeared. It was argued that the summer campaign ... might be directed against Turkey just as much as against Russia: it was ... even said that Turkey had no intention of "immolating herself" and that Britain was seeking to throw her into the lion's jaws.<sup>312</sup>

In a foreign policy address on the eve of the national election, President İnönü pledged that his Government would "... do everything possible not to become involved in and

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<sup>311</sup> Von Papen (op. cit., p. 495) refers to some sort of understanding according to which the Turks would enter the war only in "extreme circumstances."

<sup>312</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 191.

contaminated by the world upheaval." Four years ago, no one had expected Turkey to remain neutral for so long; since then "... more had been spent on defence than ever before." Only by bearing this burden, he concluded, could the Republic avoid the fate of thirty-five of the forty belligerent nations: that of being plunged unwillingly into hostilities. <sup>313</sup> The General Staff continued doggedly to temporise with the British, despite predictions in London that their attitude would change as the Allied position improved.

German pressure was facilitated by complications in Anglo-American efforts to improve Turko-Soviet relations. A week after Churchill's report on Adana to Stalin, the Turks informed Vinogradov of their desire to improve relations; but just as the Turkish Ambassador returned to Moscow, the sentence of the two Russians convicted in the von Papen bomb trial was confirmed. <sup>314</sup> Simultaneously, a frontier dispute between the USSR and the Polish government-in-exile induced A.E. Yalman to denounce British Tories for offering Stalin a feudal empire in Eastern Europe, after having given the same to Hitler. He stressed the change in Soviet foreign policy which, having two decades before championed Turkish and Persian independence, now coveted neighbouring lands. Like many other Turkish liberals, he advoca-

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<sup>313</sup> In Bulletin, XX(1943), 229.

<sup>314</sup> See above, pp. 111-112.

ted a postwar Balkan Confederation as the best defence against aggression from any quarter. <sup>315</sup> (At this time, the Turkish Government were already advancing suggestions in Balkan capitals for a multistate organisation even before war's end, to forestall Soviet entry. <sup>316</sup>)

The greatest German success during the spring of 1943 lay in the new trade agreement negotiated between Clodius, von Papen, Menemencioğlu, and Bay Sunus, Director of Türk-ofis (the foreign trade agency). Ankara had agreed to British purchase of all chromium not covered by the first Clodius Agreement, but had rejected an Allied request that all Nazi claims should lapse if the terms of the Agreement were not fulfilled by 31 March. Germany by that date had only partially supplied the promised arms, and had consequently received only a corresponding proportion of chrome production. The original contract would therefore have permitted the suspension of ore shipments. Instead, the further agreement (signed on 18 April) continued the original arrangement until 31 December 1943. It was soon discovered that this new agreement reserved quantities of many Turkish exports

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<sup>315</sup> Vatan, 22-24 March 1943. For his wartime activities in support of liberal democracy and in opposition to Soviet imperialism, see A.E. Yalman, Turkey in My Time, University of Oklahoma Press (Norman, Okla.), 1956, pp. 182-220.

<sup>316</sup> This story has yet to be told. See Trial of the Major War Criminals, 14 November 1945-10 October 1946, Nuremberg, International Military Tribunal, 1947, XXXV, 430 for a hint of Turkish initiatives. Henceforth, Trial. For the "Balkan school" of Turkish thought, see The Times, 10 March, Christian Science Monitor, 16 June, and New York Times, 17 August 1943.

essential to the Reich in addition to chromium. 317

iii

The Allies meanwhile were continuing their preemption programme, despite its rather obscure value. Their military victories at the end of 1942 led them to press more forcefully for Turkish economic collaboration, yet even after the failure at Adana persuasion and frankness were believed the wisest courses to win the Turks. The new trade agreement with Germany shook this belief, leading the British to conclude that further preemption was futile unless access were gained to those commodities reserved specifically for Germany. American optimism (and money) prevailed, however, and in July a new preemption campaign was begun. The Anglo-American Ambassadors in Ankara were authorised to spend a total of £5.5 million in an "... expensive experiment [which] continued with little practical effect throughout the following winter." 318

The concert in Anglo-American policy toward Turkey was

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317 Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 84. A table on p. 85 indicates the volume of Turko-German trade in 1943. The only other account (A.I. Feridum, "Ankara between Clodius and General Wilson," Free Europe, VII(21 May 1943), 168-169) contradicts that of Toynbee. According to this source, the new trade agreement made no mention of chrome. Clodius "was not even wooed by the Adana cotton interests so spoiled by German preemptive prices" and admitted later that "the whole agreement was concluded merely to save face." Toynbee, however, seems to be the more accurate.

318 Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 85.

troubled in other fields as well. After the "playing the cards" decision at Casablanca, the British assumption of almost complete control over Lend-Lease aid to Turkey led Secretary of State Hull to complain that this had caused "great consternation" among the Turks (who could no longer deal directly with the Americans). President Roosevelt was obliged to inform London that the United States had surrendered its full independence of action in neither economic nor political aspects of relations with Turkey. <sup>319</sup>

Even in the broad area of military planning there was disagreement between the Western Allies, due mainly to differences over Mediterranean and Balkan strategy. British support for a southern campaign increased after the victories in North Africa: the tide had turned sufficiently in the Middle East to give promise of eventual triumph. Churchill's Balkan scheme, however, required for its fulfillment a Turkish declaration of war. For their parts the Americans feared that any Mediterranean operations of more than a diversionary nature would delay the liberation of Western Europe.

At the Trident Conference in May 1943, Churchill contended that the invasion of Italy would have a great effect

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<sup>319</sup> Hull, op. cit., II, 1367-1368. Lack of coordination on Turkish policy between Britain and the US, and even within the American Government, was striking. See also Hurewitz, Dilemmas, pp. 191-192; Leahy, op. cit., p. 173; Churchill, op. cit., IV, 930 ("in both munitions and diplomacy the UK plays the hand in Turkey").

on Turkey. Thereafter, he foresaw the ready Allied use of Turkish bases from whence to clear the Aegean and menace the Balkans.<sup>320</sup> Cool American reaction brought a progressive attenuation in his plan,<sup>321</sup> but he continued to advance it during the summer. When Italy collapsed in August, he pressed for a swift Balkan campaign to be supported by either Turkish belligerency or permission to use Thracian airfields. He later concluded that

... had I been allowed to carry out my theme ... I could have had Turkey in the war on our side before the end of 1943 ... That this did not take place ... was due to unfortunate events in the Aegean. 322

Because of American objections, only a plan to capture the Dodecanese islands was sanctioned; in ordering the assault upon Cos, Leros, and Samos Churchill quoted Hitler's observation that

... Turkey's attitude is determined solely by her confidence in our strength. Abandonment of the islands would create a most unfavourable impression. 323

With large-scale Turkish connivance from the mainland, landings were made on 18 September. By 3 October, Nazi aerial supremacy rendered the British positions untenable, and evacuations were reluctantly begun - again via Turkish ports

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<sup>320</sup> Churchill, op. cit., IV, 782, 791.

<sup>321</sup> See the report of the Algiers Conference, in ibid., p. 826. For American fears see Wilson, op. cit., pp. 179-180; Leahy, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>322</sup> Churchill, op. cit., IV, 716.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., V, 208.

such as İzmir. <sup>324</sup> The official British explanation for the débâcle remains to this day the surrender of the Italian garrisons on the islands to the Nazis. <sup>325</sup> Yet it seems clear the real reason was the unwarranted expectation (based on their previous assistance) that the Turks would permit RAF operations from coastal aerodromes. <sup>326</sup> Certainly the Turkish Government had tacitly acquiesced to clandestine preparations for the invasion; but they were unwilling to incur the risk of retaliation by overt coöperation.

Accordingly, the Turks retired once more into their shell of neutrality. In speaking to the GNA, President İnönü circumspectly wished the "... victors in this world war to be civilisation and humanity." <sup>327</sup> Saracoğlu explained this attitude to be not "neutral" (a term used merely to avoid complications with other powers), but indicative of pro-Allied sympathies. His auditor, however, reported that

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- <sup>324</sup> For covert Turkish coöperation, see Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 193; McNeill, op. cit., pp. 305-313; Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 357; Raymond de Belot, The Struggle for the Mediterranean, 1939-1945, Princeton University Press, 1951, pp. 240-242. For British estimates of the effect of a Dodecanese victory on Turkish policy, see Ehrman, op. cit., V, 92-93.
- <sup>325</sup> Churchill (op. cit., V, 225) also complains bitterly of American "pedantic denials" of essential reinforcements.
- <sup>326</sup> See Vere-Hodge, op. cit., p. 157, where it is claimed "... that Turkey promised a radical change of policy [at Adana ?] in the event of the Allies clearing the Axis out of the Aegean." Assuming this promise to have been made in the vague terms characteristic of Turkish wartime diplomacy, the observation seems valid. Yet until the relevant documents are published it cannot be either substantiated or denied.
- <sup>327</sup> In Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 193; Von Papen, op. cit., p. 503.



the dominant characteristic of the Turkish political scene was an "intense, stubborn, and unwavering desire" to remain out of the war.<sup>328</sup> In the paper war, however, this seemed not so true.

That the Turkish press should turn its attention to the future of the Balkan States,<sup>329</sup> at the moment when the Government were emphatically reaffirming their neutrality, provoked a violent reaction in Moscow. This neutrality was attacked as "increasingly more favourable to Germany," for it safeguarded the Balkan flank and thus allowed greater Nazi concentration against Russia. As for the Balkan federation proposed by Turkish editors, it "... would be hostile, and in any case ... could not survive a crisis." Finally, Turkey had made an unforgiveable error by signing a Nazi treaty on the eve of the eastern offensive.<sup>330</sup>

The Turkish response was both spirited and logical:

It is easy to say that Turkish neutrality is to Nazi advantage and to want to push Turkey into the war, but difficult to perceive who would profit if we did so; and, even more, where and how Turkey would enter the war and against whom she would direct her attack ... Russia was forced into war in self-defence, having herself signed a Nazi pact which had been a decisive factor in Turkish neutrality ... Had the USSR joined with Britain in 1939,<sup>331</sup> this world war might well have been avoided.

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<sup>328</sup> Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 181. Other observations were of great prosperity resulting from preëemptive purchases and of the "not more than vestigial" influence of von Papen.

<sup>329</sup> See, for example, Aksam, 24 September 1943.

<sup>330</sup> Izvestia, cited in The New York Times, 12 September 1943.

<sup>331</sup> Aksam, 15 September 1943.

Several papers, like that of Yalman, called upon the Western Allies to establish a just international order based on the ideals of the Atlantic Charter, lest Soviet imperialism conquer Europe. This acrimonious exchange continued until the Moscow Conference, and indeed perhaps laid the foundation for the Soviet position at this meeting.

#### B. The Turko-Allied Councils of War

##### iv

The Allied Foreign Ministers met in Moscow on 19 October 1943 to consider (among other matters) measures to shorten the war. In support of his demand for an invasion of France in the spring, Molotov proposed that the three Powers suggest to Turkey her immediate entry into the conflict. From London, Churchill instructed Eden to avoid taking an immediate decision, while at the same time to ascertain the reasons for the quite unexpected Soviet proposal.<sup>332</sup> The Foreign Secretary therefore stressed the difficulties of providing the military support prerequisite to Turkish belligerency and suggested it might be preferable to encourage Turkey's entry of her own volition at a slightly later date. From Washington, there came a much less evasive reply. A belligerent Turkey would impose obligations far in excess

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<sup>332</sup> Churchill, op. cit., V, 285-289. It became clear in subsequent discussion that the Russians sought not a request but a tripartite "command" to the Turks. See McNeill, op. cit., pp. 328-335.

of the gains to be achieved and would impede both the Pacific campaign and the European invasion plans.<sup>333</sup> Instead, the Secretary of State proposed the lease of Turkish airfields - a suggestion popular with the British, whose Dodecanese adventure had not yet collapsed.<sup>334</sup> Molotov attacked this as "too mild," while Vishinsky claimed bitterly that

... the immediate entry of Turkey would take fifteen German divisions from the Russian front ... He felt that Turkey should be required to fight with the resources she then had plus those we could give her without jeopardising other commitments.<sup>335</sup>

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- <sup>333</sup> J. R. Deane, The Strange Alliance, New York, Viking, 1947, p. 21. See also Sherwood, op. cit., pp. 591, 746-747, 764-765, 787-789, 799; Hull, op. cit., II, 1301.
- <sup>334</sup> Ehrman (op. cit., V, 100) makes the ironic point that "Whereas the capture of the Dodecanese had originally been designed to precede [indeed, to encourage] action by Turkey ... [this action] was now required to secure possession of the Dodecanese."
- <sup>335</sup> Hull, op. cit., II, 1312; Dean, op. cit., p. 22. This disillusionment may well be interpreted as part of a subtle Anglo-Soviet diplomatic game. Seeking to verify hints that the Anglo-Americans planned no Balkan offensive, Molotov pressed Eden and Hull for their views on Turkey. Eden's evasiveness was doubtless intended to elicit Soviet intentions in the Balkans (already rendered suspicious by other developments). The Russians probably concluded that British reluctance to press Turkey arose from fears of the extension of Soviet influence throughout the area before the entry of Western troops. In addition, the present writer has been told (on good Turkish authority) that the British at this time were actively if covertly supporting Turkish efforts to establish some form of Balkan federation well before war's end.

Soon after the end of the Moscow Conference, Soviet and British attitudes to Turkish belligerency were to be reversed, with Russian opposition supported by the US. Postwar Soviet sources conceal Vishinsky's ...

Before the Ministers left Moscow, the Dodecanese dé-bâcle again brought the Turkish question to the fore; on 1 November, Eden and Molotov struck a compromise. The Foreign Secretary would visit Ankara en route home to request immediate use of airfields; later, Britain and Russia would join in a "request" for a declaration of war before the year's end. Three days later, Roosevelt reluctantly agreed to this.<sup>336</sup> As it turned out, Menemencioğlu was invited to Cairo, where Eden would present the Allied suggestions. These, wrote the British Ambassador, were an "abrupt departure" from the previous British position, caused by the strain of war and the need for "a fresh ally." In addition, the Turks were naturally awaiting news from Moscow rather breathlessly. He recalled that "... it was at this moment that we entered upon the most difficult period in our relations."<sup>337</sup>

## v

The Cairo talks between the two Foreign Ministers began on 4 November. Eden lost no time in emphasising the value of Anatolian aerodromes to the Dodecanese campaign, and then turned to the benefits of a Turkish declaration of

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bitterness in order to claim that the "... imperialists placed great hopes in their Turkish lackey's falling in with their plans to invade the Balkans ... under the pretence of Turkey's entry into the war." Tägliche Rundschau, 22 February 1952, in Kirk, op. cit., p. 459.  
<sup>336</sup> Churchill, op. cit., V, 298; Hull, op. cit., II, 1369.  
<sup>337</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 194.

war. The Bulgarian frontier would require reinforcement, thus reducing Axis occupation forces in restive Greece and Yugoslavia; aerial attacks on Ploesti would be possible; chrome would be denied Germany; and the moral advantage of Turkish belligerency would hasten the collapse of the Axis empire. 338

Menemencioğlu was unmoved throughout three full days of eloquent cajolery. He pointed out that Allied use of Turkish bases would bring instant and horrible retaliation on major urban centres. Eden's munificent promises of fighter protection to the contrary, Allied difficulties in Italy had demonstrated clearly the continuing potency of the Luftwaffe. If Turkey were to join the battle, he continued, a number of military and political questions should first be resolved. Rather than vague assurances, the Turks must have a definite task allotted them, so that they might remain in complete control of their intervention. In addition, they had little inclination to come in at the eleventh hour to divide the spoils: Menemencioğlu cited the ignoble example of Italy. 339

Finally, and most important, was the Russian question. Menemencioğlu was puzzled by Eden's emphasis on Anglo-American-Soviet solidarity and distressed by his evasiveness

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338 Churchill, op. cit., V, 335; Ehrman, op. cit., V, 101-102.

339 Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 196; Von Papen, op. cit., p. 506.

concerning the Moscow Conference. Eden's eventual admission that territorial questions had been neither settled nor even discussed naturally meant to the perceptive Turkish diplomat that Russian claims were merely left in ominous abeyance. He was apparently unable to get the slightest indication from Eden of firm Allied plans in the Balkans where, it seems, he expressed both Turkey's anxiety that the Anglo-Americans should begin operations and her readiness to join forces according to a concrete plan.<sup>340</sup>

The only immediate result of the meeting was the Turkish pledge of a formal reply to Eden's requests as soon as possible. If positive, further conversations would ensue; if negative, the matter would be dropped but Anglo-Turkish relations "... could hardly fail to be affected by such a disappointment."<sup>341</sup> As Menemencioğlu returned to Ankara, the Germans recaptured the Dodecanese; by 16 November, their southern flank had been fully restored.

A full caucus of the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party) was convened on the Minister's return, and on 17 November a statement was issued saying only that Turkey's treaty obligations had been reviewed in Cairo.

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<sup>340</sup> Cretzianu, op. cit., pp. 111-113. This report based on a conversation with the Foreign Minister, is unique, but it seems in view of subsequent events to be quite credible.

<sup>341</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 196. According to Goebbels Diaries (pp. 510-511), Menemencioğlu insisted that constitutional authorities, especially the ruling party, would first have to be consulted. See also Açıkalın, op. cit., pp. 485-486.

The expected official reply was delivered to the British Ambassador on the following day. The Government declared their readiness "in principle" to declare war, but this

... would be impossible in the first place unless Turkey received adequate defence against German attack, which would evidently be on a scale to menace her existence, and in the second place unless some scheme for military cooperation in the Balkans could be arranged. 342

The Ambassador found the emphasis on defence requirements justified, and the reply generally encouraging insofar as it accepted the principle of early belligerency.

The RPP then issued a public statement to the effect that Turkey would remain non-belligerent unless attacked. Indicative of the changing mood was Yalçın's description of this policy as "obsolete and meaningless;" the alliance with Britain, he concluded, entailed commitments on both sides. 343 On the same day, another paper reported that Eden had pressed Numan Bey to respect these obligations, that this was impossible at present, and that conversations were taking place to determine the conditions under which Turkey would declare war. 344

More than mere talks were occurring, for Menemencioğlu confided to von Papen that he was being subjected to great pressure. The British Ambassador had "more or less broken

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342 Knatchbull, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

343 Tanın, 20 November 1943

344 Son Posta, 20 November 1943

off relations" and intended "... to remove his embassy to İstanbul [as] a reminder of the period in which the Great Powers regarded the régime of Atatürk as having no official existence." He had threatened to suspend all Allied exports to Turkey, unless she at once severed commercial relations with the Axis. Rather than risk a breach with Britain or jeopardise the national economy, Menemencioğlu would have to comply. <sup>345</sup>

With Turkey thus on the brink, von Papen flew to Berlin for consultation and a conference on the famous "Operation Cicero." This fascinating exercise in espionage by the valet of the British Ambassador provided von Papen with photostatic copies of many communications between London and Ankara, and enabled him on several occasions materially to influence Turkish policy. He was, for example, fully informed of the Moscow decision to seek Turkish belligerency. A dispatch from the British Embassy, according to von Papen, indicated Numan Bey's willingness to comply with the Allied demand

... as soon as it is clear that Allied landings in the West have been successful ... If we are unable to agree on an earlier date, it might be well ... to fall in with M. Menemencioğlu's suggestion ... The Foreign Minister ... was prepared to discuss the matter with his Prime Minister with a view to confirming this undertaking. <sup>346</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Von Papen, op. cit., pp. 506-507.

<sup>346</sup> Telegram of 19 November, in von Papen, op. cit., p. 513. For "Operation Cicero" see Moyzisch, op. cit., in toto; Colvin, op. cit., pp. 178-179; Walter Schellenberg, ...



"Cicero" also kept von Papen informed of the Cairo meeting <sup>347</sup> on 23-26 November (at which Churchill clung tenaciously to his Balkan strategy), and of the Tehran Conference which followed on 28 November.

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In the Persian capital Churchill reiterated his "triple theme" in support of a Turkish declaration of war: the Aegean would be conquered; a convoy route would be opened through the Black Sea; and a political avalanche would be precipitated in the Balkans. Stalin now doubted the Turks would voluntarily declare war, opposed the diversion of Allied forces to their support, and even disputed the military advantages to be gained. He remained "in principle" favourable to Turkish entry; but this shift in Soviet policy nevertheless clearly contradicted the views expressed by Molotov in October. <sup>348</sup>

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- The Labyrinth, transl. Louis Hagen, New York, Harper, 1956 (UK edition entitled The Schellenberg Memoirs), pp. 337-344. From these sources, it would seem "Cicero" had access to British documents between October 1943 and February or perhaps May 1944.
- <sup>347</sup> For accounts of this brief meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt prior to Teheran, see Churchill, op. cit., V, 325-341; Leahy, op. cit., p. 201; McNeill, op. cit., p. 342; Deane, op. cit., p. 41; Ehrman, op. cit., V, 155-172.
- <sup>348</sup> Churchill, op. cit., V, 342-356; Deane, op. cit., p. 44; G. A. Harrison, Cross-Channel Attack, Washington, US Department of the Army, 1951, p. 125. These sources explain the Soviet volte face as either a manoeuvre to confuse British Balkan strategists or a preference for a western offensive. The present writer views it as an early indication of the Soviet spheres of influence concept, which was soon to become apparent in subsequent conferences.

In rebuttal, Churchill minimised the need to delay "Operation Overlord" (the western invasion). Turkey, he said, "... would be mad if she declined Russia's invitation to come in on the winning side, and at the same time lost the sympathy of Great Britain." <sup>349</sup> Roosevelt intervened to support Stalin and to observe that if he were the Turkish President he would demand so heavy a price in assistance that "Overlord" would have to be postponed. <sup>350</sup> The persistent Churchill then presented a modified offensive plan, including operations against Rhodes and Turkish belligerency, to which Stalin replied only that Russia would support Turkey in the event of a Bulgarian attack. He asked bluntly if Britain really planned a western offensive: obviously, he suspected Churchill of seeking to thwart Soviet ambitions in the Balkans. <sup>351</sup> When the Americans privately admitted to him their belief that Turkish entry would delay "Overlord," Molotov stated flatly that Russia opposed this belligerency. <sup>352</sup> Faced with combined Russo-American opposition, Churchill eventually capitulated: "Overlord" was scheduled for May, 1944.

With grand strategy thus decided upon, a final meeting was held on 1 December to resolve certain political issues - including the Turkish question. Churchill was authorised

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<sup>349</sup> Churchill, op. cit., V, 357-358.

<sup>350</sup> Sherwood, op. cit., p. 781.

<sup>351</sup> Ehrman, op. cit., V, 173-183; McNeill, op. cit., pp. 359-360.

<sup>352</sup> Sherwood, op. cit., p. 792.

to offer İnönü a small measure of immediate military support in the event of Turkish belligerency, but was denied permission to mention his scheme for Aegean operations. <sup>353</sup>

If Turkey should reject these offers (limited aerial protection, Soviet support against a Bulgarian attack, further arms assistance, and the "friendship of the victorious powers"), the Prime Minister proposed to try other methods: she would receive no more military aid, would be treated like other neutrals, and would forfeit her chance to sit at the Peace Conference. It was finally agreed that İnönü be invited to Cairo, where Churchill and Roosevelt would press their (by now much weakened) case, and thus place the Turks in an unpleasant dilemma. <sup>354</sup>

The British Ambassador presented the invitation with some misgiving, in view of İnönü's previous refusal (on constitutional grounds <sup>355</sup>) to attend a meeting outside Turkey. This time, however, the only condition advanced by the Turks was that the President should not be called to Cairo

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<sup>353</sup> For details, see Sherwood, op. cit., pp. 793-796.

<sup>354</sup> Churchill, op. cit., V, 391-392. According to Lukacs (op. cit., pp. 560-561), Churchill had arranged even before Teheran to bring İnönü to Cairo for "consultation."

<sup>355</sup> The Turkish claim that it would be difficult for the President to leave the Republic is difficult to substantiate. The copy of the constitution available to the present writer (dated 1945) merely makes provision (Article XXXIII) for provisional executive authority during his absence. The writer is unaware of any relevant amendments between 1943 and 1945.

merely for talks on the bases of decisions already taken at Teheran. When assurances were made that the conference was intended as a free discussion of means by which Turkey could best serve the Allied cause, İnönü accepted. This alone was significant, since the mere fact of the President's journey must have annoyed the Germans (who had at least seventeen divisions deployed around Turkey and still held aerial supremacy in the Aegean). Even more surprising, if true, was the revelation a few months later that İnönü departed with full authority from his Government and Party to go to war. <sup>356</sup>

Ankara was not yet aware of the decision to give full priority to "Overlord" at the expense of a Balkan or Mediterranean campaign. Turkish apprehension on the eve of the President's departure was indicated in the notification to the Anglo-American Ambassadors of the decision to release those victims of the Varlık Vergisi still in detention. <sup>357</sup> Another symbol, this time of the divergent Western position regarding Turkish belligerency, was found in the arrival at Adana of both Roosevelt's and Churchill's private aircraft, dispatched in "friendly rivalry" to bring the Turks to Cairo. As might have been expected, İnönü took one and Menemencioglu the other, accompanied by Cevat Açıkalın and

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<sup>356</sup> Knatchbull, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>357</sup> 2 December. See above, pp. 123-125.

a host of advisers.

vii

The delegation reached Cairo on 4 December. The British Prime Minister "... promptly laid seige to President İnönü to induce him to caste the fate of his country with the Allies. Churchill did most of the talking. İnönü just listened." <sup>358</sup> He was informed of the Soviet decision to guarantee Turkey against Bulgarian attack, but would agree only to the infiltration of a few more Allied technical experts and the establishment of yet another "special" Anglo-American military mission. <sup>359</sup> When the Turks had withdrawn, Roosevelt confessed to Churchill that if he were the Turkish President he would require greater reassurance than had been given before leading his people into war: it was understandable, he concluded, (and this is set forth in the solemn record) that the Turks "... should not want to be caught with their pants down." <sup>360</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Leahy, op. cit., p. 214. The anecdote concerning İnönü's deafness, first told by wags at Adana, now began to circulate in Cairo. The Turks, it went, wore hearing aids so perfectly attuned to one another that they all failed the instant the possibility of Turkish belligerency was mentioned.

<sup>359</sup> Churchill's original figure of 7500 specialists to prepare for Turkish belligerency was reduced by Turkish opposition to about 1500. Further, implementation of their recommendations was so obstructed that by the end of 1943 they were all but abandoned. Wilson, op. cit., p. 187. For German knowledge of this scheme, see the "Cicero" report in Moyzisch, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>360</sup> In Sherwood, op. cit., p. 800.

A similar scene took place on the second day, although this time Churchill had the added incentive of American agreement to an attack on Rhodes provided Turkey enter the war. The Prime Minister scheduled this assault for 15 February, and warned İnönü that unless Turkey had joined the Allies by that date she would lose not only her seat at the peace table but perhaps also the Straits. <sup>361</sup>

İnönü, now aware of Anglo-American differences <sup>362</sup> and in possession of Turkish intelligence reports that no major Balkan offensive was planned, became more articulate. Doubtless knowing Roosevelt would reject the first and Churchill the second, he demanded additional assistance and more time to train his forces. If Turkey were to join the fray before these two conditions were met

... the destruction of the principal Turkish ... towns would have been a question of minutes and the invasion of Trakya and İstanbul would have followed. Even in spite of the resistance of the Turkish Army which would have had to withdraw behind a strategic line of defence somewhere in Anatolia, the occupation by the Axis of İstanbul and the Straits, even temporarily, could only serve the interests of the German invader and eventually those of the Power which would come as liberator. <sup>363</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Jon Kimche, Seven Fallen Pillars, London, Secker and Warburg, 1953, p. 90. The author describes this unsubstantiated but credible charge as "no more than Churchillian bluff."

<sup>362</sup> In contrasting the different attitudes of the passionate Prime Minister and the President, Menemencioglu later observed that Roosevelt reminded him of the judge in the Nasrettin Hoca (the Turkish folk hero) story who was so fair-minded that he was swayed by the last plaintiff in any particular case. See Cretzianu, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>363</sup> Açıklık, op. cit., p. 486.

The Turks expressed further reservations. They desired a joint military plan of action and some indication of Allied intentions in the Balkans. No hint of Allied preparations for operations in the area had been detected by Turkish intelligence; in addition, Churchill had seemingly abandoned his scheme for Balkan federation at what Menemencioğlu later termed "a frown from Stalin."<sup>364</sup> (The Foreign Minister concluded that Allied policy would be determined not by long range Anglo-American interests, but simply by Soviet demands. The departure of Vishinsky from Cairo shortly before their arrival further exacerbated the Turks' fears,<sup>365</sup> and they found scant satisfaction in Stalin's declaration concerning Bulgaria.) Even the Teheran resolutions were not communicated to İnönü. This situation gave rise to two immediate Turkish suspicions: first, that the Turks were expected merely to act as pawns on the Allied chess board in order to realise decisions taken at Teheran; and second, that they were merely to permit Allied use of bases without being assigned a specific rôle for their forces.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Gretzianu, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., p. 115. A New York Times report (8 December) from Cairo confirmed that the Western Allies had cautioned the Turks to seek improved relations with Russia, as Turkey could not count on Anglo-American support in the event of difficulties with the Soviets. Ambassador Vinogradov was mysteriously in Cairo at the time, but took no part in the conversations.

<sup>366</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 198.

On the day after the conference had officially ended, Churchill held a private meeting with İnönü and Menemencioğlu. At last they were given some inkling of the projected 1944 campaigns, yet they still complained of the impenetrable mystery surrounding the question of military cooperation.<sup>367</sup> It was finally agreed that Turkey should state her attitude by 15 February, but should decide immediately the question of opening her airfields. A platitudinous communiqué was thereupon issued,<sup>368</sup> reaffirming the non-belligerency of the Republic. While it was received in Ankara as a triumph of Turkish immobility, it may perhaps be better described as a victory for Russo-American over British war strategy.

In that capital on 8 December, Menemencioğlu informed the press that "... non-belligerency as defined by the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi meeting of 17 November remains unaltered."<sup>369</sup> Four days later, the official reply was communicated to Britain. It accepted Allied proposals "in principle" but warned that bases could not be granted until

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- <sup>367</sup> Açıkalin, op. cit., p. 486. Von Papen (op. cit., p. 514) quotes "Cicero" documents to show Churchill claimed plans existed for Balkan operations and landings at Salonika about 15 February, to be covered by Allied aircraft based on İzmir. For a different account, based on the same sources, see Schellenberg, op. cit., p. 343.
- <sup>368</sup> For text, see The New York Times, 7 December 1943; for Eden's report, see House of Commons, Debates, 5th ser., vol. 395, coll. 1423-1506 (14 December).
- <sup>369</sup> In Bulletin, XX(1943), 1144.



Turkish defences were improved. Because "the supplies proposed are completely inadequate for Turkey's primary necessities," the Government could not complete preparations for the assault on Salonika by 15 February. <sup>370</sup>

The British were naturally disappointed. Whereas the British Ambassador had claimed that "no blame was to attach to Turkey if she decided in the negative," <sup>371</sup> Churchill now warned

... that failure to comply on ... February 15 is the virtual end of the alliance, and that making impossible demands is only another way of saying no ... [Claims] of the Germans being able to [in- <sup>372</sup> vade Turkey are] ... absolute rubbish.

### C. The Turkish Appeasement Policy

#### viii

Staff conversations continued in Ankara with the object of bridging the impressive gap between Allied supplies and Turkish demands. This aim was much hampered by von Papen, who (being aware of their progress through the "Cicero" documents) took the bold step of intervening to warn Menemencioğlu that any abandonment of neutrality would bring swift Nazi reprisal. The Foreign Minister was sufficiently alarmed by the extent of German knowledge to confer with Knatchbull-

<sup>370</sup> Açıkalın, op. cit., p. 486; von Papen, op. cit., p. 516.

<sup>371</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., pp. 199-200. See also Churchill,

op. cit., V, 415-417; Ehrman, op. cit., V, 194-195.

<sup>372</sup> Churchill, op. cit., V, 422. See also pp. 430-431.

Hugessen on measures to improve security.<sup>373</sup> These apparently failed, for the Germans knew of not only the increasing infiltration of Allied personnel but also the maintenance on constant alert of a large air reserve, to enter Turkey the moment negotiations should prove successful.<sup>374</sup>

The Turks continued doggedly to demand vast quantities of equipment and subtly to exploit Anglo-American differences. London drew the attention of Washington to this policy of divide et impera and requested that Ambassador Steinhardt be instructed to support his British colleague more forcefully in the talks. Such instruction apparently did little good, for the British continued to assume the Turks were seeking to prolong their neutrality until the German menace had receded, and the Turks to suspect the British were unwilling to meet their demands because of other commitments.<sup>375</sup>

In late January 1944, the conversations reached complete deadlock. Amid mounting accusations by the British, and some elements within the Turkish Government, that he was

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<sup>373</sup> Moyzisch, op. cit., pp. 119-120. Von Papen concludes that "Cicero" (by informing Germany of Allied plans) helped Turkey to remain neutral (ibid., p. 183). Schellenberg (op. cit., p. 344) offers the fascinating speculation that Cicero may have been a Turkish agent seeking not only continued neutrality but also (by warning of Allied plans) the prevention of Germany's total destruction. Support for this claim may be found in Colvin, op. cit., pp. 178-179.

<sup>374</sup> Wilson, Overseas, p. 196.

<sup>375</sup> Hull, op. cit., II, 1370.

pro-German, Fevzi Çakmak was abruptly removed as Chief of Staff. The Marshal, one of the great pioneers of the Republic, had been an architect of far more than military policy alone. He was known to hold both decidedly neutralist views and pan-Turkist sympathies. His stature as a statesman and political leader had given him great influence in the Cabinet and at the Foreign Ministry; his replacement therefore could be interpreted only as indicating a major change in Turkish policy.

Çakmak was succeeded by General Kazım Orbay, a confidant of İnönü and reportedly one of the more Anglophil of the early Kemalists. Encouraged by this, the British intensified their pressure. Hull was informed of their intention to withdraw the head of the military mission, to suspend all supplies, and to instruct the Embassy to avoid contact with Government circles. Perhaps it was at this time (although von Papen suggests mid-December) that the Ambassador lost patience with the Turks' obstructionism and suggested that relations be severed. <sup>376</sup>

Allied policy soon hardened. On 3 February, the military delegations left Ankara; projected operations in the Aegean were abandoned. Deliveries of war material were to be suspended (although this was not made public until 1

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<sup>376</sup> Hull, op. cit., II, 1371; von Papen, op. cit., pp. 514-516. Eden replied that Knatchbull-Hugessen should make "the best of a bad job."

March) and the preemption programme curtailed. There was no immediate response, but in late February Ankara agreed to settle all debts to the UKCC (non-payment of which had seriously hampered Allied purchasing). <sup>377</sup> A further gesture was made on 15 March, when the GNA officially revoked the Varlık Vergisi. <sup>378</sup>

Despite these steps and the studied aloofness of Allied diplomats, the Turks gave no public indication of abandoning their neutrality. Menemencioğlu spoke to the press of the continuing alliance with Britain; it was hinted that Turkey was willing to declare war if given more armaments. <sup>379</sup> Yet when the suspension of supplies was announced, at least one authoritative spokesman reacted bitterly:

... it appeared that for the few pennyworth of arms that Turkey had received, she was expected to plunge into the war at a given command ... Did Britain imagine that Turkey would play the part of her Indian or Negro mercenaries? <sup>380</sup>

This outburst served only to demonstrate the weakness of the Turkish case, growing increasingly indefensible as the German menace receded. In recognition of this, the Allies proceeded to press their demands more forcefully.

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<sup>377</sup> For details, see Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 85.

<sup>378</sup> See above, pp. 123-125.

<sup>379</sup> Vere-Hodge, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>380</sup> Sadak, in Aksam, 2 March 1944.

In April 1944 a German trade delegation arrived in Ankara to negotiate a renewal of the agreement expiring at the end of that month. The Reich had made every effort to fulfil its obligations, if only to ensure the delivery of Turkish chrome.<sup>381</sup> To curtail this supply, the British and American Ambassadors on 11 April presented identical notes warning of an Allied blockade if Turkey did not comply with a previous appeal (to the neutral countries generally) to deny Germany strategic materials.<sup>382</sup> Further obtuseness obviously meant a rupture of vital links with the West.

The official Turkish reply pledged compliance "to the extent of material possibilities," and on 20 April von Papen was informed that ore deliveries would be terminated on 1 May. In announcing this to the GNA, Menemencioğlu made the surprising statement that

A belligerent country's note to a neutral country asking her not to sell material to another state would probably raise the question of the privileges of neutrality. But according to our pact with Britain we are not neutral. It is necessary for us therefore to consider the Allied note as being not to a neutral, but to an ally of the British and their allies. 383

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<sup>381</sup> Turkey (at that time the world's largest producer) had provided the Allies with 56,000 and the Axis with 47,000 tons of ore in 1943; and in 1944, 2000 and 15,000 tons respectively. Bulletin, XXI(1944), 361.

<sup>382</sup> For a more friendly American note, drafted earlier but withheld because of British objection that it was too mild, see Hull, op. cit., II, 1372. The Anglo-American Ambassadors at this time were recommending destruction of Turkish bridges across the Meriç (Maritsa) to impede chrome supplies.

<sup>383</sup> The Times, 21 April 1944.

On the following day it was announced that all export permits for the Reich would require Foreign (rather than Trade) Ministry approval. Menemencioğlu nevertheless informed the press that this action, based solely on one economic agreement, in no way affected Turkish friendship for Germany.<sup>384</sup> It was clear from this that while Turkish statesmen were agreed on the need for appeasing the Allies, there was some difference of opinion as to how far this should go.

Von Papen was summoned to Berlin for what was announced on 27 April to be an indefinite absence. Apparently von Ribbentrop advocated a violent reprisal against Turkey, but was overruled by Hitler, who observed that since Germany was in no position to act, von Papen should resume his post. Although this was made awkward by the sudden revelation of the "Cicero" affair and the defection of several Embassy personnel, the Ambassador returned to present on 11 May a note attacking the chrome suspension and demanding compensation for this violation of the Clodius Agreement.

Having thus annoyed the Germans, the Turks were now faced with an increasingly strident chorus of criticism in Britain. On 24 May, Churchill delivered a major indictment of Turkish foreign policy before the Commons. He spoke of the great disappointment in the fall of 1943 when the Aegean could have been taken but for "exaggerated" Turkish caution.

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<sup>384</sup> Bulletin, XXI(1944), 370.

Demands from Ankara had reached such a point that "... having regard to transport alone, the war would have been over before these supplies could reach them." The Turks had magnified their own danger, taken "the gloomiest view of Russian prospects," and thereby had lost a strong voice in the ordering of the peace. Churchill expressed appreciation only for the chrome suspension, which he (curiously) attributed to the personal initiative of İnönü. 385

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This speech was received with great consternation in the press, for it was the first public denunciation of Turkish policy by a Western head of state. Some papers replied that Ankara's caution arose not from a "gloomy" view of Soviet prospects but from the Allied position in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean which had improved little in the last quarter. Perhaps affronted by Anglo-American criticism, several editors turned rather unexpectedly to court the Russians. One observed that their strength was so great

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385 House of Commons, Debates, 5th ser., vol. 400, coll. 764-766. One can only speculate on the relation between this reference to İnönü and the fate of Menemencioglu (for which, see below, p. 166). The tears shed on the retirement of the Foreign Minister in Knatchbull (op. cit., p. 201) nevertheless seem somewhat crocodilian. British pressure took other forms as well. For example, in Patmore (op. cit., p. 284, published in 1944) there is a not very subtle suggestion that only by an immediate declaration of war could Turkey obtain a "say in Balkan affairs" and postwar British credits for economic development.

the Soviets need not drag other nations into the war; if a second front was desired, the Western Allies should open it themselves. 386

The Government found the moment opportune publicly to dissociate themselves from the (now declining) pan-Turkist movement. In a speech on Gençlik Bayramı (Youth Day), İnönü paid the first public tribute in many months to the Soviets, who had been in the early days of the Republic the Kemalists' "only true friends." Turkey entertained no expansionist ambitions and would deal severely with any foreign-inspired pan-Turanian subversion. 387 On 18 May the Cabinet decided to prosecute certain pan-Turkist leaders; martial law was proclaimed in İstanbul; and Radio Ankara revealed the "discovery" of a secret revolutionary organisation within the well-known Bozkurtcu Society. Composed of allegedly pro-Nazi elements, this group was accused of plotting since 1940 to overthrow the government and proclaim a vast Turkic confederation. Twenty-three suspects, including pedagogues, civil servants, and army officers were held throughout the summer, while the Government gathered evidence. 388

Perhaps it was only coincidental that during May Ankara proposed to Moscow an agreement for closer political coöpera-

386 Aksam, date not cited in Kirk, op. cit., p. 27.

387 Anadolu Acantasi Belleten, in Hostler, op. cit., p. 185. For the pan-Turkist movement, see above, pp. 116-121, and Ayın Tarihi, no. 126(May 1944), pp. 159-161.

388 For the trial, see below p. 177.



tion and for security guarantees to the postwar Balkan states. In reply, the Russians divested themselves of any future obligations by maintaining that such an agreement would have as its prerequisite Turkish entry into the war. The Soviet press ridiculed the proposal and commented sarcastically on the pan-Turkist arrests.

In the west, Turkish relations with the Allies were disturbed by a new source of friction. On 7 June, the Government revealed that they had received strong representations from the British Ambassador concerning the passage of German vessels through the Straits. These were alleged to be destined for the French front (the channel crossing had been made the day before) and to be secretly armed; they should therefore be regarded as auxiliary craft, the passage of which was prohibited by the Montreux Convention. The Turks replied that only merchantmen had been allowed transit; several auxiliaries had already been turned back. 389 On 9 June, Knatchbull-Hugessen protested that Britain was "... profoundly disturbed by the fact that the Turkish Government should have lent themselves to this palpable German manoeuvre." 390 After Menemencioğlu had received von Papen's personal assurances, careful Turkish inspection of the next ship revealed all that had been charged.

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389 Bulletin, XXI(1944), 537.

390 In Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 361; see also von Papen, op. cit., pp. 526-527.

The majority of the Cabinet then favoured yielding to the British demands, but the Foreign Minister apparently opposed any concession that might compromise future Turkish sovereignty over the Straits.<sup>391</sup> On 14 June, Eden pressed his charges, pointed out that the violations had been admitted by Turkey, and demanded appropriate action be taken immediately.

It was announced in Ankara on the next day that "The Cabinet not having approved the policy followed in the last few days by the Foreign Minister, the latter has submitted his resignation. The portfolio will be assumed by M. Saracoglu." The new Minister promptly announced that "there will never exist any possibility of Turkey's potentialities being used against the Allies" and revealed that certain Axis vessels in transit through the Straits would be detained.<sup>392</sup> Also on 15 June, he disclosed a new agreement with the Allies whereby Turkish exports to Axis Europe would be cut to fifty percent of the 1943 level. Further reduction would be made when other sources of essential imports could be found. Ten

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<sup>391</sup> Menemencioğlu contended that passage of such auxiliaries was permitted by the Convention. See Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 362. For an account of the liberal Turkish interpretations of the relevant clauses, see H.N. Howard, The Problem of the Turkish Straits, Washington, USGPO, 1946 (pub. 2752), pp. 36-51.

<sup>392</sup> In Bulletin, XXI(1944), 537. At a Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi caucus, Saracoglu admitted the accuracy of British charges and promised those responsible would be punished.

days later, estimates published in Ankara indicated that during 1944 a vast quantity of chromium would be available exclusively to the Allies; shipments were already being arranged from Mersin. <sup>393</sup>

As the British Ambassador so discreetly put it, "... the element in the Turkish Government which favoured a more forward policy reasserted itself." <sup>394</sup> Perhaps more than any other figure, Numan Menemencioğlu had been the watchful keeper of the Turkish pendulum and the determined advocate of impartial non-belligerency. He was accused of being overly sympathetic to Germany not only by the British but also (especially after the decline of Axis power) by influential Turks.

Following his dismissal, the Government made clear their intention to comply with all Allied requests short of a declaration of war, and the obedient press struck up an increasingly anti-Nazi tone. Turkey belatedly recognised that the claim her belligerency would merely constitute a military liability had begun to lose its validity. The tide of war had long since turned, and the Turks found themselves attacked by the Russians and shunned by the Western Allies. A reappraisal in policy was obviously necessary. It was not long in coming.

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<sup>393</sup> In Bulletin, XXI(1944), 574.  
<sup>394</sup> Knatchbull, op. cit., p. 200.

V

TURKEY AT WAR

"Let it be on the Side of Western Civilisation"

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## V. TURKEY AT WAR

A. The Last Days of Peace

## 1

Following the auspicious opening of the second front and the diplomatic victory of Menemencioğlu's dismissal, the British intensified their pressure on Turkish neutrality. On 23 June they sought American support for a request that Ankara sever both political and commercial relations with the Axis, but found Washington to be in agreement with Moscow that only a declaration of war would be acceptable. London suspected that such a demand would entail the usual interminable conversations in Ankara, and suggested (the Turks having already expressed their readiness to sever relations immediately) that a diplomatic break be taken as "a first instalment." 395

Bargaining had already begun with the American Embassy even for this: Ambassador Steinhardt reported the Turks had sought a promise of being treated as full allies with an equal place at the peace table, had requested markets for their exports and alternate sources for essential imports, and had demanded further military aid. 396 The British

395 Churchill, op. cit., VI, 79-80. Admiral Leahy (op. cit., pp. 245-246) suggests the Turkish offer included a commitment to declare war at a later date to be specified by Britain. This has not yet been substantiated elsewhere.

396 Hull, op. cit., II, 1372; Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 362.

approach would not only avoid these complications but also would require in return only the vaguest Allied assurances to Turkey regarding material assistance and her postwar position. In addition, argued London, a request for the severance of relations only could be met at once, with virtually the same moral effect on the Axis satellites as an actual declaration of war.

These arguments inclined the Americans toward the British position, as did military attractions such as the use of Turkish bases, the expulsion of Axis agents from Turkey, and the improved supply route to the eastern front. The Russians, however, responded with "flinty disapproval."<sup>397</sup> Turkey's impending rupture of relations was both too little and too late; the USSR therefore proposed to leave the Turks entirely to their own devices. By thus dissenting from the Anglo-American approach, the Soviets freed themselves to pursue an independent policy. They were soon to reveal it.

The Turks meantime were actively preparing for the impending rupture. On 22 July, Ankara announced that because of U-boat attacks on shipping within territorial waters, the Straits would immediately be closed to all foreign vessels. As the month ended, air-raid practices were imposed on many towns, and the reinforcement of anti-aircraft defences was expedited. The portent was clear: von Papen

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<sup>397</sup> Hull, op. cit., II, 1375-1376; Churchill, op. cit., VI, 80-81.

warned Saracoğlu that a break with Germany would "... deprive Turkey, finally, of her freedom of action ... [and] force her to enter the war ... with ... momentous consequences for the country." <sup>398</sup> That the Ambassador would soon be challenged to implement his threat was indicated on 1 August, when all Turkish shipping was ordered to put in immediately to domestic or neutral ports.

Throughout that night, GNA deputies in party caucus fully debated the impending decision. Ministers had been brought by special trains from all over Turkey to attend an extraordinary Cabinet session. On the following day Prime Minister Saracoğlu announced before the Assembly the severance of Turkish relations with Germany.

Our Republic is approaching its twenty-first anniversary. If we look back over these years, we shall see that each of them was filled with ... achievements designed to benefit our country. In this ancient homeland of ours, ruined by inefficient administration and continual wars, the only secret of having in so short a time ... created so many works of reconstruction rests in our unshakeable faith in the watchword "Peace at Home and Peace Abroad," set down by our immortal chief Atatürk ... But the spectre of war reappeared on the world scene ... in 1935 when Italy enslaved Ethiopia. Almost every page of the calendar that followed ... is full of ... outrages against international law ... Thus it came about that Turkey decided ... to collaborate with the nations uniting to resist aggression. <sup>399</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> In Bulletin, XXI(1944), 653. According to von Papen (op. cit., p. 527), President İnönü during his last interview with the Ambassador made a final offer to serve as mediator between the Western Allies and Germany.

<sup>399</sup> In Ulus, 2 August 1944.

The Prime Minister also recounted how Turkish neutrality had been designed to aid the Allies, and delivered an apology for the 1941 Treaty with Germany. Finally, he revealed that both London and Washington had pledged economic assistance to alleviate the consequences of the break with the Reich. The Assembly then voted unanimously in favour of the severance of both diplomatic and commercial relations, and on the following day pardoned all persons of Allied nationality held for political or military offences.

A large segment of the press contended rather sensitively that Turkey's action had been executed without pressure from the Allies; a declaration of war would not be made except in reply to an act of aggression. National defensive preparations were nevertheless feverishly intensified. On 8 August, the first act of Nazi retaliation occurred: the motorvessel Mefkure was torpedoed off the Black Sea coast. A group of three hundred German diplomatic officials were interned when exchange arrangements collapsed, and various Nazi publications (including the notorious Türkische Post) suppressed. Yet the Government moved with great caution in liquidating the numerous German commercial enterprises in Turkey. In addition, full diplomatic and commercial relations were maintained with other Axis Powers including Japan, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria. <sup>400</sup>

<sup>400</sup> The representatives of these four Powers in Ankara had announced their desire to maintain relations. See Bulletin, XXI(1944), 701.



Although London and Ankara had agreed to consider the severance of relations with Germany

... as a first step towards effective belligerency, it became evident from further developments that the question of Turkey's participation in a war in the Balkans was a matter on which the three Great Powers were not in perfect agreement. 401

The first of these developments was the installation in Sofia on 9 September of a "people's democratic" régime. Blackout regulations in Istanbul were suddenly intensified (after having been relaxed in late August), and were explained somewhat obliquely in the press. Yalçın, for example, admitted that certain precautions against possible Soviet aggression were being taken, yet suggested (in sanguine contradiction of his wartime theme) that no one expected Russia to demand the Straits once she had conquered the Balkans. 402

More indicative of Turkish opinion was the report of the new British Ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson, who replaced Knatchbull-Hugessen in early September. He apparently conceived his mission to be one of reassurance concerning Soviet expansion, but later admitted that the "... Turks listened

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401 Açıkalin, op. cit., p. 487.

402 See his articles in Tanin, 10-12 September 1944. A more sensible comment was that attributed to the Soviet Consul in Istanbul. Amused by the blackouts, he observed that they were unnecessary: the Red Army would attack only in daytime. For the frigid Soviet reaction to Turkey's break with Germany, see Pravda, 7 August 1944.

without appearing to be convinced. The Turks were right." <sup>403</sup> They now began to seek closer relations with the Western Allies, doubtless to counterbalance the threat from the northeast. On 14 September, a new Foreign Minister was appointed. A month later, the anniversary of the treaty with Britain was celebrated effusively in the press. <sup>404</sup>

The Turks began to lose hope for an independent Balkan bloc, turning their attention instead to British efforts in Greece. They greeted the liberation of Athens with great enthusiasm; the enterprising Yalçın looked forward to close cooperation between the two neighbours, whose security interests he described as identical. <sup>405</sup> This theme was taken up by President İnönü in a foreign policy address at the autumn sessional opening of the GNA on 1 November. He expressed the hope that the Great Powers would devise a post-war system of international security, to which Turkey could contribute by promoting a just and stable peace in the Balkans. His Government sought the development of indigenous democratic national institutions and would oppose any imposition of régimes inspired from abroad. Meanwhile, Turkey's alliance with Britain, "... after passing through severe tests remains fresh and alive." He concluded with

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<sup>403</sup> Maurice Peterson, Both Sides of the Curtain, London, Constable, 1950, p. 252.

<sup>404</sup> See for example Yalçın's "Victory of the Policy of Alliance with Britain," Tanın, 8 October 1944.

<sup>405</sup> Tanın, 18 October 1944.

the wish that "... relations between the two would become deeper and deeper in the future." 406

Three weeks later, İnönü informed Greece that Turkey would renounce all claims to the Dodecanese islands. Just as the press was capitalising on this gesture, however, civil war flared up violently across the Thracian frontier. Turkish editors commented that only British intervention prevented the Greek communists from extending the "Slavic bloc" through the Balkans to isolate Turkey from her Western Allies. Yalçın warned that unless Turkey remained loyal to Britain

... she would lose her independence; but Britain, too, might lose her position in the Middle East if she were to end her connexion with Turkey ... In 1941-1942 Turkey had saved [sic] Syria, Egypt, and Iraq by standing ... against the Nazi flood. She was ready to do so again ... against the "Trotskyite" movement threatening the Mediterranean. In the face of such danger, Britain and Turkey must live or die together. 407

The Turkish Government were now painfully aware of the need swiftly to harmonise their policies with those of the Anglo-Americans. Accordingly, the GNA on 3 January unanimously resolved to sever diplomatic and commercial relations with Japan. This action, to take effect three days later, had been preceded by mild (when compared to the pressure

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406 In Bulletin, XXI(1944), 980. For Turkish postwar objectives, see Ömer Faruk Davaz, "Turkey's Aspirations," Free Europe, X(20 October 1944), 120-121.  
 407 Tanin, 22 January 1945. By "Trotskyites" is meant the communist partisans.

exerted during the previous year) representations by the Allied Ambassadors. On 12 January, the Assembly voted again unanimously to comply with a British request that the Straits be opened immediately to vessels supplying the USSR.

It was the decision taken at the Yalta Conference that induced the Turks to take the final step towards belligerency. The erroneous report in November <sup>408</sup> that Turkey would participate in the forthcoming peace conference was corrected on 20 February, when the British Ambassador informed the new Foreign Minister, Hasan Saka, that only those nations at war with the Axis by 1 March 1945 would be invited to the San Francisco Conference. The Government thereupon convened the GNA (which was in recess until 5 March) for an extraordinary session on 23 February. Unanimous approval was then given to a declaration of war on the Axis, and a wry communiqué published explaining minutely the reasons for the action. As of 1 March, after five years and five months of calculated uncertainty, diplomatic savoir-faire (and not a small amount of plain good fortune), neutral Turkey at last joined the ranks of the belligerents.

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In Turkey, the declaration of war was received with reluctant approval. Sympathy for the beleaguered Germans had grown during the spring, when it was generally realised

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<sup>408</sup> See Haber, 21 November 1944.

that the Western Allies had no clear plans for halting the Soviet advance. Large crowds gathered at ports of exit to bid farewell to the German colony. It was also widely appreciated that the real issue remained for the future, and that to face it Turkey needed Anglo-American support.

In London and Washington, the Turkish entry into the war was generally welcomed. In Moscow, however, the reaction was above all sarcastic. The Turks were accused of supporting Nazism to the very end, of exploiting the war to amass gold, and of persecuting "democrats" <sup>409</sup> who had fought Fascist and pan-Turkist influence in the Republic. Indicative of the Russian attitude was Stalin's demand for a revision of the Montreux Convention: he could not accept "... a situation in which Turkey had a hand on Russia's throat." <sup>410</sup> When the Western Allies proved evasive, Stalin proceeded to take unilateral measures.

On 19 March 1945, Molotov informed Ambassador Sarper that in view of the profound changes wrought by war, the 1925 Turko-Soviet Treaty was anachronistic and needful of serious improvement. Simultaneously, a vitriolic press

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<sup>409</sup> For a brief and often unreliable account of wartime communist activity in Turkey, see W. Z. Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East, London, Kegan Paul, 1956, pp. 214-215.

<sup>410</sup> E. R. Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, London, Cape, 1950, pp. 237-238. For earlier Soviet proposals regarding the Straits, see pp. 117, 123; and Churchill, op. cit., V, 381.

campaign was launched against Turkey; Sarper was recalled for consultation. Ten days later, Ankara politically announced light sentences for the prisoners held since the pan-Turkist arrests of the preceding summer. <sup>411</sup>

The Turkish reply, delivered in Ankara on 7 April, described the Treaty as having for twenty years been "... a foundation stone in Turkey's foreign policy, as well as the symbol of friendship with Russia." The Government were nevertheless prepared to consider any Soviet proposals for a pact "better adapted to the present interests of the two countries." <sup>412</sup> The tone of the Moscow press thereupon

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<sup>411</sup> For the pan-Turkist movement, see above pp. 116-121; for the arrests, p. 164. The trial of these unfortunate scapegoats had begun in September and had followed an erratic course reflecting the vagaries of relations with Russia. For the trial, see Yeni Sabah, 3-6 February 1945 and (a Soviet account) Dantsig, op. cit., p. 289. For the sentences, see Aksam, 30 March 1945. The attention paid by Soviet propagandists was out of all proportion to the strength of the movement, as the trials were perhaps designed to show. But the Russian argument, that in view of government control over the Turkish press there must have been official patronage for the movement, had some validity. By October 1945, when the decision of 29 March was reviewed, Turko-Soviet relations were so unpleasant that the sentences were cancelled. A second trial was held in August 1946 (see Tasvir, 20 September 1946), after which all were acquitted in March 1947 (see Tasvir, 31 March 1947). A far more tragic (and rather less comic) case of appeasing the Russians was the forced repatriation in August 1945 of some two hundred refugees from Soviet tyranny. This infamous act can be understood only in terms of the complete lack of Anglo-American support for Turkey against Russian pressure.

<sup>412</sup> Açikalin, op. cit., p. 487; Bulletin, XXII(1945), 375.

softened, prompting Yalçın to write on the need for a new Straits régime reaffirming the rights of all Black Sea Powers. <sup>413</sup>

In an interview with Molotov on 7 June, however, Sarper discovered that the Soviets sought far more than mere revision. Molotov demanded a frontier rectification, bases on the Dardanelles, and joint defence of the Straits. <sup>414</sup> The last two demands were raised again at the Potsdam Conference, where Stalin secured Anglo-American recognition that the Straits régime should be revised and tacit acceptance of bilateral Turko-Soviet negotiations. <sup>415</sup>

With Turkey thus exposed both geographically and diplomatically, the Russians continued to raise the price she should be forced to pay for her neutrality. Moscow radio suggested the formation of a more "democratic" government in Ankara; the Soviet Ambassador demanded acceptance of Bulgarian expansion in Thrace. <sup>416</sup> When Turkey rejected the Straits proposals in July, the Armenian Soviet Republic mobilised to press for cession of the so-called "Armenian lands"

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<sup>413</sup> In Tanin, 14 and 18 April 1945.

<sup>414</sup> For details, see Sadak, op. cit., p. 458.

<sup>415</sup> This may seem tendentious, but see Sokolnicki, op. cit., p. 29; McNeill, op. cit., pp. 607-608; Leahy, op. cit., pp. 475-477; Emil Lengyel, World Without End, New York, John Day, 1953, pp. 169-170; and G.E. Kirk, Short History of the Middle East, London, Methuen, 1948, p. 268. (All other references to Kirk refer to his Middle East in the War.)

<sup>416</sup> McNeill, op. cit., p. 608; The Times, 28 June 1945.

in Eastern Turkey. Not to be outdone, the Georgians claimed a Black Sea littoral some 180 miles in length on the grounds it had once been theirs. In the east, the Soviets launched a rebellious Kurdish autonomy movement and staged numerous border incidents; in the west, Greek communists embarked upon a campaign of frontier violence in support of territorial claims to Trakya and indeed to Istanbul. <sup>417</sup>

The unequivocal Turkish reply to these noisy provocations was to continue total mobilisation of the army. With growing (if belated) Anglo-American moral support, a long series of notes began to issue forth from Ankara to Moscow, rejecting the repeated Soviet demands. The Turks put up a brave front, in the belief that the Russians were exploiting the postwar chaos to stake their imperialist claims before the international dust settled. This front was perhaps best characterised by a Turkish note of 26 August 1946, delivered at the zenith of the Soviet pressure campaign:

The surest guarantee of [Soviet security] ... is offered not by striving to gain a privileged position on the Straits which cannot be reconciled

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<sup>417</sup> For these various pressures, see A.C. Edwards, "The Impact of the War on Turkey," International Affairs, XXII (July 1946), 389-400; W.L. Westermann, "Kurdish Independence and Russian Expansion," Foreign Affairs, XXIV (July 1946), 675-686; Reader Bullard, Britain and the Middle East, London, Hutchinson, 1951, p. 140; "The Background of Russo-Turkish Relations" and "Russia, Turkey, and the Straits," The World Today, II (February and September 1946), 57-65 and 396-405 respectively.



with the dignity and sovereign rights of an independent State, but on the contrary, by restoring relations of confidence and amity with a strong Turkey .... 418

The exchange of notes continued but remained inconclusive, prompting the Turks to observe that in

... the daily tirade, the charge which the Russians seemed most to enjoy repeating was that Turkey had remained neutral during the war. Indeed, one can readily believe that Russia's greatest regret is that Turkey was not occupied and then "liberated." 419

#### B. The Essence of Turkish Neutrality

##### iv

That Turkey remained neutral was initially the fault of the Russians themselves. In the spring of 1939 when

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418 In Sokolnicki, op. cit., p. 34. For other notes concerning the Straits, and Soviet charges of Turkish wartime infractions of Montreux, see pp. 29-37. For a Soviet account of the controversy, see Dantsig, op. cit., pp. 296-298. For the Turkish view, see the admirable articles by Cemil Bilsel, "International Law in Turkey," and "The Turkish Straits in the Light of Recent Turkish-Soviet Correspondence," American Journal of International Law, XXXVIII(October 1944), 546-556 and XLI(October 1947), 727-747 respectively. See also his general history, Türk Bogazları, İstanbul, Hak Kitabevi, 1948. Another Turkish account is A.S. Esmer, "The Straits: Crux of World Politics," Foreign Affairs, XXV(January, 1947), 290-302. See also H.N. Howard, "Germany, the Soviet Union, and Turkey during World War II," Department of State Bulletin, XIX(18 July 1948), 63-78, his "The United States and the Problem of the Turkish Straits," The Middle East Journal, I(January 1942), 59-72, and of course op. cit. in toto.

419 Sadak, op. cit., p. 459. For the Soviet charge, see Dantsig, op. cit., pp. 294-296.

the Turks began negotiations with Britain and France, it was their clearly revealed intention to conclude a treaty with the Soviet Union also. This far-sighted policy was abandoned only in the aftermath of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the unsuccessful pilgrimage of Saracoğlu to Moscow. The twenty-two months of Russo-German cooperation which followed revived the traditional (although latent) fear of Muscovy, and drew the Turks closer to their Anglo-French Allies. Five times these Allies invited Turkey to enter the war, and five times she cautiously withdrew.

The initial invitation coincided with the end of the first of the four phases which characterised Turkish neutrality. From the outbreak of war until June 1940 Ankara was a willing partner of London and Paris, and reportedly came close to entering the battle. In the heat of the 1954 election campaign, Prime Minister Menderes claimed that

In 1940, before the collapse of France, he [İnönü] almost drove us into the war. All the preparations for this purpose had been completed, speeches had been written and deputies assigned to deliver them had been sent to the various vilayets ... [But] exactly on this occasion France fell and ... Turkey was saved from entering the war. After that ... its direction was deflected from her. If the war had moved toward Turkey, or if it had been in the interests of one of the belligerents, İsmet Paşa would not have [prevented Turkish entry] ... We were outside the zone of war, and there we remained. 420

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<sup>420</sup> In Zafer, 25 April 1954. For support for this claim, see Ekrem Rize, 1939-1949 Türkiye'nin Düstüğü Harb Tehlikesi: Kacırılan Fırsat, Bugünkü Vaziyet, İstanbul, Alışan Dobra Matbaası, n.d., p. 4.

This charge has never been substantiated (nor for that matter denied) but if purged of its partisan phraseology it seems not unfounded.

Yet when their French ally was replaced by a hostile Italy,<sup>421</sup> and British inability to provide military aid demonstrated, the Turks became disenchanted. Their paramount interests were in the defence of Kemalism. Atatürk was dead, but his achievements remained; lesser men held power, but they at least made a virtue of prudence. During this phase, which lasted until the summer of 1941, German diplomacy was nevertheless unable to achieve anything more than a non-aggression pact.

Likewise, a second Allied invitation met with failure. A Turko-Greco-Yugoslav alliance was mooted during the spring of 1941, but its attraction paled beside the Turkish General Staff declaration that belligerency would be suicidal. The Turks held a far more realistic view of the Balkan situation than did their British allies (desperately struggling to build a defensive barrier of "the mesmerised Balkan neutrals."<sup>422</sup>) Ankara therefore stepped clear of the tragedies during that catastrophic spring, but could not help be-

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<sup>421</sup> For a claim that the Anglo-Turkish alliance considerably delayed Italian belligerency, see Howard Kelly, "A Brief Sketch of the Policy of the Turkish Republic," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, XXXII(1945), 251. It is also suggested there that the alliance increased British influence in the Muslim world.

<sup>422</sup> Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 364.

ing affected by the Axis triumph. The British were at their military nadir, with no choice other than to accept continued Turkish neutrality.

Following the Turko-German Pact (which Saracoğlu himself allegedly has admitted made the Nazi assault on Russia inevitable <sup>423</sup>), Turkey no longer had a clear policy and a united domestic front. This third phase was marked primarily by a subtle retreat from non-belligerency (harbîn hari-cinde) to genuine neutrality. German forces were establishing themselves with terrifying rapidity on two-thirds of Republican frontiers. There arose a trying conflict between economic interest and Turkish political policies, a division which proved useful to the resourceful von Papen. Commercial circles profited handsomely from the Axis trade connexion; the military were much impressed by the awesome efficiency of the Nazi war-machine; pan-Turkist elements awaited the destruction of Russia with gleeful anticipation; the official élite and the intelligentsia maintained a delicate balance weighted slightly in favour of the Allies.

The undisputed leadership of this last group was demonstrated by the maintenance of a precarious neutrality sympathetic to Britain even at the zenith of Axis success in the Caucasus and in Egypt. The instinctive Russophobia of the population, having been rendered less articulate by

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<sup>423</sup> See the interview in Gunther, op. cit., p. 188.

Kemalist diplomacy between the wars, reasserted itself; yet among the leading circles at least there seemingly never existed any overwhelming support for the Reich. On the contrary, there remained bitter memories of what German collaboration had meant during World War I, and there existed an acute awareness that Nazi victory would be infinitely more unpleasant than a Western triumph. This view was strengthened by American entry into the war: most Turks were then convinced that Allied success was not in doubt, but merely a question of time.

This simple conviction was in no way compromised by the requirements of political expediency. Concessions to the Reich were necessary from time to time, but seldom more than the inevitable minimum. With the turn of the tide at the end of 1942, Turkish neutrality entered a fourth phase in which this minimum gradually was washed entirely away.

The expectation of Allied victory was, however, much complicated by Soviet presence among the Allies. This ominous consideration largely explains the doggedness with which the Turks bargained with both Axis and Allied Powers during the interminable series of trade negotiations. In return for strategic raw materials and various forms of political benevolence, the Turks pressed consistently and persistently (even after the Nazi threat had waned) for what seemed to be an infinite amount of armaments. One cannot

but conclude that these weapons were thought necessary for the eventual defence of Turkey against Soviet aggression. If this be true, the Turks were lamentably accurate in their assessment of the postwar world. <sup>424</sup>

By 1943, and much to her relief, Turkey had become something of a bystander in the world conflict. With the Axis out of North Africa and southern Russia, with Allied clients established throughout the Muslim World, and with the Straits increasingly less vital in an age of airpower, the Turks found their beleaguered Republic to be peripheral both to the Germans and the British. This relief was not to last long, for that year marked the third, fourth, and fifth occasions on which they were firmly "requested" to declare war. Once at Adana and twice at Cairo the Turks pled what had become the traditional case for continued non-belligerency: that inadequate military power made all but the role of "protective neutral pad" suicidal.

v

Until 1943, the Turks had substantial grounds for arguing that

In being able to remain a bulwark protecting [the Allied Middle East]... Turkey rendered the greatest possible service to Great Britain ... that could

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<sup>424</sup> See the interview in Cretzianu (op. cit., pp. 116-117) where Menemencioğlu in March 1944 traced in an atlas a line which "... marks with almost mathematical precision the current boundaries of the Soviet empire."

have been expected from this [Anglo-Turkish] alliance. It is no matter of coincidence that Hitler's armies did not march through Asia Minor, but the result of the Turkish Government's untiring and hard efforts. 425

Even the Soviets sullenly agreed with this contention during the critical period of their belligerency, while a contemporary American observer wrote that Turkey's "greatest service to the Allies" was to form a "determined neutral buffer" between the Near East and the Axis Balkans. 426 Virtually all British strategists concurred; in addition, many suggested that the example of Turkey had a moderating effect on Arab nationalism and fifth-column activities. 427 As the war developed after Stalingrad and al-'Alamayn, however, the rôle of immobile bastion became in British eyes increasingly inadequate.

Herein lay the paradox of the Turkish position in Allied

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425 From the speech by İnönü to the GNA on 1 November 1945, in N.A. Kocaeli, "The Development of the Anglo-Turkish Alliance," Asiatic Review, XLII(1946), 349. The author offers a resourceful defence of Turkish neutrality, emphasising the officially favoured "bastion" theory, as does Açıklık, op. cit., pp. 484-485. See also İsmet İnönü, Turkey: Ten Eventful Years, New York, Turkish Information Office, [1948?], no pagination.

426 J.S. Badeau, "East and West of Suez," Headline Books, no. 39(1943), p. 89.

427 Churchill in particular seems to have overemphasised this effect. See op. cit., II, 173-174 (and the review in International Affairs, IX(January 1951), 86). One point worthy of exploration is the Turkish impact on Kābul, which seems to have been considerable. See above, note 28, p. 13.

strategy. Having proved her usefulness as a neutral, Turkey in 1943 and 1944 was pressed to join in a Balkan campaign. The buffer was to become a base for offensive operations and perhaps also a makeweight against the advancing Russians. Supported by Allied Mediterranean forces, Turkey by 1944 could have coöperated in such a campaign without grave risk. It seems clear that had a definite battle plan been presented to her, Turkey would have been willing to enter the conflict. That this was not done was perhaps primarily the fault not of the Turks, but of the strategists in Washington, who denied even the minor diversion of forces desired by Churchill. Had his plan been brought to fruition, it seems clear that the belligerency of fifty Turkish divisions would have contributed signally to a different Balkan situation than that which obtains so sadly today.

In this light, Turkish refusal to enter the war in 1944 may be seen as part of a colossal political error. It is difficult to assess the culpability of those responsible for the rejection of the far-sighted Churchillian strategy. Certainly American disinterest in, even opposition to, the plan was a major factor in Turkish reticence. Further, Churchill in his inimitable exuberance usually took the Turks for granted. He did not allow for their understandable reluctance to jeopardise the achievements of Kemalism, and he - unlike them - did not always distinguish between military fact and the grand design.



The Turkish Government has been called pusillanimous for seeking the reestablishment of an independent Balkan bloc without being willing to join in the liberation of the area. Yet the Dodecanese débâcle gave ample cause for hesitation, as if the absence of a war plan alone was not dissuasion enough. In addition, Roosevelt and his advisers "openly encouraged" the insatiable Turkish demands for armaments.<sup>428</sup> Had success in the Aegean precipitated further offensive operations in the north, and had the Americans extended the aid requested by the Turks, it seems reasonable to assume that by 1944 Turkey's interests in the Balkans would have led her to declare war. As it was, the Americans held the cards, the British bluffed, and the wily Turks passed.

## vi

Viewed across a span of twelve years, the Turkish decision to tread the tortuous path of neutrality seems to have been a wise, if unheroic, one. With no major Balkan campaign possible, the Turks could have made only a marginal contribution to the Allied triumph. They therefore had little to fight for outside their borders yet everything to defend within. For this reason they continued preparations to meet the new threat which they correctly predicted would arise from the ashes of Nazi defeat. They had learned the

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<sup>428</sup> Toynbee, Neutrals, p. 365.

lesson of World War I (which for them had meant a bloody decade of conflict beginning in 1912) and pursued consistently what could only be called a policy of realism and self-interest.

Non-belligerency for the Turks was not a negative evasion of the principles of collective security. It was in fact a positive decision which both safeguarded the Kemalist edifice and also contributed, perhaps as much as any other policy would have done, to the defeat of Nazism. The last wish of Atatürk, confided to İnönü from his death bed, was to a large extent fulfilled by the wartime policy of the Republic:

In the coming war, Turkey must not again risk destruction; above all she must not fight on the side of Hitler. If she must take up arms at all, let it be on the side of Western civilisation.

It is not easy to judge Turkish policy during the war, for during those five eventful years (and indeed since then), the Turks were drawn fully if unwillingly onto the international chessboard. Turkish diplomacy was restricted largely to responding appropriately to a series of external challenges. That these responses were so successful was due not least to the ability of Turkey's ruling élite, whose traditions of efficient public service could be traced back to Ottoman days. The diplomatic capabilities of this group was increased in the nineteen-thirties by the creation of a career foreign

service and by the establishment in Ankara of the Siyasal Bilgiler Okulu (School of Political Science).

The opening of this excellent School was indicative of another aspect of Turkish diplomacy: its almost invariable precedence over domestic affairs. This could be seen clearly during the war, when considerations of foreign policy frequently determined the conduct of government at home. If geography is the "mother of politics," then the reason for this predominance is clear. Between three continents and astride the Straits, Turkey must live with a security problem far greater than that of more isolated small states. Indeed, she has been for centuries a vital element in the imperial strategy of nearly every Great Power. The Turks' response to the Nazi menace during the war and the Tsarist threat reemergent thereafter demonstrated clearly a heritage of bitterly learned experience in exploiting the balance of power to their own advantage.

If geography is the mother of politics, then perhaps it is also the father of realism. Turkish diplomacy during the war was nothing if not realistic. Idealism was a luxury the Turks could not afford, for their struggle was a stark one of survival in the midst of the contending camps. Only with this assured, and their Kemalist achievements thus protected, could they seek to turn wartime conditions to the advantage of their own national development.

Finally, this realism was based on the recent fact of nationhood. Only a "Turkey for the Turks" could have maintained itself as a stable bastion, master in its own house, amid the chaos of war. Unencumbered by Ottoman complications, the Turks were free to pursue, always with skill and determination, and often with evasion and procrastination, the clearly defined interests of a sovereign and united nation.

## vii

The pursuance of a neutral foreign policy was not without its effect on both the national economy and the domestic political scene. The wartime competition for Turkish products, for example, was not an absolute good. On the credit side, the national debt rose only from TL620 to TL1500 million, a moderate increase when compared to that of most other states during the period. It had the additional virtue of being almost entirely an internal debt. The five-fold increase in the note issue, designed in part to facilitate retirement of this debt, was more than offset by the gold holdings of the central bank. Here the Turks turned the competition between Allied and Axis purchasers to good use: their bullion hoard rose from 26 in 1939 to 195 tons in 1945, despite repayment in gold of most of their foreign indebtedness. <sup>429</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Figures approximated from Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 389-390; and Ömer Celal Sarç, "Economic Policy of the New Turkey," The Middle East Journal, II(October 1948), 435-439. For ...

Ankara displayed a splendid talent for oriental bargaining in negotiating trade agreements with both Berlin and London. For most of the war, only Germany was in a position to supply the industrial goods which the Turks described to the British as "essential." What they obtained from the Reich here, in exchange for chromium and other raw materials, was quite impressive. On the other hand, even these lucrative deals could not maintain the prewar pace of Kemalist development.

In many areas the economy stagnated as supplies of numerous essential imports disappeared. Shortages of replacement parts, for example, wrought havoc with the transport system; often even imported foodstuffs were scarce. Worst of all was the soaring inflation which resulted from the competition for Turkish exports and the crushing burden of continuous mobilisation. Despite a number of unsuccessful corrective measures, certain sectors of the population prospered while the masses suffered under a rising rate of taxation. Wide-scale rationing was impossible because of inadequacies in administrative and transport facilities.

The full impact of the inflated price structure was not felt until the last year of war, when Turkish producers

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other accounts of wartime economic difficulties see Eleanor Bisbee, The New Turks, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951, p. 193, and H.V. Cooke, Challenge and Response in the Middle East, New York, Harper, 1952, pp. 259-285.

found themselves unable to compete in the reopening world market.<sup>430</sup> Disparity between official exchange rates and actual currency values meant inevitably the emergence of black market operations. Turkey was faced with a painful choice between devaluation of the lira or compulsory price reduction. She chose the latter, with only moderate success, and with great disruption throughout the economy.

The impact on Turkish political life of war, neutrality, and association with the Allies was also considerable. The unfortunate Varlık Vergisi, for example, seems not to have been without effect in the astonishing election upset of 1950. Further, the pan-Turkist movement was apparently consigned to oblivion as a result of its wartime ambitions. Most important of all was the popular reaction against the stern authoritarianism which had characterised Turkey during the war. This régime had reversed the trend toward liberalisation evident until 1939, and had seriously impaired freedom of public expression. Press laws<sup>431</sup> to ensure harmony

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<sup>430</sup> See "Turkish Prices Must Come Down," and "Problem of High Prices in Turkey," Great Britain and the East, LXI (December 1945) and LXII (January 1946), 37-39 and 47-48 respectively.

<sup>431</sup> Article 50 of the Press Law permitted indefinite suspension of any paper "not complying with government policy." No censorship existed, but editors ran the constant risk of financial hardship. In the GNA, the only real freedom of expression obtained at the secret meetings of the RPP. Even here, discussion usually turned about matters of detail, due to fears of not being renominated for election by the party leadership. This same consideration inhibited the "Independent Group" within the RPP and the few independent Deputies permitted to run for office.

between editorial opinion and official policy were doubtless necessary in view of Turkey's precarious international perch, but they served only to intensify the intelligentsia's desire for greater liberty. In addition, the commercial circles that had partaken so deeply of the fruits of neutrality bitterly resented the pervasive state interference in the economy. Finally, the toiling masses were enamoured of any change promising relief from the heavy burden of austerity and wartime taxation.

All these dissatisfied groups could point to the victorious Allies as models for the future. As a result, when the United Nations Charter was brought before the GNA, several Deputies proposed that

... when the movements of democracy and liberty have won a complete victory in the entire world, and when the principle of respect for democratic liberties is about to be internationally guaranteed, there can be no doubt that the whole nation, from the President of the Republic to the last citizen, is animated by the same democratic ideals. 432

The President responded in November 1945 with the announcement that the time had come for the formation of a responsible opposition party, and for the foundation of a closer Turkish association with her democratic friends. The Republic of Turkey, having brilliantly executed a wartime policy of defending two decades of Kemalist achievement, thus embarked upon the next step in the remarkable Turkish transformation.

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432 On 7 June 1945, in Rustow, op. cit., p. 318.

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