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**The Anglo-Turkish Alliance 1939-1940**

**Anatomy of a Failure**

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July 1992

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of  
Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy



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### Abstract

In October 1939, an alliance was concluded between Britain, France and Turkey. By June 1940, this alliance had completely failed. Amidst the general collapse of allied policy, the specific reasons for the failure of the Tripartite Alliance, and in particular, of the Anglo-Turkish relationship, have gone unnoticed, and where noticed, have been located temporally, almost without exception, in the period after June 1940; after the time, that is, beyond which it was extremely unlikely that there would be any fruitful Anglo-Turkish cooperation, however favourable might have seemed the conditions of the day.

It is the contention of this thesis that the Tripartite Alliance came at the end of a period during which Britain and Turkey attempted to reconcile their often conflicting interests in order to ensure common security in the Near East. Between 1934-1939, contrary to the usual belief, the dynamics of Anglo-Turkish relations most often led Turkey to seek a formal relationship, which Britain, for reasons of its own, was reluctant to grant. Once conceded, in May 1939, with the proclamation of the Joint Guarantee, the fledgling Anglo-Turkish condominium promptly began to sicken, and by June 1940, had failed altogether. The primary reasons for this collapse were four. Firstly, the political underpinnings of the alliance never seemed sufficient to permit either partner to consider advantageous the activation of the alliance once made. Particularly paralyzing were the absence of an Anglo-Russian accommodation, the failure to obtain a satisfactory statement of Italy's policy, and the total inability of the Balkan states to combine effectively against external threats. Secondly, the Alliance was afflicted by certain powerful dilemmas within Britain's global strategy which prevented British planners from coming to any lasting consensus regarding Turkey's role in imperial defence, aside from a common reluctance to consider activation of the alliance with Turkey in any case except common response to direct attack -- an attack, of course, which never came. Thirdly, if the alliance were to be made effective, sufficient and timely assistance -- chiefly, material and economic assistance -- would have to be provided the Turkish partner. Ankara insisted upon, and London and Paris readily conceded, this basic reality. Nonetheless, during this early period, both Britain and France remained unable or unwilling to provide anything like the level of assistance required if Turkey were to consider a more straight-forward policy line, and, in particular, if it were to move toward a total break with Germany. Finally, the numerous inter-allied Staff conversations, which were a principle feature of the Alliance's early years, failed to produce a single viable option for the fruitful deployment of common forces against any possible enemy. Without such a plan, the entry of Turkey to the war would have been worse than ill-advised; it would have been pointless.

Once the Alliance had definitely foundered on these rocks, in the infinitely more menacing conditions existing after June 1940, it was entirely unlikely that Turkey would permit the activation of an alliance no longer consistent, by any reading, with its essential interests.

## Résumé

En Octobre 1939, une alliance fut conclue entre la Grande-Bretagne, la France, et la Turquie. Cependant par juin 1940, cette alliance s'était complètement dissoute. Au centre de l'effondrement de l'alliance des trois pays, et en particulier, celle de la relation anglo-turque, ont passé inaperçues, et, si par hasard elles furent notées, elles se trouvèrent, presque sans exception, dans la période qui suivit juin 1940. Passé cette période, il fut extrêmement improbable qu'une coopération anglo-turque puisse être fructueuse même si les conditions d'alors s'y prêtaient.

C'est l'intention de ce résumé de démontrer que l'alliance des trois pays survint à la fin d'une période durant laquelle la Grande-Bretagne et la Turquie tentaient de reconcilier leurs intérêts opposés afin de s'assurer une sécurité relative au Moyen-Orient. Entre 1934 et 1939, contrairement à l'usage courant, le dynamisme de la relation anglo-turque laisse souvent les Turques dans une position où ces derniers sont obligés de chercher une relation formelle, pour laquelle, Londres pour ses raisons particulières est réticent à leur accorder. Une fois concédé, en mai 1939, avec la proclamation du rapport d'aide mutuelle, le condominium anglo-turque commença à proprement sombrer, et par juin 1940, avait carrément échoué. Les quatre raisons principales pour cet affaiblissement sont décrites ci-après. Premièrement, la reprise politique de l'alliance faite par aucun des partenaires. Cela s'explique particulièrement par l'absence des arrangements anglo-russes, le manquement des l'obtention d'un compte-rendu satisfaisant des politiques de l'Italie, et du manque d'efficacité totale des Balkans dans la défense lors d'attaques extérieures. Secondo, l'alliance fut affligée de certains dilemmes à l'intérieur de la stratégie globale de la Grande-Bretagne, ce qui prévint les stratagèmes britanniques de faire consensus sur le rôle de la Turquie dans la défense impériale advenant la cas d'une attaque -- qui ne vint jamais. Tertio, si l'alliance devait être efficace, une assistance matérialistique et économique devait être fournie à la Turquie. Ankara insista, Londres et Paris concédèrent cette réalité. Néanmoins, durant cette période, la France et la Grande-Bretagne restèrent incapables et non disposées à fournir l'assistance requise si la Turquie était à considérer une politique avant-gardiste et en particulier si elle avait se séparer totalement de l'Allemagne. Finalement, les nombreuses conversations de l'état-major inter-alliés qui étaient la principale fonction de l'alliance à ces débuts, faillit à la tâche en ne produisant pas une seule option valable en vue du déploiement des forces communes contre un ennemi possible. Sans ce plan, l'entrée de la Turquie dans la guerre n'aurait été non seulement impolitiquement viable, mais aurait été futile. Une fois que l'alliance eut définitivement formé ses bases, et dans l'infinité des conditions plus menaçantes existant après juin 1940, il était très improbable que la Turquie permettrait l'entrée en vigueur d'une alliance inconsistante avec ses intérêts essentielles.

### A Note on Translations and Maps

All following maps and translations, except where indicated in notes, are my own. Apologies are in order to French and Turkish readers for errors which may have crept into translations and transcriptions. Maps are drawn from text information found in manuscript sources, and may contain some few errors. In British documents, lists of Turkish place names contain numerous errors including obsolete usage, phonetic English spellings, and direct transcriptions from the Turkish without making use of the uniquely Turkish letters i, ö, ü, ş, ç, and ğ. Where lists have been copied, I have given them exactly as found in British text and indicated source. Where information so derived has been reproduced on a map, in the few cases where identification is not immediately obvious, the "best guess" method has been used, and where even this has not been possible, the excepted place name has been indicated on the map, and noted, for example "airfield unidentified".

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List of Abbreviations Used in Main Text

Abbreviation	Abbreviated Term
AAA	Air Attaché Ankara
AA	Anti-Aircraft
AFC	Anglo-French Committee
AOC	Air Officer Commanding
AOCME	Air Officer Commanding Middle East
Adm	Admiralty
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
AT	Anti-Tank
C in C Med	Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean
CAB	Cabinet
CAS	Chief of Air Staff
CCB	Control of Contraband
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
CFS	Central Flying School
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
CNS	Chief of Naval Staff
COS	Chiefs of Staff Subcommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence
D Plans	Director of [Naval] Plans
DCDS	Deputy Chief of Defence Staff
DCOS	Deputy Chiefs of Staff
DCNS	Deputy Chief of Naval Staff
DD Ops	Deputy Director of [Naval] Operations
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence
DMI&O	Director of Military Intelligence and Operations
DMO	Director of Military Operations
DNI	Director of Naval Intelligence
DQMG	Deputy Quarter-Master General

Abbreviation	Abbreviated Term
ECGP	Export Credit Guarantee Department [Foreign Office]
EW	Electronic Warfare
FO	Foreign Office
FTS	Flight Training School
GHQME	General Headquarters Middle East
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOCME	General Officer Commanding Middle East
HE	High Explosive
ISTDC	Inter-Service Tactical Development Committee (a SubCommittee of the JPC)
JIB	Joint Intelligence Bureau
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee (generally the Joint Intelligence SubCommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence)
JPC	Joint Planning SubCommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence)
M.I3	Military Intelligence Bureau Three
MAA	Military Attaché Ankara
MND	Minister or Ministry of National Defence
NAA	Naval Attaché Ankara
OKW	OberkommandWermacht
RAF	Royal Air Force or Royal Air Force Base
RAFME	Royal Air Force Middle East
RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
RE	Royal Engineers
RM	Royal Marines
RN	Royal Navy
RNR	Royal Navy Reserve
RNVR	Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve
SAA	Small Arms Ammunition
SO	Staff Officer

Abbreviation	Abbreviated Term
WO	War Office

**Notes on Abbreviations:**

1. When used for the first time in main text, abbreviated terms have been given in full with abbreviation following in brackets.
2. Closest approximate abbreviation has been given for Turkish persons and departments. For example, Marshal Çakmak was not known as the CDS, but this common Western term closest approximates the position he held in the Turkish military.

### Introduction

On 12 May 1939, a joint Anglo-Turkish Guarantee was announced simultaneously in London and Ankara. On 23 June, France, having agreed to the cession of Hatay to Turkey, adhered to the guarantee, making it tripartite. On 17 October, after long and sometimes rancorous negotiations, the Tripartite Guarantee, became the Tripartite Treaty, further defined by a Military Convention signed by the regional Commanders-in-Chief the following day. On 8 January 1940, in Paris, Numan Menemencioğlu signed on behalf of Turkey three commercial agreements which aimed to assist the Turks in financing their rearmament program, and in potential, their participation in the war. That same day, Turkey lifted the Suspensive Clause which had hitherto restricted the action of the Tripartite Alliance. In effect, subject to the limitations of Treaty and Convention, Turkey linked itself politically and militarily to Britain and France and was promised in exchange concessions detailed in the instruments Menemencioğlu had negotiated and signed. Four months later, Germany attacked France in the West. In June, Italy entered the war. In short order, the tripartite relationship failed so completely that it might as well not have been -- at least insofar as it was of benefit to the British and French partners.

Why this failure occurred is a question which has scarcely been addressed; and where addressed has been so in a way unlikely to supply sufficient answers. The principle writers on wartime



Turkish Foreign Policy -- Derengil,<sup>1</sup> Weber,<sup>2</sup> Ataov,<sup>3</sup> Weisband,<sup>4</sup> -- have all largely ignored the "phoney war" period; or, where like Derengil they have addressed themselves to it, have viewed it as the lead-up to, and as consistent with, the period in which they are truly interested -- that following the Winter 1940-1941. All have failed to recognize that Turkish Foreign Policy was at once less and more consistent than they have depicted it: less consistent in that it was episodic, with the period between the Russian defection from the Peace Front in 1939, and the collapse of France clearly separating a prewar from a wartime foreign policy; more consistent, in that the Turks throughout did have foreign policy aspirations of their own, a world view, and ideological preferences among the powers, and were not, as Weber and to a lesser extent Derengil show a marked tendency to describe them, purely opportunistic. Turkish policy was consistent until October 1939, and gradually faded thereafter into the enduring egoism so evident after the collapse of France and the entry of Italy into the war. To describe it as purely egoistic throughout, or to view

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<sup>1</sup> S. Derengil, Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1989.

<sup>2</sup> F. Weber, The Evasive Neutral. Germany, Britain and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War, (Missouri: St Louis) 1979.

<sup>3</sup> T. Ataov, Turkish Foreign Policy 1939-1945, (Ankara) 1965.

<sup>4</sup> C. Weisband, Turkish Foreign Policy 1943-1945. Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics, (Princeton: Princeton) 1973.

the prewar and early war period as merely the anteroom to the wartime period, is a grave logical error. Turkey pursued alliance with Britain with fixed determination after 1934 and continued to do so until such an alliance was achieved in 1939. It was neither trapped nor tricked into the tripartite relationship; in fact, the Tripartite Treaty, the Military Convention, and the commercial agreements of January 1940 were largely Turkish inspired and responsive to Turkish desiderata. If Britain, and to a lesser degree France, could have avoided them, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that there would have been no Treaty, no Convention and certainly no commercial agreements. Having inspired, insisted upon, and largely authored the agreements of 1939, it would be strange if it had never been the intention of the Turks to honour the elements of the Alliance if they could have done so to any advantage. The collapse of the Alliance in the Summer of 1940 then, is not to be seen as the logical out-growth of Turkey's prewar policy, but as a sign of the comprehensive defeat of that policy, and its replacement by a new, wartime policy in which the Tripartite Treaty was an incongruous reminder of a greatly different time. As İnönü was the first to admit, in the Summer of 1940 Turkey's prewar conceptions proved grossly inadequate. All Turkey's policies were rendered nugatory by the failure of the premises upon they had been based and the attempt made of necessity to start building anew on a site almost completely razed by the disasters of May and June. The Turks ran out of policies and rediscovered politics.

A further failure of the chroniclers of Turkey's wartime foreign policy comes in the matter of the documentation they have chosen to present their case. Turkey's archives being closed for the years 1914-1945, the best collection on Turkish Foreign policy resides in the Public Records Office (PRO) in London. With the exception of Weber, each of these historians has based his work in whole, or primarily, on Foreign Office documents held at the PRO. Of course, this is insufficient, and not only because it excludes Turkish material -- unavailable in any case -- but because it is their purpose to describe a foreign policy in time of war, and for this, Foreign Office documents are plainly inadequate. Cabinet and Service Collections are essential if even the British half of the Anglo-Turkish relationship is to be understood: British policy in the Near East was always a function of imperial defence, and failure to understand the requirements of imperial defence is, therefore, tantamount to failure to understand British policy. In addition, Service collections contain accounts of the Anglo-Turkish and Tripartite Staff Conversations and Commanders-in-Chiefs conferences, which could not but have exercised a powerful influence on the foreign policy of participant nations. In an effort to come to terms with Turkish policy in the bridge period May 1939 to May 1940 the minutes of a single conference presided over by Marshal ~~Öakma~~ are of greater value than the entire Von Papen corpus -- in which Weber places such faith. Yet these documents have been ignored, as have the Knatchbull-Hugessen and

Elmhirst collections held at Churchill college Cambridge.<sup>5</sup> The choice of evidence has warped the presentation. In most discussions of wartime Turkish foreign policy, one finds scant reference to the Turkish Army, to any of the Staff Conferences, or to any of the principle Turkish military leaders -- Marshal Çakmak, General Gündüz, and General Orbay, to name only the most significant. In the opinion of contemporaries, the Turkish General Staff often exercised a determinant influence on foreign policy; yet for all the attention they, and their corporate aspirations have received from writers on Turkish foreign policy, they might as well never have put on uniform. Valuable work these historians of Turkish foreign policy certainly have done; but their general approach of forcing the past into a mold required by their vision of the future, and their failure to make use of crucial source material, renders their work incomplete and certain of their arguments suspect.

If the writers on wartime Turkish foreign policy are of little assistance, those who concern themselves with the prewar period are of not much greater assistance. Vere-Hodge, the first to address himself to the question of Turkish prewar policy, did so at a time when the best available sources were contemporary newspapers. While his account is often good, it lacks detail. The documentary evidence, at time of writing, was simply unavailable.<sup>6</sup> Evans, who

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<sup>5</sup> Certain documents, including a portion of FO 371, could not have been consulted earlier because unavailable prior to 1990-1991.

<sup>6</sup> E. Vere-Hodge, Turkish Foreign Policy 1918-1948, (Geneva: Geneva) 1950.

wrote later, made scant use of such evidence as there was, and confined his discussion, in the main, to the period before 1927.<sup>7</sup> Zhivkova,<sup>8</sup> for her part, made excellent use of such Foreign Office material as was available in 1976 but ended her tale in 1939 with the signing of the Tripartite Treaty and the beginning of the war -- surely a strange procedure when the logical end of the period she was describing was the Turkish desertion of June 1940. It is after all, pointless to describe a birth without mentioning that death followed surely and shortly thereafter. Moreover, her discussion is marred by a rigid Marxist analysis which drives her to view the rivalry of the powers in the prewar Balkans as a fight for markets -- a strange argument surely when the British only reluctantly, and then half-heartedly, accepted the necessity of economic conflict with Germany; and only then from political rather than economic necessity. In fact, it was the Balkan nations themselves which clamoured for "exploitation" and the British capitalists who were reluctantly driven to accept the unwelcome necessity; their greatest source of reluctance being that incursions into the Balkan market might result in exactly the fight for markets which, if Zhivkova's analysis is correct, it was their purpose to wage -- the Marxist analysis of colonialism, in effect, placed on its head. In Zhivkova's defence, however, it must be said

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<sup>7</sup> S. Evans, The Slow Rapprochement. Britain and Turkey in the age of Kemal Ataturk, (Eothen Press: London) 1982.

<sup>8</sup> L. Zhivkova, Anglo-Turkish Relations 1933-1939, (Secker and Warburg: London) 1976.

that she had access to the Bulgarian state archives; though to judge from her use of them, either Sofia has no secrets to tell, or Zhivkova has chosen not to tell them.

General discussions of Turkish History -- Lewis,<sup>9</sup> Karpas,<sup>10</sup> Berkes,<sup>11</sup> Tamoq<sup>12</sup> -- and biographies of the principle Turkish leaders -- Armstrong,<sup>13</sup> Aydemir,<sup>14</sup> Balfour,<sup>15</sup> Kinross,<sup>16</sup> Orja,<sup>17</sup> Volkan<sup>18</sup> -- are in the case of the general histories, with the exception of Tamoq, too general to be of much use; and in the case of the biographies, with the exception of Volkan and Kinross, lack objectivity. Tamoq, unfortunately, too often takes refuge in imponderables, and Volkan and Kinross, while providing excellent biographies of Atatürk, are less concerned with his

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<sup>9</sup> B. Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, (Oxford: London) 1961.

<sup>10</sup> K. Karpas, Turkey's Politics, (Princeton: New Jersey) 1959.

<sup>11</sup> N. Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, (McGill: Montreal) 1964.

<sup>12</sup> M. Tamoq, The Warrior Diplomats. Guardians of the National Security and Modernization of Turkey, (Utah: Salt Lake City) 1976.

<sup>13</sup> H. Armstrong, Grey Wolf. Mustafa Kemal: an Intimate Study of a Dictator, (A. Barker: London) 1932.

<sup>14</sup> S. Aydemir, İkinci Adam (Second Man), Vol II, (Remzi Kitabevi: Ankara) 1967.

<sup>15</sup> J. Balfour, Ataturk, (Morrow: New York) 1965.

<sup>16</sup> Kinross, Ataturk, (William Morrow: New York) 1965.

<sup>17</sup> I. Orja, Ataturk, (Michael Joseph: London) 1962.

<sup>18</sup> V. Volkan, The Immortal Ataturk. A Psychobiography. (Chicago: Chicago) 1984.

foreign policy than with his impact on the nation he led.

From the legions of memoirs published by Britain's prewar political leadership, almost none concern themselves directly with Anglo-Turkish relations. Eden alone gives the subject any attention.<sup>19</sup> Of the military leaders, only Cunningham,<sup>20</sup> Slessor,<sup>21</sup> Kennedy,<sup>22</sup> and Ironside -- in his published diaries<sup>23</sup>-- are of much use. From politically significant Turks in our period, there is a sole voice, Erkin, Menemencioğlu's deputy and a post-war Foreign Minister. Erkin makes up for the lack of many memoirs, by the excellence of his own semi-biographical Les Relations Turco Sovietiques et la Question des Detroits.<sup>24</sup> If there is one truly essential autobiographical work, it is his. The French are much more forthcoming than either of their allies. Gamelin,<sup>25</sup> Weygand,<sup>26</sup> and Reynaud,<sup>27</sup> while not sufficient in

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<sup>19</sup> Avon, Facing the Dictators, (Cassell: London) 1962.

<sup>20</sup> Cunningham, A Sailor's Odyssey, (Hutchison: London) 1951.

<sup>21</sup> J. Slessor, The Central Blue, (Cassel: London) 1956.

<sup>22</sup> J. Kennedy, The Business of War, (Hutchison: London) 1957.

<sup>23</sup> R. MacLeod (edt.), The Ironside Diaries 1937-1940, (Constable: London) 1962.

<sup>24</sup> F. Erkin, Les Relations Turco Sovietiques et la Question des Detroits, (Basnur Matbassi: Ankara) 1968. Erkin is essential for discussion of the Stalin-Saracoglu talks in October 1939, of which he was the sole witness to publish an account -- an account which, due to the silence of Turkish and Russian archives, stands alone.

<sup>25</sup> M. Gamelin, Servir, (Libraire Plon: Paris) 1947.

themselves, are crucial to an understanding of French policy in the early war period but should be read with caution because their writings are part of a powerful apologetic, the more dangerous because the writers themselves were perceived as having the most to apologize for. The diplomatic memoirs -- Knatchbull-Hugesson,<sup>28</sup> Massigli,<sup>29</sup> Von Papen<sup>30</sup> -- are of limited use because none of the writers was in Ankara prior to the Spring of 1939, and because, with the exception of Von Papen, they are more anecdotal than historical accounts. Von Papen, on the other hand, sticks to the facts, but is not adverse to bending them to suit his own purpose -- at the time of writing, clearing his name of charges of complicity in the crimes of the Third Reich. Von Papen was, moreover, notoriously "out of the loop" in Ankara and a historian, like Weber, who bases himself primarily on Von Papen's papers, published and unpublished, takes a dangerous risk. Ciano,<sup>31</sup> on the

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<sup>26</sup> M. Weygand, Memoires. Mirages et Realite, (Flammarion: Paris) 1957; and, Recalled to Service, (Heinemann: London) 1952(1950).

<sup>27</sup> P. Reynaud, La France à Sauve l'Europe, (Flammarion: Paris) 1947; In the Thick of the Fight, (Cassel: London) 1955; and, Memoires Venu de la Montagne. (Flammarion: Paris) 1960.

<sup>28</sup> H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Diplomat in Peace and War, (John Murray: London) 1949.

<sup>29</sup> R. Massigli, La Turquie Devant la Guerre. Mission à Ankara 1939-1940, (Paris) 1964.

<sup>30</sup> F. Von Papen, Memoirs, (Andre Deutsch: London) 1952.

<sup>31</sup> G. Ciano, Ciano's Diary 1937-1938, (Meuthen: London) 1952; Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938, (CP Dutton: London) 1953; Ciano Diary 1939-1943. (Heinemann: London) 1947; Ciano's Diplomatic



other hand, remains as great a pleasure to read as an assistance in deciphering Italy's torturous policy. Gafencu too is helpful in decoding the Balkan matrix.<sup>32</sup>

Least helpful of all in coming to an understanding of Anglo-Turkish relations in the prewar and early war period, are general discussions of British diplomacy and strategy. Certain are essential in reaching an understanding of the British context,<sup>33</sup> but few address themselves directly to the subject of Anglo-Turkish relations. The most complete treatment of Anglo-Turkish relations in our period is provided by D.C. Watt in How War Came.<sup>34</sup> Sidney

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Papers, (Odhams Press: London) 1948; and, Les Archives Secretes de Comte Ciano 1936-1942, (Librairie Plon: Paris).

<sup>32</sup> G. Gafencu, Dernier Jours de l'Europe. Un Voyage Diplomatique en 1939, (Egloff: Paris) 1947.

<sup>33</sup> B. Bond, British Military Policy Between the Wars, (Clarendon: Oxford) 1980; M. Fitzsimons, Empire by Treaty, (Ernest Benn: London) 1965; M. Howard, The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War, (Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London) 1968; W.N. Medlicott, The Economic Blockade, (HMSO: London) 1952; G. Penden, British Rearmament and the Treasury 1932-1939, (Scottish Academic Press: Edinburgh) 1979; L. Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez. Britain's Mediterranean Crisis, 1936-1939, (Cambridge: London) 1975; A.J.P. Taylor, English History 1914-1945, (Clarendon: Oxford) 1965; L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, Vol I, (HMSO: London) 1970; J. Butler, Grand Strategy: September 1939-June 1941, (HMSO: London) 1957; N. Gibbs, Grand Strategy Vol I, (HMSO: London) 1976; F. Hinsley, British Intelligence in the Second World War, (HMSO: London) 1979; W. Medlicott, The Economic Blockade, (HMSO: London) 1952-1959; I. Playfair, The Mediterranean and the Middle East, (HMSO: London) 1954-1961; B. Prasad, (ed.) Defence of India: Policy and Plans. Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War 1939-1945, (Delhi) 1963; R. Sayers, Financial Policy 1939-1945, (HMSO: London) 1956; C. Barnett, The Audit of War, (MacMillan: London) 1986; and, M. Postan, British War Production, (HMSO: London) 1952.

<sup>34</sup> D.C. Watt, How War Came, (Mandarin: London) 1990(1989).

Aster's, The Making of the Second World War, while it gives limited space to the Turks, is also useful, and, in its general line, is sound.<sup>35</sup> Robertson,<sup>36</sup> while helpful, mainly confines his discussion to the years after 1941 and gives insufficient consideration to the Turkish context. The closest we have to a complete account is to be found in the pages of the Survey of International Affairs -- but this, of course, cannot be complete because composed before most of the evidence was available. In short, there is no sufficient account of Anglo-Turkish relations immediately before the war; which is to say also, no account of the origins and first failure of the Tripartite alliance of 1939. It is to this last question that this thesis will be addressed.

It will be our argument that the Anglo-Turkish relationship did not die primarily from any single cause; indeed, trying to ascribe its failure to a single cause, is like trying to attribute the murder in an Agatha Christie novel to any one suspect -- so various and grievous are the wounds on the deceased. The breakdown of the Tripartite Treaty was a complex failure in which Britain's inability to provide sufficient timely assistance, material, financial and industrial, combined with an unclear strategic picture, and the consequent absolute failure to produce anything like a coherent operational plan, to deprive the alliance of much of the effectiveness it might otherwise have had. In truth, the

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<sup>35</sup> S. Aster, 1939. The Making of the Second World War. (Andre Deutsch: London) 1973.

<sup>36</sup> J. Robertson, Turkey and Allied Strategy, (Cruland Publishing: New York) 1986.

political reality of the Anglo-Turkish alignment after 1939 -- that the Joint Guarantee of May was the badge of the comprehensive collapse of the British policy of appeasement, and the Tripartite Treaty of October, the symbol of the complete failure of the Turkish policy of parallel alliances with the West and with the Soviet Union -- was such that effective operation of the Alliance was highly unlikely in the best of conditions. Despite this, Turkish, British and French statesmen and soldiers struggled until May 1940 to jerry-rig an alliance capable of effective action. That it did not function, was less the result of ill-will on the part of any of the principles than of the simple truth that there was insufficient time remaining to the Allies before the collapse of the Summer to accomplish all that had to be done to put the Alliance in working order.

Why did the alliance fail? If there was an over-riding reason, it was this last: lack of time. As will be seen, however, this lack of time was largely, on the British side, a self-imposed constraint resulting from the dilemmas of a larger strategy which prevented British movement toward an alliance desired by Turkey since 1934. What could have been done before 1939 was impossible thereafter as panic-driven British rearmament and the requirement to defend what was most essential with what few military assets there were monopolized Britain's resources. In addition, even after the Alliance was made, one of the most important of the dilemmas -- the insistence that nothing be done to increase the chances of Italian hostility even if this meant Turkish neutrality -- continued to

argue against operation of the alliance until the entry of Italy to the war in June 1940; by which time, of course, it was highly unlikely that the Turks would enter the war. In many respects, the Joint Guarantee was the child of a distinct period in British strategic thinking -- April-September 1939 -- when Italian hostility was taken for granted and the desire to appease Italy nearly abandoned. After September 1939, this constraint returned with redoubled force, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that the Tripartite Treaty resulted as much from the powerful forward momentum generated by the politics of the Spring as from any more immediate cause.

Could the Tripartite Alliance have worked? The answer must be yes. The qualification, however, placed upon this answer must be that successful operation would have required the provision of substantial assistance -- material and financial -- prior to the outbreak of war and a British foreign policy more vigilant to achieve alliance with Russia and Turkey than to appease Italy. In short, the alliance could have worked -- there was sufficient goodwill on both sides -- but only if Britain had not been Chamberlain's Britain and British policy not British policy.

After the failure of the Alliance in 1940, it was unlikely that it would function effectively again. Every Turkish doubt and cause for hesitation could not but have redoubled following the calamities of the Summer: the collapse of France, the entrance of Italy to the war, the movement of the USSR to a more belligerent stance, and the near defeat of Britain. There was simply nothing to

be gained by entering a war in which the first result of Turkish belligerence was likely to be preemptive German attack before any assistance from the West could be effective. Turkey, after all, by the Winter of 1940, had the Germans within an easy drive and an easier flight of Istanbul, and the examples of Finland, Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium to provide a constant reminder of German power, Allied torpor, and the brutal consequences of an heroic policy for a small nation. Under such circumstances, the decision to stay out of the war after June 1940 was hardly surprising.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See for example, F. Von Papen, Memoires, (Andre Deutsch: London) 1952. p. 514-516. Von Papen argues that it was exactly this dilemma -- that there could be no cooperation without preparations, and no preparations without reprisal -- far more than the lack of material support with made impossible effective Anglo-Turkish cooperation after 1941.

**Towards an Alignment**

## Chapter I -- Britain and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean

### **Britain and Turkey before 1934:**

In 1926, with the end of the Mosul crisis came also the end of the Eastern Question. The Ottoman Empire was dead. The Turkish Republic had elected not to attempt to recoup its losses against a hostile League. The British Empire, the principle heir of the Ottomans, entered into a period during which many other concerns appeared to be more pressing than imperial defence. Since Britain's interest in the Near and Middle East had normally been dependent upon its perception of the requirements of imperial defence, both Turkey and the newly won conquests quickly faded from Imperial imagination. Nor did this quickly change. Lord Templemore, introducing the Anglo-Turkish Armaments Credit Agreement Bill on behalf of the Treasury in July 1939, still felt able to say:

I have often thought -- and I dare say the same thought has occurred to your Lordships -- how little we have heard of the country and Government of Turkey during the last few years, and I think that is all to the good, because it means that the Turkish Government are getting on with the job of running their country.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Templemore was speaking of a country which had been pursuing an alliance with his own since 1934, which had considered itself allied since 1936, and which had been one of Britain's most consistent and closest collaborators both in and out of the League of Nations for the previous five years. Similarly, as late as 25 November 1940, Halifax, for two years Foreign Minister, was writing to Ismay at the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID):

A friend of mine who is intelligent and an amateur strategist writes to me this morning: 'Please note Lemnos

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard Lords, Vol CX col 896.

and the Dodecanese Islands. Have the Greeks an aerodrome there now? If not could we not arrange with them to prepare one secretly . . .?' I do not know whether there is anything useful in these ideas or not but it seems worthwhile passing them on for the consideration of those who are competent to speak on these things.<sup>2</sup>

Halifax had been a member of both the CID and the Inner Cabinet for two years during which plans to effect the capture of the Dodecanese had been a staple of discussion. It is hoped that it was his grammar and not his geography which resulted in the suggestion that there might have been a Greek airbase on the Dodecanese Islands. In any case, it is hard to understand, given his position, how Halifax could not have apprised himself of the state of strategic affairs in an area so important to imperial defence as the Eastern Mediterranean. "Those who are competent to speak on these things" -- Halifax, if anybody, should have been competent to speak on this thing.

Until 1934, and by the above one might suspect for some time after that, the Near East remained the province of the professional rather than of the amateur: less a matter for the Foreign Office than for the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), less for the Embassy than for the Consulates, less for the CID than for the Chiefs of Staff (COS), and less for them than for the planners and local commanders. Administration rather than policy was the order of the day.

Prior to 1934, Turkey appeared most often in Foreign Office records as one of the legatees of the defunct Ottoman state. The

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<sup>2</sup> PRO FO 800/318 Halifax to Ismay 25 Nov 1940.



concern was not strategy, but the book-keeping details arising from the collapse of an Empire. Payment of the Ottoman debt, the status of persons made stateless by the war, and the recovery of the property of British subjects were the staples of diplomatic exchange.<sup>3</sup> An occasional "crisis" arises. Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish President, asks the Egyptian Ambassador to remove his fez at a diplomatic function. Egypt seeks redress through Whitehall.<sup>4</sup> A British Naval officer is enticed ashore and shot dead by Turkish Gendarmes. Compensation is to be arranged.<sup>5</sup> An Italian Fisherman is killed by police. Demands are made. Threats are exchanged.

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<sup>3</sup> The case of Parounak and Bedros Parounakian for example. Armenians, naturalized British subjects as a result of the Cyprus annexation order of 3 November 1914, trying to recover their property in Smyrna. PRO FO 198/98 Ankara to FO 17 Dec 34; FO 198/99; and FO 369/2516 K8446/1710/244, and, K4630/1710/244. A problem never solved was that of the Levantine Maltese -- British subjects until the end of extraterritoriality in 1924 -- unable to work in Turkey as a result of the labour laws of 1934, and not wanted in Malta: "Levantine not Maltese . . . Levantine in all but name whose sense of allegiance to England is very problematical and who, bred in the atmosphere of intrigue of the East and living on the Governor's charity, will furnish receptive material for anti-British activities and propaganda". FO 369/2377 Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister 24 Jul 1934. "I fear", wrote Rendell of the Foreign Office, "their prospects are well night hopeless. Even if they throw themselves with zeal into the national life of modern Turkey they would always remain suspect and be doomed to eventual extermination". FO 369/2977 K4915/205/244 Minute 27 Apr 1937.

<sup>4</sup> "The Turks of course handled the early stages of the incident in the most childish way possible and the line they took could not have been better designed to bring about a first class row, but I am sure that this was done due to inexperience more than malevolence . . . I am sure that it will be a long time before he [Mustafa Kemal] recovers from the feeling that his intentions have been deliberately misunderstood". PRO FO 1011/32 Clerk to Oliphant 16 Jan 1933.

<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 1011/35 Loraine to Oliphant 18 Jul, and 26 Jul 1934; also FO 1011/61 Loraine to Simon 1 Aug, Loraine to Aras 20 Jul, and Aras to Loraine 22 Jul.

Tewfik Aras, the Turkish Foreign Minister, fears that it may become necessary to close the Straits and the port of Izmir.<sup>6</sup> HMS Johanna, attempting to dock to take on food and water, is boarded and forced ashore by a party of soldiers. The Royal Navy is outraged.<sup>7</sup> Consuls in Smyrna are prevented by police from boarding merchant vessels flying the flags of their nations. Britain deliberates on the best way to protest this affront.<sup>8</sup> The abiding impression is one of endemic xenophobia on one side returned with active dislike by the other.

These inefficient, impecunious and rabidly avaricious Oriental countries are an awful nuisance. The despots of Turkey and Persia imagine that they are Westernized and can display their authority and power by being cheeky, truculent and offensive to the British Government.<sup>9</sup>

So wrote Lord Wigram, the King's Private Secretary, to Percy Loraine, Ambassador to Ankara. Loraine returned:

Some people think it [Turkey] is particularly antiBritish -- I do not myself share this view -- it is just generally anti foreign and it aims at uprooting all foreign influences in the political and economic life of the country to which the Turks largely attribute the rottenness of the former Ottoman Empire.<sup>10</sup>

It was not so much that the Turks hated the British, Loraine would say in their defence, they just hated everybody.

<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 1011/34 Loraine to Oliphant 15 Aug 1934.

<sup>7</sup> PRO FO 369/2378 M5400/5400/244 FO to Loraine 30 April 1934. According to the Admiralty, "Treatment of her crew showed extreme discourtesy and is inexcusable".

<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 369/2378 Grieg (Smyrna) to Morgan (Istanbul) 30 May 1934; also K7720 Loraine to Simon 23 June.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 1011/88 Wigram to Loraine 31 Jan 1933.

<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 1011/89 Loraine to Wigram 12 Nov 1934.

### Britain in the Eastern Mediterranean in the mid 1930s:

The infrastructure of Imperial Defence had languished with imperial interest; indeed, it could hardly have been otherwise. British interest in the interwar years was focused on Britain. The guiding principle was the ten year rule. No war for ten years, and therefore, no need for planning, for armaments, for alliances, for any of the appurtenances of the diplomacy of power. One can not write about British policy or strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean between 1926 and 1934 because there was none. This was not a lethargy from which Britain quickly sprang but one from which it gradually awoke. Insofar as one can discern a regional policy in the MacDonald-Baldwin years, it revolved around the elimination of regional distractions by timely concessions to the demands of local political figures, thus permitting attention to be turned once again to more important questions -- Britain's lingering economic malaise, and the reconciliation of the classes.

After 1933, threat combined, overlapped, and piled quickly upon threat. With a rush, the ten year rule and all the assumptions upon which it had been based were washed away.<sup>11</sup> Regionally, Britain once again began to think in strategic terms but Eastern Mediterranean strategy was a small piece in a difficult puzzle and was almost always conceived in relation to some greater question. A hard dying vestige of policy under the ten year rule was the conviction that Britain should eschew alliances; but post-1934, not

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<sup>11</sup> The ten year rule was abandoned in March 1932, primarily as a result of tensions arising from the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

because alliances were believed to distract statesmen from domestic policy, but because it was feared that they would lead an enfeebled Britain to war for other than British interests. The watchword was no longer "no foreign policy", but "no commitment".<sup>12</sup>

Before 1934, for the development of Britain's position in the Middle East, there was neither money nor interest -- and why should there have been? Under the ten year rule, Britain would have ten years warning of any war -- time enough to move mountains. Development could be safely set aside for the foreseeable future, and if agreements reached with local leaders damaged Britain's strategic interests, this too was not of significant concern. For a Britain which had banished the possibility of war, strategic interests seemed irrelevant. After 1934, faced with the possibility of sudden conflict with several potential enemies, Britain made some effort to correct the worst of the short-falls and repair the worst of the damage, but scarce resources were directed where the danger was most immediate. Seldom, until 1941, was this in the Eastern Mediterranean. Britain's Middle Eastern position remained perilously vulnerable.

The railway which was to have connected Egypt with India had shrunk to a road between Basra and Haifa. Even this was not

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<sup>12</sup> It is a fact not to be forgotten in the discussion of prewar Anglo-Turkish relations that this stricture applied to Turkey as to all other powers. British statesmen were not peculiarly obtuse in failing to respond to Turkish overtures. To do so, would have been to make an exception from its general policy for Turkey that HMG was unwilling to make even for France. Nevertheless, it would be false not to note below the baleful effect that British rejection of Turkish approaches had on the prospects of successful alliance after 1939.

completed before the outbreak of war.<sup>13</sup> The all red air route around the world, inaugurated by Samuel Hoare, the Air Minister, in 1925, with a flurry of publicity, and a constant concern of Imperial Conferences, had, in 1937, yet to be finished. It was an open question whether it even could be completed given the nature of the political settlements made with Egypt and Iraq.<sup>14</sup>

Arrangements with the tributary states had also deprived the Mediterranean fleet of a permanent home. Malta had been rendered unsuitable for use in war by developments in aerial technology and Air technique. The 1933 agreement with Egypt made it clear that Alexandria would not be permanently available to replace it -- nor were there funds to make it fully sufficient in the short term.<sup>15</sup> Haifa, it was becoming clear, would one day go to an independent

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<sup>13</sup> PRO CAB 53/35 COS 670 Baghdad-Haifa Road June 1938; and, CAB 53/9 COS 249th Mtg.

<sup>14</sup> Although the various legs of the route were flown and portions of the route charted and marked in the 1920s, it was not until 1931 that the necessary political moves began, and not until 1937 that the route truly began to become operational. PRO CAB 51/5 35th and 42nd Mtgs of CID Mid East Subcommittee; CAB 32/137 IC(36)10 The Cabinet Air Route around the World 3 Feb 1937; Imperial Conference 1930; Imperial Conference 1937; Maurier; S. Hoare, Empire of the Air (Longmans, Green: London) 1925; A Flying Visit to the Middle East (Cambridge: London) 1925; India by Air (Longmans, Green: London) 1927; A. Dudgeon, The Luck of the Devil (Airlife: Shrewbury) 1985; and, A. Boyle, Trenchard (Collins: London) 1962.

<sup>15</sup> PRO CAB 53/27 COS 428 Anglo Egyptian Treaty 23 Jan 1936. Recognition of effective Egyptian independence, with the 1936 treaty, did not bode well for the long term use of Alexandria as a naval base. See also CAB 53/32 Naval Base Facilities in the Eastern Mediterranean; CAB 53/35 COS 630 Situation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East; CAB 53/8 COS subcommittee 217th Mtg; and, ADM 1/9880 Docking Abroad of Capital Ships Eastern Mediterranean.

Jewish state.<sup>16</sup> The only unquestionably British port in the Mediterranean was Famagusta in Cyprus, but the twenty-five million pounds needed to develop it as a naval port did not exist, nor did the aircraft and soldiers to hold the Island should such a base be constructed.<sup>17</sup> The only answer Sir Ernle Chatfield, the First Sea Lord, could see was to use neutral ports -- whether that would be Lisbon, or "X" port to be established in Spanish or Greek territorial waters.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> PRO CAB 53/9 COS 233rd and 248th Mtgs. At the 248th meeting of the COS subcommittee of the CID, on 25 Aug 1938, the conclusion was reached that in the Jewish Palestine of the future, some attempt should be made to retain Haifa as a British enclave. Haifa had been developed, initially, by the Colonial Office as a civil port for the future independent state of Palestine/Israel.

<sup>17</sup> PRO CAB 53/29 COS 514(JP) Cyprus Potentialities as a Naval, Military and Air Base 13 Oct 1936. The cost to create a base at Famagusta for 5 Capital Ships, 3 Carriers, 15 Cruisers, 4 Depot Ships, 20 Auxiliaries, 12 Submarines, 36 Destroyers, and 24 small craft was set at L14,750,000. To garrison 3 Battalions and 2 Batteries of 9.2" guns there would cost a further L200,000. To build the base infrastructure for a Middle East Reserve would cost L5,000,000 with L500,000 p.a. To build two aerodromes and base 5 Air Squadrons on the island would cost a further L4,696,000. Total cost was estimated at L24,500,000 one time with L800,000 p.a. Such a base would take four and a half years to build. A downscale version to accommodate 2 Capital Ships, 2 Carriers, 4 Cruisers and 4 Destroyers was later considered. CAB 53/29 COS 529. Both schemes were rejected with the possibility of war with Italy. See also CAB 53/29 COS 547; CAB 5/31 COS 573; and, CAB 53/6 COS 183 Mtg.

<sup>18</sup> PRO CAB 53/2 COS 109th Mtg 11 Apr 1933. By 1935, Navarino bay in Greece had been identified as the most likely Port "X". CAB 53/5 COS 150th Mtg 13 Sep, and COS 159th Mtg 13 Dec 1935. Plans were drawn-up for an MNBDO (Mobile Naval Base Unit Defence Organization) which would be able to establish such a base and make it defensible against Air attack, submarines, and surface torpedo attack within 48 hours. ADM 116/3386 Conference Notes 12 Aug 1931. See also, S. Roskill, Naval Policy Between the Wars, (Collins: London), 1976. Vol II.

The Army was in no better shape.<sup>19</sup> In Palestine there were no barracks for such few soldiers as there were. Only in 1939 did the Army Council decide to build barracks with money diverted from the ration fund.<sup>20</sup> In Egypt, the withdrawal of British forces to the canal zone, called for in the 1936 Treaty, set off a rancorous exchange between the local military authorities and the Government of Egypt over who was to pay for the barracks necessary to replace those being vacated.<sup>21</sup> Both sides in this exchange were adamant that the other was responsible. In Egypt, as in Palestine, the losers were the soldiers who often were reduced to living under canvas.<sup>22</sup>

The garrison of Palestine prior to the Arab revolt of 1936 was composed of a Battalion (Loyal Lancaster Regiment) in Haifa with a Platoon detached to Nablus, a Battalion in Sarafand (2nd Camerons) with a Company detached to Cyprus, and 14 RASC in Jerusalem: total 1,734 all ranks. In addition, there were two Bomber Flights at RAF Ismailia, one Bomber Flight at RAF Ramleh, 14 Bomber Squadron at

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<sup>19</sup> For a fair account of the Army in the Middle East in the inter-war period, see, J. Lunt, Imperial Sunset. Frontier Soldiering in the 20th Century, (MacDonald: London) 1981.

<sup>20</sup> PRO WO 163 Army Council 21st and 22nd Mtgs.

<sup>21</sup> The decision to move to the Canal zone had been made in November 1933. PRO FO 1011/33 Loraine to Oliphant 28 Nov 1933. See also: CAB 53/40 COS 747 Responsibility for Building Accommodations in the Canal Zone for British Troops 13 Jul 1938.

<sup>22</sup> In Egypt at least, this was a sporadic condition because the War Office refused to vacate barracks, as agreed in 1936, until the Egyptian Government built replacements in the Canal Zone. Bulletin of International News, Vol 17, No. 3 (10 Feb 1940), p. 152.

RAF Amman, an RAF armoured car Company at Ma'an, and an RAF armoured car Flight at Ramleh. British forces were supported by the paramilitary Palestine police (2,883 all ranks), the Arab Legion (1,046 all ranks), and the TransJordan Frontier Force (874 all ranks) -- with two companies at Zerka, and one at Ma'an.<sup>23</sup> Taken together, this was a dangerously small garrison for such an unhappy land. In Egypt, the garrison of the canal zone -- as established by the 1936 Treaty -- could not exceed 10,000 men. This limit was no constraint. There was seldom more than five Battalions in Egypt in the prewar period. Thus, if all auxiliary, allied and paramilitary forces were included, the British could have assembled something like a rag-tag Division in the Middle East. In comparison, the Garrison of French North Africa in the interwar period was never less than eight divisions. To speak of Britain's Middle Eastern *place des armes* prior to 1940 is to tell a not-very-funny joke. Despite its victories of the First World War, by 1933, the British Army was living on short term leases in rented accommodations almost everywhere in the Mediterranean.

In Iraq, there was no Army at all. Under the 1933 treaty, the British retained airbases at RAF Basra and at RAF Habanniyah outside Baghdad and reserved the right to enlist local forces to defend these bases and of transit in time of emergency.<sup>24</sup> In time

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<sup>23</sup> WO 282/6; also, J. Glubb, War in the Desert (Hodder & Stoughton: London) 1960; To War With the Arabs, and Arabian Adventures (Cassel: London) 1978.

<sup>24</sup> For most of our period, the British forces in Iraq were composed of 3 Bomber Squadrons (36 aircraft), 1 Bomber Transport Squadron (12 aircraft), a flying boat Squadron (4 aircraft), an



of war, the Iraqis promised to provide "all possible facilities".<sup>25</sup> All of this notwithstanding, the main responsibility for the defence of Iraq had devolved to the Iraqi Army.<sup>26</sup> Britain was required only to assist. Cooperation in defence of Iraq was the responsibility of the AOC Iraq.

No sooner had the 1933 treaty been signed, however, than Iraq began to become an embarrassment and liability. "Now that British control has been relinquished" wrote Ogillvie-Forbes, Ambassador in Baghdad to Seymour at the Foreign Office, Iraq "is sinking to its natural level as a weak oriental state and the downward trend has not yet been arrested".<sup>27</sup>

The Iraqi successor regime was worse than weak. It was murderous. The first action of the unsupervised Iraqi Army was to turn on Britain's Assyrian allies. In August 1933, led by its new commanders, the Iraqi Army killed somewhere between five hundred

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armoured car Company (24 armoured cars) and a locally raised Battalion of 1,250 all ranks. PRO CAB 53/30 COS 556 Iraq Defence Plan 1935. Until 1937 aircraft were mainly of the Hawker Hart-Hind type, and were then replaced by Bristol Blenheims. When war began, the Blenheims went to Egypt and were succeeded at Habbaniyah by the Oxfords and Audaxes of 4 FTS. See A. Dudgeon, The Luck of the Devil.

<sup>25</sup> PRO CAB 44/122 Campaign in Iraq and Syria.

<sup>26</sup> Until conscription began in 1937, the Iraqi army was 11,174 all ranks with 650 organized into a "mobile force". After conscription, it swelled to 2 divisions and a mechanized brigade in and about Baghdad, another watching the Persian frontier to Kirkuk, a fourth watching the Turkish frontier from Kirkuk to the Kurdish mountains, and a fifth based on the middle Euphrates at Al Diwaniya. The Iraqi Air Force operated about 60 aircraft, but was largely ineffective; the Iraqis being, in British estimation, "shocking mechanics". PRO CAB 44/122.

<sup>27</sup> PRO FO 800/392 Ogillvie-Forbes to Seymour 3 Sep 1934.

and one thousand Assyrian civilians -- often under the noses of the Assyrians' erstwhile British allies.<sup>28</sup>

The Iraqi successor regime was worse than murderous: it was unstable. By 1936, Iraq was well launched on the series of coups that would make it one of the world's most politically erratic nations. On November 1936, Bakr Sidqi and Ali Jarad, those most responsible for the Assyrian massacres, seized power.<sup>29</sup> In less than a year they were dead -- shot to death at Mosul airport on 11 August 1937 by soldiers loyal to their rival Nuri Taha.<sup>30</sup>

But even worse than unstable, Iraq was vulnerable to attack from several directions while being too weak to make a credible resistance against any of them. Thus, by its nature, Iraq invited attack from its neighbours, by its weakness it was certain to require aid, by the terms of the treaty of 1933, it looked to Britain for assistance, and by its political constitution, it was probable that aid once given would be productive of resentment rather than friendly remembrance.

While attacks from Persia, Saudi Arabia, and French Syria were all deemed possible, the Turkish threat was most real and most dangerous. British planning to make its Iraqi guarantee effective against Turkey derived directly from plans drawn up at the time of

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<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 800/288 Hoare (Baghdad) to Simon 28 Aug 1933. See also, Survey of International Affairs, 1934, p. 122-134.

<sup>29</sup> PRO CAB 23/86 Cab 62(36) 4 Nov 1936.

<sup>30</sup> PRO WO 282/5 AOC Iraq to Courtney (Air Min) 12 Aug 1937; and, BIA, Vol XIV, No. 4 (21 Aug 1937), p. 21.

the Mosul crisis.<sup>31</sup> The difference between earlier plans and the Iraqi Defence Plan 1935, however, was that the British had ceased to expect victory. It was supposed that the Turks would be able to concentrate 27,000 men and sixty aircraft against Iraq quickly, easily and quietly. This force, it was thought, would be able to cross the border three days after the declaration of war. Nothing that the Iraqis could raise would be sufficient to meet such an onslaught. For the British the "only practical course is to delay Turkey's advance until such time as it is decided whether the defence of Iraq is to be accepted as an Imperial commitment or not". It would not be a fight but a fighting withdrawal with Air bombardment being the only counter-stroke likely to be at all effective. Within three weeks Turkish forces would overrun the country -- about the same time it would take for the arrival of any reinforcements India might see fit to send. Iraqi defence against Turkey was less a matter of defending than of "reconquering the country".<sup>32</sup> A further sign of the times was the inclusion of a

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<sup>31</sup> See AIR 9/42 Folio I Notes on Possible Air Action Against Turkey Nov 1924; Folio II Joint Naval/Air Plan 18 Feb 1926; and, Folio IX Air Staff Notes on the Offensive Employment of Aircraft Against the Turkish Nationalist Feb 1924. P. Halpern, The Keyes Papers, (Naval Records Society: London) 1980, p. 127-173.

<sup>32</sup> PRO CAB 53/30 COS 556 Iraqi Defence Plan 1935. Turkey was the nation against which Iraq defence planning was directed until 1939. When the Combined Anglo-Iraq Defence Plan was published in June 1939 it was finally conceded that "Iraq can count on Turkey as an ally". This admission came as a result of an Iraqi request that HMG determine what aid would be available from French Syria in the event of Turkish attack. Halifax considered "the likelihood of a Turkish attack on Syria or Iraq as so remote that it is neither necessary nor desirable to concert joint plans with the French". CAB 54/50 COS 916(JP) Combine Anglo-Iraq Defence Plan.

chapter in the plan covering the case of internal rising not accompanied by external attack. Iraqi rebellion would be met by close defence of airbases, Air attack, and reinforcements from overseas.<sup>33</sup>

The reinforcement most often spoken of for Iraqi defence was a Brigade from India. The Government of India refused to make this commitment. By 1935, it was by no means certain that Indian politicians would allow such a force to be dispatched, and still less certain that the Indian Army's British commanders retained the power to send it regardless. As Newall reminded the COS on 11 February 1938, Britain had no constitutional right to make plans involving Indian soldiers, and even if such plans were possible, the outcry in India would vitiate any benefit to be gained by making them.<sup>34</sup>

Worse even than all of this, were the lingering, and as events were to prove, justified, British suspicions that the Iraqi could not be expected to remain loyal in the event of imperial crisis. By 1935, Britain could not, and did not, depend on its Iraqi allies. The COS urged the Government to tell Iraq bluntly that it would be expected to stand by its undertakings.<sup>35</sup> That demands had to be made was proof in itself that they would prove fruitless.

More frightening than the disintegration of Britain's Land and

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<sup>33</sup> CAB 53/30 COS 566 Iraq Defence Plan 1935 chpt VII. p. 32-35.

<sup>34</sup> PRO CAB 5/9 COS 23 Mtg 11 Feb 1938.

<sup>35</sup> CAB 53/40 COS 748(JP) Military Cooperation Between the United Kingdom and Iraq in Time of War 25 July 1938.

Air position in the Eastern Mediterranean, however, was the absolute decay of its regional Sea power. In 1926, Admiral Keyes' Mediterranean Fleet had comprised eight Battleships, ten Cruisers, two Aircraft-carriers, thirty-six Destroyers and a Submarine Flotilla.<sup>36</sup> It was the greatest concentration of naval power afloat. Keyes used the Fleet to overawe the Turks at the time of the Mosul crisis.<sup>37</sup> In the 1930s, the usual strength of the Mediterranean Fleet was three Battleships, one Carrier, four Cruisers, sixteen new and seven old Destroyers, and nine Submarines.<sup>38</sup> Pound's fleet was approximately half as powerful as that of Keyes. This does not tell the entire story. On making an inventory of essential naval stores when hostilities with Italy began to appear possible in September 1935, it was discovered that the Royal Navy had only 960 fifteen inch gun shells in the world -- all in the Mediterranean -- 400 at Malta. The Resolution, Revenge, and Valiant would require 160 each for an operational load. Moreover, there were only fifty sixteen inch shells anywhere -- all

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<sup>36</sup> Halpern, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>37</sup> On 1 Sep 1926, Turkey complained to the League about threatening British naval activity off its coasts. The operations in question were a searchlight and star-shell exercise conducted off Mitylene and a gunnery and torpedo exercise off Lemnos. Keyes denied, when challenged by the Admiralty, that these exercises were in any way inspired by the political situation. This is hard to believe since Lemnos and Mitylene are within sight of the Turkish mainland and searchlight and star-shell activity is what any unbriefed observer would associate with amphibious landing. Halpern, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>38</sup> PRO ADM 1/9922 MED 064/0712/7 Initial disposition of Mediterranean Fleet for War with Germany and Italy Pound to Admiralty from Warspite. Of the Cruisers, 2 were 8" and 2 were 6". See also the Navy List for any given month.

high explosive (HE) -- enough for five broadsides from either the Rodney or Nelson.<sup>39</sup> Lack of adequate bases and repair facilities, ships and ammunition made it quite clear that the Mediterranean Fleet was not what it had been.

Britain's enemies were not slow to capitalize on its weakness. From 1933, Arab feeling toward Britain quickly moved from cautious friendliness to active enmity due to the half-hearted British support of Zionism. The shift was all the more violent because of the labours of German and Italian propagandists. The Italian legations in Baghdad and Cairo were centres of disaffection.<sup>40</sup> The large and influential German community in Iraq encouraged anti-British acts.<sup>41</sup> German and Italian Arabic language radio broadcasts became and remained popular.<sup>42</sup> Britain did nothing to combat Axis propaganda, and could have done nothing in any case as

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<sup>39</sup> GR CHT 4/1 Backhouse to Chatfield 19 Sep 1935.

<sup>40</sup> This was especially the case after 1939 when the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem took up residence in Baghdad; becoming, with the Italian Ambassador, Signor Gabrielli, a counsellor of the Iraqi Government. PRO CAB 44/122 Campaign in Iraq and Syria; also, FO 800/292 Zetland to Hoare 12 July 1935.

<sup>41</sup> CC GGLD 20/12 Dundas to Lloyd 13 June 1939. See also, M. Hauner, India in Axis Strategy, (Klett Cotta: Stuttgart) 1981; and, L. Hirszowicz, The Third Reich and the Arab East, (Routledge & Keagen Paul) 1966.

<sup>42</sup> Yunis Bahris, an Arab broadcasting from Berlin was particularly popular. CC GGLD 20/12 Dundas to Lloyd 14 Nov 1939. Another popular station was the Italian Arabic language station broadcasting from Bari. Italy's arabophilia was a new growth and followed from Italy's attempts to restore its relations with the Moslem world after the conquest and virtual annihilation of the Senussi tribes in Libya by 1934. E.M. Robertson, Mussolini as Empire Builder, (MacMillan Press: London) 1977. p. 94-95.

there were neither British controlled newspapers nor radio stations.<sup>43</sup> If there had been, it is doubtful if they would have been effective. The Palestine canker gave Axis propaganda too great an advantage. Italy was the "friend of the Arabs"; Germany knew how to "put the Jew in his place".<sup>44</sup> Britain was the friend of the Jews and it was all too patent that it was the British intention to put the Jew in the Arab's place.

Influential Italians and Germans criss-crossed the British Middle East. Field Marshal Von Blomberg's son, a Luftwaffe officer who was to command the German forces dispatched to Iraq in 1941, toured Palestine and Iraq as Dill's guest in 1937 -- in Baghdad taking Dill for a ride in his plane.<sup>45</sup> As late as May 1939, Goebbels and Balbo were travelling in Egypt and Palestine. On this occasion, Balbo broke from the group to go to Khartoum even though permission to make this trip had been forbidden.<sup>46</sup> Long before this however, British authorities were worrying about the

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<sup>43</sup> CC GLLD 20/12 op. cit.

<sup>44</sup> PRO CAB 51/9 ME(O) 225 Propaganda in Eastern Countries and Foreign Activities in the Near and Middle East note by the Secretary of the MidEast Subcommittee of the CID 31 May 1937. See also CAB 51/4 MidEast Subcommittee 57th, and 58th Mtgs. By 1937, it was official German policy to encourage Arab unrest in Palestine and Iraq against Britain, the agent of the 'Jewish International'. London, Ribbentrop instructed, was to be informed that Germany favoured Jewish emigration, but would never approve of the formation of a Jewish state. ASW Vol V, Book II, No. 422 Ribbentrop to London, Jerusalem, and Baghdad 1 Jun 1937.

<sup>45</sup> PRO WO 282/1 "Boots" to Dill (GOC Palestine) 14 May 1937; 9 April 1937 Von Blomberg to Dill; and, 16 April 1937, Col Hotblack (Berlin MA) to Dill.

<sup>46</sup> CC GLLD 20/3 Lord to Lady Lloyd 16 May 1939.

continuing loyalty of their Arab friends including their old ally Ibn Saud -- and rightly so.<sup>47</sup>

On 19 April 1936, rebellion flared in Palestine. Before its official end on 12 October, the Palestinian insurrection claimed the lives of twenty-eight soldiers and eighty Jewish civilians. Arab casualties were estimated at 1,500. Property damage was extensive. The commitment of two Divisions was required to contain the uprising.<sup>48</sup> Suppression was never complete. Rebellion merely became systematic terror.<sup>49</sup> Until 1936 the garrison of Palestine had been two Battalions. Rebellion necessitated an eight-fold increase. Thus, if we include the garrison of Egypt, by 1936, two complete Divisions were permanently immobilized in the Middle East

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<sup>47</sup> PRO CAB 23/94 Cab 35(38) 27 Jul 1938. See also, G. Weinberg's discussion of Saudi intrigues with Germany in The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, (Chicago: Chicago), 1980.

<sup>48</sup> PRO WO 282/1; 282/4; 282/6 Report on the Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion. Forces involved were MGen Armitage's 1st, and MGen Howard's 5th Divisions, with 4 Squadrons of RAF armoured cars, the TransJordan Frontier Force, and the Desert Legion. The RAF provided 4 Bomber Squadrons to support operations. Commanding was Gen Sir John Dill GOC Palestine.

<sup>49</sup> The Service Heads remained terrified that a rebellion might break out widespread enough in itself to undermine the entire British position in the Near and Middle East. The MacDonald White Paper on Palestine drew heavy fire for its cautious Zionism. There was real danger, the Chiefs of Staff warned, of a "serious degree of hostility in the Middle East. If this hostility was exploited and turned actively against us, our military position would become untenable in peace as well as in war". PRO CAB 53/10 COS 266th Mtg 2 Jan 1939. See also, Robert Montagne, "Les Arabes et la Colonization Juive en Palestine", Politique Etrangere, Vol I, No. 2 (Apr 1936), p. 54-66; Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 719-742; H. Beely, "The Administration of the British Mandate for Palestine 1937: Terrorism in Palestine", Survey of International Affairs, 1937, Vol I, p. 543-581; and, Survey of International Affairs, 1937, p. 567-581.



to ensure internal security alone. This increased commitment went a very long way to neutralizing the entire British Army at a time when it was becoming obvious that it would soon be wanted in France.<sup>50</sup>

By 1936, increased threat, both internal and external, had made it apparent how insufficient were the provisions for imperial defence in the Near and Middle East. Where there had been a stronghold in 1918, there was only a jumble of vulnerabilities and weaknesses in 1936. Unfortunately for defence planners, strategic reality had not changed in the interim. The Chiefs of Staffs Annual Review for 1935 established the principles of imperial defence as:

1. The maintenance of sea communications
2. The Defence of India
3. Upholding the Locarno Treaty
4. The defence of Palestine-TransJordan
5. The defence of Iraq
6. The air defence of Great Britain
7. Air communications<sup>51</sup>

Sea communications were defined primarily as "the great maritime line of communications through the Mediterranean".<sup>52</sup> Four of the seven -- excepting the defence of India, the Air defence of Great Britain, and the Locarno treaty -- were by definition Near and MidEastern concerns; but even the three excepted could not but be powerfully affected if Middle Eastern troubles monopolized defence resources, as was becoming the case by 1936.

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<sup>50</sup> PRO CAB 53/6 COS 192nd Mtg. CIGS paper The Role of the British Army 18 Jan 1937.

<sup>51</sup> PRO CAB 53/24 COS 372 Annual Review for 1935.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Britain's enemies often claimed to be inexorable. Imperial reality was much more relentless. It was with fear and fully conscious of the degree of imperial vulnerability that policy makers and strategists approached the problems of Eastern Mediterranean security in the years after 1934. If the scale and variety of the threats facing the Empire often paralysed British policy, they did so in no small measure because British weakness often seemed debilitating.

#### **Turkish Foreign Policy in the mid 1930s:**

In Turkey also the years between the Mosul crisis and 1934 were years of introspection during which Foreign Policy had little relevance. Turkey was a nation fully occupied defining the basic facts of its identity and had little time for outside distractions. The most efficient insulation was the best foreign policy. Turkey's policy, therefore, was defensive and sought to ensure Turkish security by avoiding foreign entanglements and by achieving workable agreements with neighbours in matters of local concern. Pact piled on pact, treaty of friendship on treaty of friendship, but none of these were much more than agreements between the signators that each would leave the other free to settle internal problems without disturbance.<sup>53</sup> By 1934, however, Turkey was beginning to follow a much more active policy course. There is little doubt that this resulted from a quickening appreciation of external threats.

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<sup>53</sup> See, A.G. Okçun, A Guide to Turkish Treaties, (Ankara: Ankara) 1966.

The most immediate threat was Italy. It was no coincidence that the active phase in Turkish policy began at the same time that the Italians began to seem menacing. It was primarily against Italy that Turkey concluded its alliance with Greece<sup>54</sup> and led its Balkan neighbours in the formation of the Balkan Pact.<sup>55</sup> It was also with the Italian threat in mind that Greece and Turkey began to increase the size of their fleets after 1934.<sup>56</sup> Local symbol of the Italian threat was the Dodecanese Islands which Italy began to fortify in 1934 contrary to agreement. The Turks offered to renounce their claim to the Islands if the Italians would agree not to fortify them. Mussolini did not even reply to this proposal.<sup>57</sup> Atatürk was quite clear that an Air and Sea base in the Dodecanese could only have utility against Western Anatolia or if it were the Italian intention to disrupt sea traffic in the Eastern Mediterranean. In Dr. Aras's view, since Turkey was too strong for the Italians, it followed that the Island base was intended to threaten communications in the Eastern Mediterranean. This was as unpalatable for the Turks, he told Loraine, the British Ambassador, as it was for Britain.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Resmi Gazete, 28 Feb 1931, No. 1735.

<sup>55</sup> Resmi Gazete, 12 Mar 1934, no. 2651.

<sup>56</sup> PRO FO 371/19037/2849 Annual Report for 1934 Aras to Eden (Geneva) Nov 1934; and, FO 371/19040 Report of Captain Potts 11 May; also, E3039/3039/44 Loraine to FO 11 May 1935. Potts informed the Admiralty that Greece and Turkey had agreed to spend 5 million pounds on their fleets in 1935.

<sup>57</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Hoare 25 Nov 1934.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Mussolini followed remilitarization of the Dodecanese with a series of violent speeches indicating that Italy would not be denied for much longer its "historic objectives" in Africa and Asia.<sup>59</sup> After the most violent of these speeches, the Turkish Ambassador in Rome lodged a formal protest with the Italian Foreign Ministry.<sup>60</sup> As one of Italy's historic objectives was Antalya -- a province on the Anatolian seaboard -- Turkey had cause for concern. Atatürk replied to Mussolini's speech by making a tour of Turkey's Mediterranean coast on a Destroyer with MTB escort.<sup>61</sup> On another occasion, when Mussolini's Ambassador mentioned Italy's

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<sup>59</sup> H. Knatchbull-Hugesson, Diplomat in Peace and War, (John Murray: London) 1949, p. 146. See also, Pierre Rondot, "*La Turquie et les Problemes Mediterraneens*", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 5 (Oct 1939), p. 543; and, Survey of International Affairs, 1934, p. 330n; and, E.M. Robertson, Mussolini as Empire Builder, (MacMillan: London) 1977. p. 69. Mussolini had begun to stake out the Italian claim anew in 1932 by propagandizing a series of articles which had appeared in the French press hinting that France would not be adverse to the settlement of Italian claims in Asia Minor. The Turks were seriously offended and protested vigorously to Rome. DDF Series I, Vol II, no. 182 annexes.

<sup>60</sup> Robertson, p. 69. Mussolini March 1934: "I could give you the details of a plan up to 1945 but I prefer to point out to you the historical objectives towards which our generation and the generations to follow should be directed during the present century. Let us calmly consider a plan that reaches the nearby millenium, the year 2000. It is only a question of sixty years. The historical objectives of Italy have two names: Asia and Africa. South and East are the cardinal points that should excite the interest and the will of Italians. There is little or nothing to do towards the North and the same towards the West, neither in Europe or beyond the Ocean. These two objectives of ours are justified by geography and history. Of all the large Western Powers of Europe, Italy is the nearest to Africa and Asia. A few hours by sea and much less by air are enough to link up Italy with Africa and with Asia". Quoted from, H. Braddick, "The Hoare-Laval Plan: A Study in International Politics", European Diplomacy Between Two Wars 1919-1939, (Quadrangle: Chicago) 1972. p. 153.

<sup>61</sup> PRO 371/19040 E1537/1537/44 Loraine to Simon 1 Mar 1935.

claim to Antalya, Atatürk rose, excused himself, left the room, and returned shortly thereafter in the uniform of a Turkish Marshal. "Now go ahead, please" he invited the startled Ambassador.<sup>62</sup> Later, he was to react to Italian claims with even less tact. "Antalya is not in the pocket of your Ambassador in Italy" he scolded the Italian Ambassador. "It is right here. Why don't you try to come and get it? I have a proposition to make to His Excellency and the Duce. We'll allow him to land Italian soldiers in Antalya. When the landing is complete, we'll have a battle, and the side who wins will have Antalya". There was nothing for the frightened Italian to do but ask if he was to understand that this was a declaration of war.<sup>63</sup>

If the Turks needed additional reasons to abhor Italian policy, Rome was not slow to provide them. The shift to a more aggressive Balkan policy after 1934 led Italy to adopt a much less accommodating attitude toward certain questions considered vital in Ankara. In 1933, for example, Italy stood as god-father to the Graeco-Turkish treaty of Mutual Assistance. In 1934, however, Italian objections precluded the inclusion of Albania in the Balkan Pact, and rumour was that Italy had also encouraged Bulgaria to keep out. In an Ankara extremely anxious that Balkan Union go forward, Italian obstruction could be viewed with nothing but distaste.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Kinross, Ataturk, (William Morrow: New York), 1965. p. 322.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>64</sup> M. Macartrey, Italy's Foreign Policy and Colonial Policy 1914-1937, (Oxford: London) 1938. p. 211.

Another more basic reason for Turkish opposition to Italy was that Atatürk and the Turkish leadership despised the Fascists as upstarts, too busy strutting about in fantastic uniforms to properly govern the nation at the head of which they had set themselves. Turkish opposition to Fascism, in many ways, derived as much from distaste as from calculation of national interest.<sup>65</sup> The Fascists appeared to the Turks as little better than civilian rabble-rousers who had militarized and brutalized a democratic nation. Atatürk, in comparison, had always insisted on a rigorous separation of Army from politics and hoped to introduce democracy to his own country.<sup>66</sup> The victorious Paşa, he had become the civilian President. Mussolini, a political agitator, had put on the uniform and airs of a generalissimo. In doing so, he earned

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<sup>65</sup> Kinross, p. 322; and, B. Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, (Oxford: London) 1961. p. 285. "Atatürk considered Il Duce a caricature of a soldier, a wicked man parading in uniform, and predicted that one day he would be hanged by his own people". V. Volkan, The Immortal Atatürk, (Chicago: Chicago) 1984. p. 321.

<sup>66</sup> Like De Gaulle, Atatürk was convinced that Army involvement in politics was equally harmful to nation and Army: it warped the development of the one, and undermined the efficiency of the other. This had been one of the points of primary difference between Atatürk and Enver in the CUP. Atatürk told a meeting of the CUP in 1909 that "as long as officers remain in the Party we shall build neither a strong Party nor a strong Army. In the 3rd Army most of the officers are also members of the Party and the 3rd Army cannot be called first-class. Furthermore [he added] the Party, receiving its strength from the Army, will never appeal to the nation. Let us resolve here and now that all officers wishing to remain in the Party must resign from the Army. We must also adopt a law forbidding all future officers having political affiliations". S. Finer, The Man on Horseback. The Role of the Military in Politics, (Pall Mall: London) 1962. p. 31.

Atatürk's contempt.<sup>67</sup>

The more dangerous long term threat came from Germany. Atatürk was convinced that Germany would one day be the cause of another great war.<sup>68</sup> He was equally certain that Hitler was a more dangerous man than Mussolini. Mussolini was a buffoon. Hitler was a madman. Atatürk, one of the few prewar Statesmen who read Mein Kampf in its German edition, was horrified at the "meanness of the language and the madness of his [Hitler's] thoughts".<sup>69</sup> Like Mussolini, Hitler was beyond the pale for his aspirations as much as his actions. Atatürk believed that he had freed an enslaved People: Hitler, even more than Mussolini, was enslaving a free People and did not disguise the fact that he hoped to place the Nazi yoke on others.<sup>70</sup> By 1938 Germany was overtaking Italy as first among Turkey's potential enemies. The watershed event was the

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<sup>67</sup> "I am not", Atatürk assured George Bonnet in 1934, "like Mussolini who adores the uniform of a Marshal or General and who covers himself with decoration; for all that he was never, like me, the commander of a victorious army". G. Bonnet, Vingt Ans de Vie Politique, (Fayard: Paris) 1970. p. 225.

<sup>68</sup> In 1932, Douglas MacArthur had an interview with Atatürk in which Atatürk described what he thought to be the likely course of events over the next decade and a half. Germany would start a war in the time period 1940-1945. Italy would be drawn in. France would collapse. The war would spread to encompass the Soviet Union and the United States. Germany would be destroyed. The war would end with the USSR and the US the only real great powers remaining. Caucasus no. I, Aug 1951, p. 16.

<sup>69</sup> Kinross, p. 322. Nazi antisemitism, in particular, appears to have disgusted the Turkish leadership. On 5 July 1934, İsmet İnönü was careful to stress to the Assembly that Anti-Semitism was completely incompatible with Turkish nationalism. İsmet İnönü, Söylev ve Demeçleri. TBM Meclisinde ve CHP Kurultaylarında, (Millî Eğitim Basımevi: İstanbul) 1946. Speeches 5 July 1934 (p. 280)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

Anschluss of Austria -- noted in Turkey as "*une sorte du boulevard des États danubiens et balkaniques*".<sup>71</sup> Taken with the Reich's economic policy, it was obvious to Turkey's Statesmen that Germany was once again looking South-East with greedy eyes.<sup>72</sup>

Turkish dislike of Hitler and Nazism, however, was powerfully conditioned by Turkish admiration for the German Army and for the capabilities of the German nation. Mussolini could be openly opposed because his pretensions and his weakness made him contemptible. Hitler must be feared because his pretensions and his strength made him dangerous. Against Italy, the Turks would consider almost any measure. Against Germany, there was bound to be more than a few glances over the Turkish shoulder and calling of the allied role. The most to which the Turks would commit themselves in advance was that there would be no repetition of 1914. In May 1936, Atatürk told Loraine:

There now seems to be the possibility, perhaps distant, perhaps not, of the German fact reappearing. The situation in that event would be uncomfortable and dangerous in the Turkish view: if it arose she would have to trim her course accordingly. At the moment she is resolved that Germany shall not again, as in 1914, have Turkey as the Eastern pivot of her power.<sup>73</sup>

The least dangerous but most endemic threat to Turkish security came from the disruptive tendencies of Turkey's Arab neighbours. These states sheltered dissident population groups -- Kurds and Armenians -- anxious to cause trouble for the Republic;

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<sup>71</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IX no. 509 Corbin to Bonnet 2 June 1938.

<sup>72</sup> PRO FO 1011/76 Loraine to King George VI 24 Apr 1938.

<sup>73</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Loraine to Eden 8 May 1936.



likewise, Turkey harboured Arab and Kurdish Nationalists eager to disrupt the established order in Syria and Iraq.<sup>74</sup> By far the most powerful state in the region, Turkey was opposed to anything likely to "upset an existing equilibrium in the Arab world which suited Turkey well enough as it is".<sup>75</sup> On one question of equilibrium all Middle Eastern states could agree. All were opposed to the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. It is not without significance that the operative paragraphs of the Sa'adabad Pact concerned the suppression of cross border raiding and the harbouring of dissidents.<sup>76</sup> In other words, the Sa'adabad Pact was, on one level, an agreement between the signators to cooperate against the Kurds and other dissident groups.<sup>77</sup> Given the Kurdish

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<sup>74</sup> PRO FO 371/20864 E2893 Appreciation on the Military Situation in the Eastern Provinces Eden 23 May 1937. French Syria too played this game. France was extremely bitter at what it considered to be Britain's harbouring of Syrian rebels during the rebellion 1925-26, and responded by providing sanctuary for Palestinians 1936-39. A. Roshwald, Estranged Bedfellows, (Oxford: Oxford) 1990, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Hoare 16 Apr 34. Reference is to a project for the union of Syria and Iraq under Feisal. Such a confederation, according to Aras, would be "distasteful to Turkey" for the reason noted.

<sup>76</sup> PRO FO 371/20866 E823/823/44 Annual Report for 1936. The Agreement had been initialled on 2 Oct 1935 by Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan but had been held up by border problems between Iraq and Iran. From Mar 1937, Turkey was pressing forcefully for signature due to the outbreak of rebellion among the Dersin Kurds. See also, Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 793-803.

<sup>77</sup> Art 1: The High Contracting Parties (HCP) undertake to pursue a policy of complete abstention from any interference in each other's internal affairs; Art 2: HCP undertake to respect the inviolability of their common frontiers; Art 3: HCP undertakes to prevent, within his respective frontiers, the formation or activities of armed bands, associations or organisations to subvert the established order, to disturb the order or security of any

propensity to revolt, such an agreement is understandable.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, the first operation of the Sa'adabad Pact once signed was to coordinate the suppression of the revolt of the Dersin Kurds.<sup>79</sup> On another level, the Pact was an agreement that the signatory powers would support each other in the League, and that the others would support Turkey's bid for election to the League Council.<sup>80</sup> In this, the Pact only formalized what was the usual practice in

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part, whether situated on the frontier or elsewhere, of the territory of another Party, or to change the constitutional system of such other party. Treaty of Nonaggression Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey 8 July 1937. J. Hurewitz (edt), Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East (Nostrand: Princeton) 1956, Vol II, p. 214-215.

<sup>78</sup> The Kurds revolted in 1926, 1933 and again in 1937. See PRO FO 371/20864 E2891/466/44 Loraine to FO 17 May; E3785/466/44 Morgan to FO 16 Jun; E4238/466/44 Loraine to FO 16 Jul 1937; and, E2893 op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> Pierre Rondot, "La Turquie et les Problemes Mediterraneens", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 5 (Oct 1939), p. 536-551. Associated in the liquidation of this rebellion, although not a signator power of the pact, was Iraq. At this time, it was Turkey's singular good fortune that Bakir Sidqi's Premier, Hikmet Suleiman, was a Turcoman and an admirer of Atatürk. p. 542. Iraq also had historically bad relations with the Kurds. In 1932, for instance, a Kurdish revolt in the North-Western Provinces resulted in the annihilation of several Iraqi columns and would have succeeded had it not been for RAF intervention. Survey of International Affairs, 1934, p. 122-134.

<sup>80</sup> Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan had entered the League at the same time, Turkey and Iraq together. Later, they were to sponsor the entrance of Egypt. Survey of International Affairs, 1937, Vol I, p. 606. In some ways, the Sa'adabad Pact, in the League, resembled nothing so much as a nascent Islamic bloc. As an example of how Turkey used its regional alliances in the League, in announcing the conclusion of the Sa'adabad Pact to the Grand National Assembly, Atatürk also announced Turkey's continued adherence to the Balkan Entente, and that Turkey would be seeking redress of the Hatay problem in the League. It is hard to believe that the conflux of ideas -- Hatay, League, Sa'adabad, Balkan Entente -- was accidental. BIA, Vol XIV, No. 10 (13 Nov 1937), p. 49.

any case. Afghanistan, for instance, was admitted to the League in 1934 following a positive recommendation by an Assembly ad hoc committee presided over by Dr. Aras and subsequently was scrupulous to follow a line established in Ankara.<sup>81</sup>

The first principle of Turkish Foreign Policy was, and remained, the alliance with Russia.<sup>82</sup> Good relations with Russia, in the context of friendship rather than subordination, guaranteed Turkey's continued security on its long Eastern border and in the Black Sea. Russia was, moreover, a reliable source of much needed manufactured goods and Turkey's default supplier of war material.<sup>83</sup> Subsequent alliances were viewed as complementary to the relationship with Russia rather than replacements for it. Şükrü Saraçoğlu, Minister of Justice until 1938 and Foreign Minister thereafter, and İsmet İnönü, Premier until 1937 and President after Atatürk's death in November 1938, were considered in Moscow and

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<sup>81</sup> A. Esmer, Turkey and the United Nations, (Manhattan Publishing: New York) 1961. p. 38

<sup>82</sup> The Russo-Turkish relationship was formalized in 1925 in The Treaty of Moscow. On 7 November 1935, an agreement was signed in Paris to extend the agreement for another ten years. The agreement was ratified by Ankara on 20 December. PRO FO 424/280 E353/353/44 Loraine to Eden 13 Jan 1936.

<sup>83</sup> In April 1939, Group Captain Elmhirst, the Air Attaché in Ankara, reminded his superiors: "Since the Republic of Turkey came into existence, the main background of Turkish foreign policy has been friendship with the Soviets". In his view this friendship was based on powerful military realities. The Soviets were the strongest power on the Black Sea; they shared a long border with the Turks in the Caucasus; if the Mediterranean were closed, stores would have to come from the Soviets; and, Russia was possessed of armed forces which the Turks were disposed to rate highly. CC ELMT 1/12 Modern Turkey Apr 39.

Berlin to be the leading advocates of the Soviet connection.<sup>84</sup> İnönü in particular continually stressed the importance of Turkey's alliance with Russia.<sup>85</sup>

Until 1939, Turkish foreign policy paralleled that of the Soviet Union. Whether this resulted from convergence of views or coordination of diplomacy between Ankara and Moscow -- whether the Turks were collaborators or fellow travellers -- would be impossible to say until the archives in Moscow and Ankara give up their secrets. In 1932, for example, Turkey joined the League of Nations, and, having been elected to the League Council on 17 September 1934, strongly supported the admission of the Soviet Union the following day.<sup>86</sup> It was the opinion of M. Kammerer, the French ambassador, that in doing so:

Turkey was acting as a spear head of Russian Foreign Policy: but by no means as a blind instrument or a subservient tool. The Turks are well aware what they were about, and their object was to get Russia more engaged in international relationships and to ascertain Russia's status as a Power in the ordinary sense of the word.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 420, Kroll to Ribbentrop 1 Feb 1939; and, DGFP Vol V, No. 559.

<sup>85</sup> See for example, İsmet İnönü, Soylev ve Demeçleri. TBMM Meclisinde ve CHP Kurultaylarında, (Millî Eğitim Basımevi: İstanbul) 1946. Speeches 5 July 1934 (p. 280), 7 March 1935 (p. 292), 14 June 1937 (p. 321) etc.

<sup>86</sup> A. Esmer, Turkey and the United Nations, (Manhattan Publishing: New York) 1961. p. 38

<sup>87</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Simon 22 Feb. Loraine concurred with this assessment. He minuted to Simon: "Is it your view too that on the whole it is better to give the Russians a seat at the dining table, rather than have them poisoning the soup in the kitchen?" Simon returned: ". . . the fact that the government leaders sit at the dining table will not deter the comintern cooks from brewing potions in the kitchen, which they will not hesitate

Loraine, the British Ambassador, did not believe that any rapprochement with Turkey would be possible if it were at the expense of Turkey's relationship with Russia. For the Turk, he wrote, "to feel insecure on his land frontier in the Caucasus, on his long Black Sea littoral, and at the northern end of the straits would be a nightmare".<sup>88</sup>

The second principle of Turkish Foreign Policy was the Balkan Entente. The Balkan Pact, İnönü told the Grand National Assembly, was an instrument of "great value for international reconciliation".<sup>89</sup> It was fundamental to Turkish thinking that war must be kept out of the Balkans, and if this proved impossible, that a common Balkan response against an external threat be assured. Equally fundamental was that the Balkan States must be prevented from squabbling among themselves. Indeed, these two principles were linked because if Balkan harmony could be assured, it was much more likely that the peninsula could be insulated against external threats, also more probable that internal problems would not spread to bring in the Great Powers as in 1914. On 12 November 1934, Loraine wrote:

Of course the main political result which the Turks wish to achieve through the Balkan Entente, besides the security within their frontiers of the signatory states, is to deprive [the] Balkans of their former character of a kind of Tom Tiddle's ground for the ambitions of great

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to serve us at any suitable moment". FO 1011/61 Simon to Loraine 29 Mar 1934.

<sup>88</sup> PRO FO 1011/89 Loraine to Wigram 30 Mar 1934.

<sup>89</sup> İnönü, p. 292. Speech of 7 Mar 1935. See also, Survey of International Affairs, 1934, p. 508-535.

powers . . . The prospect of the Balkans ceasing to be a chronic source of anxiety seems to exist. But also it seems too good to be true.<sup>90</sup>

It is in this context that we should view the Turkish alliance with Greece and the Balkan Entente as attempts to limit the dangers of Balkan quarreling as much as to ensure common action against external threats.<sup>91</sup> The Turkish leadership in making these agreements accepted that the obligations it had assumed toward its neighbours might lead to war against a disturber of Balkan peace. "If anyone ever laid hands on any one of the Balkan States proper", Atatürk told King Carol of Rumania in 1936, "Turkey, prepared or unprepared would fight".<sup>92</sup> Turkey, as a middle power, could not be expected to be interested in every question; but as the most powerful regional power it took a lively interest in all Balkan questions and tended to set its strategic frontier on the Danube.

An enduring problem for Turkish Foreign policy was the unwillingness of Bulgaria to subscribe to a common Balkan policy or

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<sup>90</sup> PRO FO 1011/89 Loraine to Wigram 12 Nov 1934. A fact not to be forgotten when considering the Turkish desire for Balkan solidarity is that many of the Turkish leaders were Rumelians. Dr. Aras and Atatürk, in particular, were both natives of European Turkey. In December 1967, Dr. Aras told Tamoç, then researching his book Warrior Diplomats, that: "It was the aspiration of Atatürk that Rumelia should be united once again. In order to realize this, Atatürk instructed him to construct ties with the Balkan countries. He believed that Rumelian unity had a different meaning in the 1930s even if the same content: 'the unity of Rumelia was to be based on sovereign equality of the Balkan states and their sincere cooperation for the protection of their respective sovereignty and independence". Tamoç, p. 194. See also, Weisband, p. 144-145.

<sup>91</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Simon 10 Jan 1934; and, H. Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe Between the Wars, (Harper Torchbooks: London) 1962 (1945). p. 372.

<sup>92</sup> CC GLLD 20/4 Balkan Tour 11 Nov 39.

to join a system -- the Balkan Entente -- aiming to preserve a status quo which Sofia viewed as unfair.<sup>93</sup> Although the Turks made strenuous efforts to bring the Bulgarians into the system and consistently assured them that it was not the intention of the signators to suppress expression of Bulgaria's legitimate grievances,<sup>94</sup> it is a fact that from the beginning, Bulgaria's unhelpful attitude deprived the Pact of much of the significance that it otherwise might have had by inhibiting its action and by introducing into the otherwise general Balkan accord a potentially disruptive element.

The third principle of Turkish Foreign Policy, by 1934, was the rapprochement with the West -- primarily with Britain. Turkey sought by this to gain assistance against the Italian enemy and relief from growing German economic domination. It hoped also to gain security on its borders with the British and French client states in Iraq and Syria. An accommodation with Britain and France, moreover, was essential if the Turks were to make progress towards achieving certain of their foreign policy goals. Without Britain, the most important naval power in the Mediterranean, there could be no alteration of a Straits regime which by 1934 was becoming a burden and a danger. Without the cooperation of France, the Syrian mandatory, the Turks could not be certain that a satisfactory settlement was achieved in Hatay -- could not be sure, with devolution seeming probable, that Hatay and its population of

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<sup>93</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1934, p. 524.

<sup>94</sup> İnönü, p. 298. Speech of 7 March 1935.

ethnic Turks would not be coerced into an overwhelmingly Arab Syria.<sup>95</sup>

The primary importance of the Western alignment, however, lay in the belief of all important Turkish Statesmen that if it came to a war the West ultimately must win. After 1934 most leading Turks seem to have been convinced that they lived in a prewar period. Whether the war would encompass Turkey was, of course, another question. Turkish confidence in Western strength, however, was not in question and sprang naturally from Turkey's own experience on the losing side of the First World War. In 1937, Dr. Aras explained to Eden that Atatürk believed that the defeat of the Central Powers was inevitable once Britain had entered the war. Britain had always, and would always, win; and if it could not do so with its own strength, it would always be able to bring in the United States "as a final calamity".<sup>96</sup> "England, he said, was not merely a power, but a world power: she was ubiquitous: her interests lay everywhere".<sup>97</sup> In the prewar years, while recognizing that the Germans were powerful, as they were in 1914, the Turks were also inclined to believe that in a conflict with Britain, they would

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<sup>95</sup> It was Loraine's belief that the lingering Franco-Turkish tension over Hatay derived from Turkish unwillingness to let the Syrian nationalists accede to the position France occupied in the Sanjak of Hatay. The problem was not that the French were there, but that they appeared to be getting ready to leave. The closer France came to granting sovereign rights to Syria, the more anxious were the Turks for the matter to be settled. PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 5 Dec 1936.

<sup>96</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 26 Jan 37.

<sup>97</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Loraine to Eden 24 Feb 37.



lose, as they had in 1918.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, it cannot be ignored that sentiment as well as calculation was present in the Turkish attitude toward the West. It was to the West that Turkey looked for models to guide its own development, and with the West that it hoped to find security against the new barbarism. A basic difference between Kemalism and what might be called "Enverism", in fact, was that for the first, even before the appearance of Hitler, the "West" meant primarily the Anglo-Saxon powers and France, while the second gave the term a powerfully German gloss. While it is perilous to place too much stock in considerations of sentiment, it is equally dangerous to ignore Huxley's dictum that ideology lies at the root of a nation's foreign policy more often than anything else; and Turkey's guiding ideology, Kemalism, was profoundly "Western" in inspiration and aspiration.

Turkey did not see these three principles as standing in isolation. Until 1937, Turkey sought to consolidate them through the agency of the League of Nations. For Turkey, the League was an omnibus big enough to reconcile the alliance with Russia, the Balkan Entente and the relationship being established with Britain and France. The League accomplished in its being what would be extremely difficult to achieve otherwise. Article sixteen of the League Charter, if vigorously upheld, effectively consolidated all three tendencies into one alliance. With the tools of traditional

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<sup>98</sup> "La Turquie et la Crise Europeene", *Politique Etrangere*, Vol III, No. 5 (Oct 1938), p. 504. This was a prognosis which Turkey made in common with most of its Balkan neighbours.

diplomacy, the Turks might never be able to do this. In November 1935, Dr. Aras told Loraine that "maintenance of the peace in a regime of collective security" assured by "the integral maintenance of the covenant of the League" was the foundation of Atatürk's foreign policy.<sup>99</sup> İnönü informed Loraine that he hoped that the League could be made a "real and effective organism for collective security and an institution of benefit not merely to the few, but impartially to the many".<sup>100</sup> Aras himself always insisted on two principles: "absolute fidelity to the League and unquestioning discharge of the obligations imposed on her [Turkey]"; and that outside these obligations Turkey had no quarrel with any nation.<sup>101</sup>

Outside the League, Turkey sought to consolidate its friendships and reduce the number and power of its potential enemies by creating intricate alliance networks. Initially, Dr. Aras sought to expand the Balkan Entente into a wider alliance which would dominate the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. In his conception, as described to Turkey's Balkan Entente partners in

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<sup>99</sup> PRO FO 371/19039 E6710/1213/44 Loraine to Hoare 14 Nov 1935. Atatürk's support of the League accorded well with his Mazzinist approach to the question of nationality. "We must think of the whole of mankind as being a single body and of each nation as constituting a part of that body . . . We must not say, 'if there is a sickness in a certain place in the world, what does that matter to me?' . . . If there is such sickness, we must be just as much concerned with it as though it happened right in our midst". Kinross, p. 527. See also, A. Esmer, Turkey and the United Nations, (Manhattan Publishing: New York) 1961.

<sup>100</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Hoare 4 Nov 1934.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

October 1934, Britain, France, Italy, the Balkan Nations and the USSR would bind themselves together for mutual assistance.<sup>102</sup> This was a primitive conception, however, transmogrified by the reality of British disengagement and Italian belligerence into the search for two parallel agreements: one with Russia in the Black Sea, and another with Britain in the Mediterranean. It was also, once again, parallel to a Russian formulation, in this case, M. Litvinov's Mediterranean Locarno.<sup>103</sup>

In effect, Turkish Foreign Policy between 1934 and 1939 was largely the story of the search for an alliance, inside or outside the League, comprehensive enough to prevent war, and failing that, overwhelming enough to win; in either case, sheltering Turkey from attack, defeat or disaster. It was not that the Turks wanted to fight, but that they were convinced that unless vigorous measures were taken -- measures not always theirs to take -- that they would have to fight, and might well lose.

The year 1934 represented a real break in the foreign policies of both Britain and Turkey as each, hitherto occupied with internal concerns, set about putting its defences in order to ensure its security in a new, harsher world. As has been suggested, and shall be shown below, it was an unhappy characteristic of this world that while British weakness was thought to argue for continued and nearly absolute disengagement, Turkish vulnerability demanded an

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<sup>102</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 263 Knobel (Belgrade) to Laval 27 Apr 1935.

<sup>103</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol I, p. 63.

accommodation with Britain and the formation of wider systems including Britain.

## Chapter II -- Abyssinia and After

### **Atatürk's Initiative:**

On 16 February 1934, Percy Loraine, Britain's new Ambassador to Ankara, was kept waiting by the Turkish President, Kemal Atatürk, while attempting to present his letters of credence. "Morgan assures me", he wrote, "that this is not due to natural vice or malice preense, but rather to an indigenous and unsheddable uncouthness. . . . Had the comedy continued much longer I should have had asked you to make representations to the Turkish Ambassador at the court of St. James".<sup>1</sup> In very short order he would be writing in quite a different tone.<sup>2</sup>

Just one month later, on 22 March, Loraine was informing the Foreign Office that he was beginning to get the distinct impression that the Turks were seeking better relations. The basis for his feeling was the unusually warm reception he had received from various highly placed Turks. Another fact which seemed to point in this direction was the recent appointment of Fethi Okyar -- "the cream of their available representatives" -- as Ambassador to London".<sup>3</sup> Okyar was a strong Anglophile who had been to London in 1921, while Minister of the Interior in the Ankara Government, to

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<sup>1</sup> PRO FO 1011/35 Loraine to Oliphant 16 Feb 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Loraine's appointment came early. He should have had another year in Egypt, but was moved because he had been too closely associated with the failed negotiations for a satisfactory treaty with the Egyptians. PRO FO 1011/60 Simon to Loraine 14 Jul 33.

<sup>3</sup> PRO FO 1011/33 Loraine to Oliphant 22 Mar 34.

attempt to negotiate a compromise peace with Britain.<sup>4</sup> Loraine did not have to wait long for his suspicions to be confirmed in a rather unconventional fashion.

Following a reception for the visiting Shah, Reza Shah Pahlavi, on 17 June, Atatürk drew Loraine into an all night poker game. "During these long hours", wrote Loraine, "the Gazi quite obviously cast down all barriers of formality and without any loss of dignity treated me as though I were a personal friend and comrade". When the game broke up at 9:30 a.m. Atatürk asked Loraine to remain.

The Gazi said he had the greatest esteem for England and that he wished for friendship with England. Why could we not come closer together? Did England attach no value to her [Turkey's] friendship? He realised that to us Turkey might not seem a very important factor. She was not a large country; nor rich, nor populous, nor strong, although she was determined to be strong enough to defend her territory against any aggression.<sup>5</sup>

Loraine denied that Britain failed to appreciate the value of Turkish friendship but alluded to Turkey's rapport with Russia as a possible bar to much improved relations. Atatürk grew quite angry but "became warm again as he realised from my language that it was far from my intention to cast Turkey's intimate friendship with Russia in his teeth as a necessary barrier of a renewed Turkish

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<sup>4</sup> S.R. Sonyel, Turkish Diplomacy 1918-1927, (Sage: London). p. 169; and, Osman Okyar, "Turko-British Relations in the Inter-War period: Fethi Okyar's Missions to London", Four Centuries of Turco-British Relations, William Hale and Ali ihsan Bagis (ets.), (Eothen Press: London) 1984. p. 62-79.

<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 371/17967/3917

friendship with England".<sup>6</sup> Atatürk expressed a desire for the appropriate authorities to discuss ways of further cementing Anglo-Turkish friendship. He called on Şükrü Kaya, the Minister of the Interior, to take a note to this effect. Loraine, fearing that he was getting out of his depth:

begged the Ghazi to realize that what I had expressed throughout our conversations were merely my own ideas, and none of my remarks must be taken as committing my Government in any way. His Excellency said he understood this; he reiterated his wish that conversations should take place, and said he much hoped that if and when they did, it would be found that I had in fact correctly anticipated the views and sentiments of His Majesty's Government".<sup>7</sup>

On the following day, Atatürk invited Loraine to another poker game following a banquet at the Persian Embassy.<sup>8</sup> Towards the end of the evening, when only Atatürk and Loraine were left "in", Atatürk leaned across the table, and in front of a large audience announced: "You see what our strength is when we are playing against each other. Imagine what it would be if we were united".<sup>9</sup>

Loraine was confused as to whether these approaches were only whims of the Gazi or considered policy unconventionally manifested.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Loraine was launched on one of the classic diplomatic friendships. His late nights with Kemal Atatürk became notorious and were a very hard act for Knatchbull-Hugesson to follow when he became ambassador in 1939. "There is a man" Atatürk remarked to the Afghan ambassador, Faviz Muhammad Khan in reference to Loraine in 1934. PRO FO 1011/38 Oliphant to Loraine 19 Feb 34.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 371/17967/3917 Loraine to FO 17 Jun 34. The other players were Reza Shah Pahlavi, İsmet İnönü (Prime Minister and later President) and Şükrü Saraçoğlu (Minister of Justice and later Foreign Minister).

On 20 June he asked Dr. Tewfik Aras, the Turkish Foreign Minister. Aras assured him that Atatürk was indeed acting in accordance with Government policy.<sup>10</sup> As if to confirm Aras's assurance, on 5 July, speaking in the Grand National Assembly, İsmet İnönü singled-out Britain as a nation enjoying particularly cordial relations with Turkey -- relations, he said, which especially in their economic dimension, the Turks desired to make closer still.<sup>11</sup>

Not fully satisfied, on 29 July, Loraine dispatched members of his staff to try to sound other Turks as to the sincerity of the Gazi's proposals. Morgan sought out Edib Bey, "an old friend of the Embassy", who assured him that Atatürk had always thought well of England. Atatürk believed, Morgan was told, that "England always gives the final word, and that England alone can give the final word in world politics". Knight approached Şükrü Kaya, the Minister of the Interior and a particular friend of Atatürk, at a farewell party for the Soviet Ambassador. "The English are our friends", he informed Knight: "our best friends".<sup>12</sup> Reassured, Loraine informed the Foreign Office:

I feel rather keenly that we are at a happy turning point in our relations with Turkey and that we only need to manage the position sympathetically and intelligently to make it rather an important one; and that the snag of embarrassing or entangling commitments, often present on such occasions is in this case rather conspicuous by its

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<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 371/17967/3917; and, Gordon Waterfield, Professional Diplomat. Sir Percy Loraine, (London) 1973. p. 209.

<sup>11</sup> İnönü, p. 280.

<sup>12</sup> PRO FO 1011/33 Loraine to Oliphant 29 June.



absence.<sup>13</sup>

Despite his optimism, Loraine knew that he could proceed no further without instructions. He requested guidance from Whitehall. There had been no response to his early dispatches. He pleaded that:

You will be kind enough to give me latitude to suggest methods which might be employed to emphasize this new development in Anglo-Turkish post-war relations in such manner as to make it plain that we warmly appreciate his friendly feelings and that we on our side are only too willing to bury all our hatchets, and to impress on the Turkish public that we have the friendliest feelings for the new Turkey and a high regard for her President and for the remarkable work of reform reorganization and progress which is being effected under his distinguished and untiring guidance.<sup>14</sup>

He worried that:

[The] Turks may sense a certain frostiness on our part. I know that you must be terribly bunged up with other affairs in London, but I have not disguised from you the importance which I attach to this move on the part of the Gazi.<sup>15</sup>

On 17 July, Loraine received his instructions. Although HMG realised the desirability of strengthening the "friendship between the two countries", it was "difficult to see how they could really be further strengthened and developed without involving HM Government in some engagement into which it would probably be impracticable to enter".<sup>16</sup> There was no profit, it was thought, in encouraging the Turks to expect things HMG could not deliver.

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<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Simon 29 Jun 1934.

<sup>14</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Simon 29 Jun 1934.

<sup>15</sup> PRO FO 371/33 Loraine to Oliphant 8 Jul 1934.

<sup>16</sup> PRO FO 371/17967/3917

Somewhat later, Loraine was directed to convey a personal communication from Sir John Simon to Atatürk. It repeated in more diplomatic language the instructions that Loraine had already received.<sup>17</sup> Turkey had already informed its Greek and Russian allies that it intended to follow a new anglophile policy.<sup>18</sup> Movement towards an alliance stopped abruptly.

Despite Whitehall's reluctance, Loraine still considered it important to give the Turks some sign of British friendship. He suggested a visit of the Fleet to Istanbul. Due to the recent murder of a British seaman at Dip Burnu, however, neither Admiralty nor Foreign Office considered this advisable.<sup>19</sup> The best that could be arranged was the visit of the HMS London and a Destroyer Flotilla on 18 January 1935.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately protocol difficulties came close to spoiling the effect of even this visit. The Turks, nothing behind in military courtesy, steamed by the London with their entire fleet, the Yavuz, the Turkish Flagship, flying the pennant of Marshal Çakmak, the Turkish Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). Mistaking the pennant for that of a Rear Admiral, the British commander, Rear Admiral Iverthorn, ordered a salute fired short by two guns. Later, the Turks questioned the propriety of the salute. Iverthorn returned that if he known that the pennant was

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<sup>17</sup> PRO FO 371/17967/3917

<sup>18</sup> PRO FO 371/19037/3849 Annual Report for 1935. Neither Russia nor Greece objected to the abortive Turkish initiative.

<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Simon 29 Dec 1934.

<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 371/19037 7/43/35 Loraine to Rendell 28 Jan 1935.

that of a Land commander, there would have been fewer guns still. To Loraine it was quite obvious that the steam past had been intended as a great compliment. During the visits of Foreign vessels, it was the usual practice of the Turkish Fleet to hide in the Black Sea.<sup>21</sup> A steam-by with the Marshal aboard was an unprecedented honour.

#### **Turkish Intentions:**

What were the Turks doing? It seems probable that Atatürk's approaches were both the first awkward movements towards a fundamental Turkish realignment as well as reactions to immediate stimuli. The Turks were at once seeking to move to some permanent accommodation with Britain and to reinsure themselves against the immediate danger of the consolidation of a Mediterranean bloc excluding any of the smaller nations. Perhaps it would be most proper to say, that in seeking to reinsure themselves, the Turks took their first steps toward a closer relationship with the United Kingdom.

Atatürk's initiative came at a time when Britain and France were seeking security against the reawakening German threat. One of the chief bench-marks in this search was the visit of the French Premier, Laval, to Rome in January 1935;<sup>22</sup> another was the Stresa conference, 11-14 April, which brought together British, French and

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<sup>21</sup> PRO FO 371/19037 MED M.01538/35 Iverthorn to C in C Med 22 Jan 35.

<sup>22</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol I, p. 91-118; and, Communique Laval-Mussolini 7 Jan 1935, Documents of International Affairs, 1935, p. 19.

Italian representatives in an attempt to hammer-out a common response to the German threat.<sup>23</sup> Stresa, for Aras, and one expects, for his master Atatürk, raised the spectre of a "*directoire europeen*" which would freeze out the smaller states.<sup>24</sup> If nothing so grand, Stresa represented at least a prospective Mediterranean Entente excluding the smaller nations which, by its nature, must cut sharply across Turkey's own policy of an inclusive Mediterranean Pact.

The Turks were not alone in being suspicious of Western diplomacy.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, their doubts were a only a single manifestation of widespread speculation.<sup>26</sup> The Balkan thesis was that the Western Nations, France especially, were being lured by Mussolini into surrendering their attachments to the smaller nations with the bait of rapprochement with Italy.<sup>27</sup> In this, they

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<sup>23</sup> See, Report on Foreign Affairs, Vol 16, No. 1 (May 1935), p. 43; Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol I, p. 156-161; and, Text of Agreements reached at Stresa, Documents of International Affairs, 1935, p. 80-82.

<sup>24</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 249 Kammerer to Laval 25 Apr 1935.

<sup>25</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 249 op. cit. The Yugoslavs were said to be "*fortes irritée*" by Stresa.

<sup>26</sup> See for example, R.G. Woolbet, "Italy in Abyssinia", Foreign Affairs, Vol 13 (Apr 1935), p. 499-509. Woolbet's thesis was that Stresa was so obviously a French victory that it can only have occurred as a *quid pro quo* for concessions made to Italy elsewhere.

<sup>27</sup> DDF Series I, Vol IX no. 384 Naggiar to Laval 15 Mar 1935. Dr. Aras and Sükrî Kaya both told Naggiar that their belief was that Italy's plan for a limited Mediterranean entente was motivated by a desire to destroy the Balkan Entente. Greece and Turkey would be included in such a pact while Rumania and Yugoslavia would be left out.

appear to have been correct. Mussolini had made quite clear in December 1933 that attendance at the coming Stresa conference must be limited to nations which were immediate neighbours of Austria. In the Balkans, this was interpreted as an effort to detach France from the Little Entente, and Entente members from each other.<sup>28</sup> It may be, as was suspected at the time, that it was Mussolini's intention to destroy France's alliance networks in Eastern Europe, and rework them into an Italian dominated Danubian Pact. If this were so, Balkan dislike of Mussolini's policy is easily explicable because in such a system, the Balkans, and especially the South Balkans, would be largely marginalized.<sup>29</sup> Balkan reaction to both the Mussolini-Laval "summit" meeting and Stresa was identical: immediate issue of a joint communique by the Balkan nations associating themselves with the great power action.<sup>30</sup> Association was a bitter pill but isolation would be more bitter still.

Turkish fears were not quieted by the labours of French diplomats in Moscow. Hitherto, Russia had been the great anti-power of Europe the inclusion of which in any sort of European concert was unthinkable -- and an excellent thing this had been for Turkey in 1921. After Laval's trip to Russia in March, Eden's trip in April, and particularly after the Franco-Russian alliance was

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<sup>28</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol I, p. 101-102.

<sup>29</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol I, p. 113. On 20 Jan 1935, the Council of the Balkan Pact, declared that it could not support the idea of a Danubian Pact.

<sup>30</sup> Documents of International Affairs, 1935, p. 24 and 86-7.

signed in May,<sup>31</sup> many in Ankara began to fear that Turkey would lose much of its influence in Moscow as the Soviets normalized their relations with the other great powers.<sup>32</sup> Russia, the Turks feared, might even be drawn into the concert of great powers then forming around the Franco-Italian combination and away from their Turkish connection.<sup>33</sup> In addition, a Russia moving on the grand stage for the first time since the Revolution gave rise to fears that it would gradually come to occupy the same place in international affairs as had the Czarist state. Ankara began to detect, or thought it detected, a gradual shift "towards a more and more Russian nationalist policy and a rebirth, however timid, of panslavism".<sup>34</sup> Stalin and Litvinov's hints that Franco-Russian should be paralleled by Franco-Turkish rapprochement were only a poor consolation beside this prospect.<sup>35</sup> For their part, Turkey's neighbours -- France's allies in the East -- needed no

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<sup>31</sup> See, Documents of Foreign Policy, 1935, p. 264-273.

<sup>32</sup> The Russo-French alliance was a bomb-shell, particularly as agreement in negotiations was announced on 9 April only two days prior to Stresa. See, Report on International Affairs, Vol 16, No. 1 (May 1935), p. 143; and, Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol I, p. 156.

<sup>33</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 423 Alphand (Moscow) to Laval 20 Mar 1935. Vassif Cinar, the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow, Alphand notes, was put into a very bad humour by Laval's successes in Moscow. Alphand thought that the Turks, hitherto Russia's only friends, feared that Stalin would cease to see them as vitally important. Aras, on the other hand, called the Agreement "the only good news that I have received in recent days". DDF Series I, Vol X no. 286 Kammerer to Laval.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 447 Alphand to Laval 24 May 1935.

encouragement to distrust and fear the Soviet colossus.

No sooner had Balkan qualms regarding Western policy begun to develop than the French provided a salutary demonstration of how things might work in the new order created at Stresa. On 23 April -- two weeks after Stresa, one week after Dr. Aras's failure to successfully raise the question of Straits revision in Geneva<sup>36</sup> -- General Denaine, a French Air General, requisitioned thirty-six aircraft deliverable to Turkey on 15 April. İnönü, Marshal Çakmak, and Sükrü Kaya were extremely angry. Were the French, they inquired, trying to deprive the Turks of the ability to defend themselves against attack from the Sea?<sup>37</sup> Other armaments orders with French firms were scrutinized to determine if they could be safely cancelled. On 25 April, Kammerer, the French Ambassador, was summoned before İnönü. The evil, he was told, would be very great if Denaine's decision were not reversed. To begin with, other orders, to a value of six hundred million Francs, would be cancelled.<sup>38</sup> The Balkan powers, İnönü warned, were watching. They believed, he said, that the French were doing a deal with Mussolini and intended to render the little powers "lachees".<sup>39</sup> İnönü went on:

The Turkish Government wishes to work well with France. The needs of our defence of the Dardanelles should also be your concern. The communications with Russia must be

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter III below.

<sup>37</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 241 Ankara to Paris 23 Apr 1935.

<sup>38</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 252 Kammerer to Laval 25 Apr 1935.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

maintained. The ability to close them against our enemies must be assured: everything is changed since Lausanne. A rearmed Bulgaria could, aligned with Italy, pose a menace to the Straits. We will not expose ourselves to that danger.<sup>40</sup>

Turkish security, he suggested, was little less the concern of France than of Turkey. Finally, İnönü concluded, Turkey could only object strongly to a policy in which Western rapprochement with Italy came at the expense of relations with other nations.

Kammerer agreed. The rearmament of Bulgaria, rapprochement with Italy, and the Straits regime were, he thought, inseparable. If France did not give the Turks some satisfaction, he thought, "they [the Turks] would not hesitate to pass over entirely to Germany".<sup>41</sup> Paris did not agree and did not deliver the expropriated aircraft. On 5 June 1935, Turkey announced that it would cease to order military material from France.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, whatever Turkey's long term intentions, it seems probable that Attatürk's approaches to Lorraine in the Spring of 1935 largely resulted from fears that a European order was about to be created excluding Turkey. In effect, Turkey sought to off-set the danger of Franco-Italian and Franco-Russian rapprochement with a British connection. These approaches could only be fruitless given Britain's lingering determination to avoid commitments of any

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XI no. 24 Kammerer to Laval 5 Jun 1935. The chance of requisition, the Turks said, was too great. Marshal Çakmak resolved that further orders would be concentrated in countries where requisition would not be a danger -- Switzerland, Holland, and the United States principally.



kind. Nevertheless, Atatürk's initiative did succeed in establishing Anglo-Turkish "friendship" as a factor in the calculations of both nations. This "friendship", however, remained a shadowy entity, much less substantial than an alliance, and represented primarily a predisposition to cooperate in questions of common concern.

**The Abyssinian Crisis:**

The first tangible proof of Anglo-Turkish friendship came during the Abyssinian crisis which also marked the eruption of the Italian factor into Anglo-Turkish relations. Cordial as Anglo-Turkish relations might get, as London saw it, they must never become so formal as to cause Italy to believe that a war alliance was being forged against it; conversely, the Turks must never become so discouraged from British reluctance to move to something more formal that they ceased to be a potential ally should it come to war with Italy. This dilemma was a variation on the basic British reluctance to assume obligations of any kind anywhere for fear of becoming burdened with commitments.

A split policy in London produced a schizophrenic response as Turkey sought to accommodate itself to an uncertain British and a very definite French lead. If Britain would lead a Mediterranean coalition against Italy then it was in Turkey's interest that it be perceived in the front rank; but if British resolve were in doubt then it was not in Turkey's interest to move into a position of implacable opposition to Italy, however obnoxious Italian actions in Abyssinia. In the first case, Turkey would be best served by

ensuring that the coalition was as formidable and as close to a Mediterranean concert as possible. In this way, the curbing of Italian aggression would be the anteroom to Mediterranean detente. In the second case, Turkey would best further its own desiderata by playing the part of the mediator -- turning the reconciliation of Italy into Aras's general Mediterranean settlement. Whatever the case, the ultimate disaster, indecisive war and the arrival of the Germans as Italy's allies on the shore of the Mediterranean, would be averted.

On December 1934, Italian and Abyssinian forces clashed at Wal Wal. On 3 January 1935, Italy refused arbitration and appealed to the League. The League quickly mired itself in uncertainty and indecision. Laval, the French Foreign Minister, horrified at the thought that France's League obligations might place it in opposition to Italy, met with Mussolini on 7 January and seems to have made him to understand that France, at least, would not oppose him over Abyssinia.<sup>43</sup> Laval was not anxious to see his labour in constructing a Franco-Italian combination against a reawakening German danger break on an African question and Abyssinia was a price he was willing to pay to preserve it.

In February, Aras told Loraine that he considered war between Italy and the League likely, and that if it came, he was confident the League would win.<sup>44</sup> Aras was not, however, anxious that the

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<sup>43</sup> P. Reynaud, *Memoires. Venu de la Montagne*, (Flammarion: Paris), 1960. p. 449; and, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1935, Vol I, p. 91-118.

<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 371/19039 E1213/1213/44 Loraine to FO 10 Feb 1935.

situation should be allowed to deteriorate this far. He was also frightened by the new Franco-Italian solidarity and worried that this might prefigure the creation of a great power bloc.<sup>45</sup> His answer was to propose a comprehensive Mediterranean combination which would widen the Stresa system to include the nations of the Balkan Entente and the Soviet Union. Italy was not adverse to alliance with Turkey but balked at the size of Aras's construction. Plainly, Italy could not dominate such a combination, and for Italy in 1935, an alliance which aimed to ensure the status quo and which Italy could not dominate seemed a poor thing. Mussolini countered with a proposal of his own. On 20 February 1935, Italy suggested an Italian-Greek-Turkish alliance. Şükrü Kaya, the interim Foreign Minister, was inclined to agree that such an arrangement would be desirable but did not see how it would be possible without nullifying the Balkan Entente.<sup>46</sup> It is probable that to annul the pact was exactly what Mussolini had in mind.

By March 1935, it was obvious that Italy was massing troops in Somaliland to attack Abyssinia. The League Council met on 20 March to consider possible action against Italy. Finally, Italy agreed to submit to arbitration. Few doubted that this was only a means of forestalling League action. In doubting Mussolini's sincerity, the statesmen of Europe were correct. Mussolini was only going through the diplomatic motions prior to an invasion. By 1932, he was set on invasion. The clash at Wal Wal only provided a convenient

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<sup>45</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 249 Kammerer to Laval 25 Apr 1935.

<sup>46</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 157 Kammerer to Laval 9 Apr 1935.

pretext.<sup>47</sup> The concentration of Italian forces in Somaliland continued unabated.

In London, Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Minister, could see no easy way out. Britain could support the League, risk war with Italy, and give the League Covenant an interpretation Britain could not support, or it could "acquiesce in what would be a misuse of the League machinery by acting in a manner acceptable to Italy but certainly unjust to Ethiopia". Whichever course was chosen, "His Majesty's Government will undoubtedly lay themselves open to grave public criticism".<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Austen Chamberlain was not alone in thinking that Italian victory would lead to a greater and more dangerous challenge in short order.<sup>49</sup>

On 9 April 1935, the Turks, worried much less about the integrity of Abyssinia than their own security in the Mediterranean, proposed again that Italy consider entering a combination such as Aras had described in February. Mussolini answered this time with a straight "no". He was not willing, for one thing, to include Rumania in such a pact because it was not a Mediterranean nation. This time, he countered with the offer of a straight Italo-Turkish pact. The Turks did not reply. Little by

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<sup>47</sup> Mussolini told General De Bono in early 1932, that he was determined on a war of conquest against Ethiopia. Christopher Hibbert, Benito Mussolini, (Longmans: London) 1962. p. 68; and, H. Braddick, "The Hoare-Laval Plan: A Study in International Politics", European Diplomacy Between the Wars 1919-1939, (Quadrangle: Chicago) 1972. p. 153.

<sup>48</sup> PRO CAB 24/255 CP 98(35) The Italo-Ethiopian Situation Simon 11 May 1935.

<sup>49</sup> UB AC 41/3/26 A. Chamberlain to Murray 6 Apr 1936.

little, Aras told Kammerer, Italy was moving in the right direction.<sup>50</sup> The next day, 10 April, Mussolini suggested that all bilateral treaties be unified into one treaty with a military convention. In Belgrade, Athens and Ankara this was taken to be a certain sign that Mussolini was about to surrender since this would be tantamount to the adherence of Italy to the Balkan Pact less Rumania.<sup>51</sup> They were wrong. What Mussolini was about to do was invade Abyssinia.

On 25 June, Italo-Ethiopian negotiations at the Hague, which had been a sham from the beginning, failed. Mussolini ceased to conceal the fact that he would be satisfied with nothing less than complete annexation. On 9 September, Sir Samuel Hoare made the speech in Geneva which gave Britain the unwelcome leadership of the League's Jacobin wing.<sup>52</sup> On 3 October, Italy invaded Ethiopia. On 7 October, in solemn session, the League Council declared Italy an aggressor.<sup>53</sup> Sanctions agreed upon on 19 October, were to take effect from 18 November.<sup>54</sup>

During these and the following months, the nations of Europe began to take sides, and to sort themselves into parties based on

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<sup>50</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 160 Kammerer to Laval 9 Apr 1935.

<sup>51</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 165 Naggjar (Belgrade) to Laval 10 Apr; also, no. 225 Thierry (Athens) to Laval 19 Apr 1935.

<sup>52</sup> PRO FO 800/295 Hoare to the League Assembly 9 Sep 1935. Text of Speech: Documents in International Affairs, 1935, p. 100.

<sup>53</sup> A. Zimmern, "The Testing of the League", Foreign Affairs, Vol 14 (Apr 1936), p. 373-386.

<sup>54</sup> M.J. Bonn, "How Sanctions Failed", Foreign Affairs, Vol 15 (Oct 1936), p. 102-111.

how far they would go in defence of the League. Litvinov told Mr. Edmund, British representative at Geneva, that Russia considered that the dispute would be decisive, and that the League would have to do something if it were to survive as an effective force. Russia, he said, was prepared to take part in the execution of a League decision whatever it might be.<sup>55</sup> The French reaction was more than a little less straight-forward. While wishing to support the League, France equally hoped not to antagonize its new-found Italian ally. Paris, also, was annoyed at what it considered Britain's belated discovery of collective security.<sup>56</sup> Finally, rent by internal divisions, France did not feel itself in a position to move into an adversarial position with anybody. Vansittart was only stating the obvious when he wrote that "France -- the country, much more than the Government -- is so divided and so pacific that it is at least open to question whether France would "march" except in case of an attack on France".<sup>57</sup>

On 2 September 1935, the members of the Little Entente met at Bled. Anticipating the Italian action, they decided to apply whatever sanctions were decided by the League and agreed upon by Britain and France and to consult together in the improbable event that Britain alone recommended sanctions.<sup>58</sup> The Balkan Entente

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<sup>55</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XIV no. 412 Edmund to Hoare 1 Aug 1935.

<sup>56</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 31-38.

<sup>57</sup> CC VNST 2/29/16 Vansittart Minute 12 Oct 1935.

<sup>58</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XIV no. 517 Balfour (Belgrade) to Hoare 2 Sept 1935.

decided to adopt a similar policy.<sup>59</sup> Bulgaria announced that it would conform to the policy of the other Balkan nations.<sup>60</sup> In truth, the attitude of all the smaller nations was nearly identical. While favouring sanctions, and strongly opposed to Italian actions, they would wait for an Anglo-French lead. Their objection to the Italian actions had little to do with the rights or wrongs of the Italian case against Abyssinia, and everything to do with the fact that Italy seemed bent on pursuing the matter in the manner traditional for great powers in their relations with smaller -- by force if necessary, without reference to third parties or bodies unless compelled.<sup>61</sup>

While Turkey was at the heart of the Balkan Entente, its reaction to the Italian moves in October was in considerable advance of its Balkan allies. Turco-Italian relations quickly began to sink into mutual enmity. Conversely, diplomatic relations between Turkey and Abyssinia were established on 1 May 1935.<sup>62</sup> Shortly after the commencement of hostilities, in October, the first Turkish Chargé to Abyssinia since 1914 and the first Turkish

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<sup>59</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XII no. 70 Kammerer to Laval 29 Aug 1935.

<sup>60</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XIII no. 108 Labouret (Sofia) to Laval 26 Oct 1935.

<sup>61</sup> The Scandinavian nations, for example, had agreed on 29 August 1935 to enforce any sanctions called for by the League. The attitude of the Dominions was similar. Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 81-2.

<sup>62</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X, no. 280 Krammerer to Laval 1 May 1935.

Military Attaché to Abyssinia ever, arrived in Addas Abbas.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, Turkish public opinion had taken a sharp turn against Italy and also against France which was seen as being insufficiently advanced in its adherence to the League. In August, Dr. Aras told M. Kammerer, the French Ambassador, that Turkey viewed Abyssinia as a neighbour, and would resent any threat to its independence.<sup>64</sup> By September, the Turkish press, was violently anti-Italian and was openly accusing France of having sold Abyssinia to Rome.<sup>65</sup> The fact was that the Turks both admired and feared Italy less than their neighbours and looked for more from the League of Nations. They were also less vulnerable to Italian retaliation. "Their experience" Loraine noted caustically, was "that Italian friendship is apt to be more dangerous than Italian enmity".<sup>66</sup> In addition, Aras considered Italy less as a threat in itself than as the key to Germany's probable actions. Germany, he thought, would not start a war without Italy being involved first, and therefore, if Mussolini could be kept at peace, it was probable that the peace of Europe could be preserved.<sup>67</sup> If Mussolini

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<sup>63</sup> In addition, a Turkish soldier-of-fortune, Vehib Pasa, was employed by the Ethiopian Army as an advisor to its southern forces in a semi-official capacity. Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 83.

<sup>64</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XI no. 453 Kammerer to Laval 14 Aug. See also, Vol XII no. 70 Kammerer to Laval 29 Aug 1935.

<sup>65</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XII no. 231 Kammerer to Laval 24 Sep; and, PRO 371/20091/272 Annual Report for 1935 para 116.

<sup>66</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 28 Feb 1937.

<sup>67</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 26 Mar 1937.



dragged Europe into conflict, on the other hand, a probable consequence, Aras thought, would be the arrival of the Germans on the Mediterranean -- a prospect "which they [the Turks] would view with abhorrence".<sup>68</sup> The safest way to keep Germany quiet and away from the Mediterranean then, was to keep Italy quiet and away from Germany. This could be accomplished either through accommodation or intimidation. After the outbreak of conflict, when Mussolini's African truculence made a shambles of Aras' Mediterranean detente, intimidation seemed the only answer.

On 7 October, reacting strongly to news of the Italian invasion, Aras told Kammerer that Turkey could be expected to stand by its allies, its obligations, collective security and the Covenant of the League.<sup>69</sup> Aras had earlier assured Loraine that while he did not personally believe there would be war over Abyssinia, and though Turkey would not take isolated action, Turkey would "follow England to the last ditch in defence of the Covenant of the League of Nations".<sup>70</sup>

The Turkish assurances were received with great pleasure in London and in the British Embassy in Ankara where they were weighed much more for what was promised than what was expected. After a

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<sup>68</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 28 Feb 1937.

<sup>69</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XII no. 364 Kammerer to Laval 7 Oct 1935.

<sup>70</sup> PRO FO 371/19039 E 5124 Loraine to FO 26 Aug 1935. At this time Turkey was seeking election to the Council of the League and was looking for British support. Dr. Aras told Eden that if Turkey's bid failed, her "sympathies would not change" but confessed, however, that "her assertion of them would be less emphatic".

lengthy panegyric on the excellent state of Anglo-Turkish relations, however, Loraine was careful to point out to his superiors that the Turks expected a British lead.<sup>71</sup> At Geneva, in September, Hoare had seemed to imply that Britain would go to any lengths in defence of the League. The Turks often said that in this matter they would go as far as the farthest. London does not seem to have twigged that in Ankara "the farthest" meant Britain, and that Britain's new popularity was largely contingent on the perception that London was, in fact, as steadfast a defender of the League as it liked to sound. British imagination went no further than the realization that:

The Turks are among our best friends in the League of Nations and from all your telegrams they appear to be ready to cooperate and not just fence sitters with regards to their responsibilities in connection with the wretched Abyssinian business.<sup>72</sup>

The Turks were looking to be led in defence of the League and the Mediterranean status quo by a great power. The British were looking for moral support. The Turks underestimated British weakness; the British, Turkish expectations.

Britain, initially, seemed set on support for the League. The so-called peace ballot of June 1935 had indicated wide-spread public support for the League of Nations. Nearly two-thirds of those polled -- with one-sixth abstaining -- had indicated that this support extended to the use of military sanctions in defence of the League. As it began to become clear, however, exactly what

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<sup>71</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Hoare 25 Nov 1935.

<sup>72</sup> PRO FO 1011/90 Wigram to Loraine 28 Dec 1935.

an effective League response might cost Britain the resolution of the British Government at least, rapidly began to weaken.<sup>73</sup>

**The Military Context and the Development of British Policy:**

Already, on 2 August 1935, the CID Joint Planning Subcommittee (JPC), had considered the military implications of Article 16 of the League of Nations covenant.<sup>74</sup> They returned to this matter on 30 August in the specific case of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute and quickly came to the conclusion that Britain was not ready to go to war against Italy without allies. It must find allies with whom to concert plans if it was to provide an adequate level of military support to the League.<sup>75</sup> On 3 September, it was decided that the Naval Member, Captain T. Phillips (RN), should prepare a plan for naval action in the Mediterranean in support of the League.<sup>76</sup> On 4 September, this plan was accepted and forwarded to the Chiefs of Staff for approval.<sup>77</sup>

The Chiefs of Staff had already considered the matter and had arrived at the same conclusion. Sanctions, they thought, would be ineffective without the exercise of belligerent rights, which

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<sup>73</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 48-51.

<sup>74</sup> PRO CAB 55/1 JPC 68th Mtg. (Composition: Capt E. King, Col R. Adams, and Gp Capt A. Harris).

<sup>75</sup> PRO CAB 55/1 JPC 70th Mtg. Capt E. King had, by this time, been replaced by Capt T. Phillips -- killed in 1941 on the Prince of Wales.

<sup>76</sup> PRO CAB 55/1 JPC 71st Mtg.

<sup>77</sup> PRO CAB 55/1 JPC 72nd Mtg.

"would, in practice, almost inevitably lead to active hostilities".<sup>78</sup> They concluded, therefore, that:

1. Economic sanctions would almost certainly lead to war;
2. that action against Italian communications would almost certainly lead to war;
3. that imposition of sanctions would mean, then, preparation for war; and, therefore,
4. that active cooperation of other naval and Mediterranean powers would be required.<sup>79</sup>

Other voices soon joined the JPC and COS in insisting that sanctions meant war. The CID subcommittee on economic pressure returned a similar opinion. It foresaw the association of Britain with Turkey, Argentina, Australia, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Mexico, Portugal, Poland, Russia and Spain in the imposition of a graduated series of sanctions. The first step would be to impose sanctions prior to the Italian invasion; the second to exercise pressure under Article 16; the third to seek the association of non-member nations (US). The fourth and last step would be war. The most elegant and least dangerous method of applying pressure, the subcommittee thought, would be to cut-off Italian trade at the Mediterranean exits. Italy was import dependent. Half its imports would be eliminated by the closure of the Straits of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. Another quarter would be stopped if Turkey closed the Dardanelles. The pressure thus

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<sup>78</sup> CAB 53/5 COS 147th Mtg 30 July 1935.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

created "would be considerable" and might prove decisive.<sup>80</sup> In the judgement of the Treasury, a blockade of Italy, while dangerous, would undermine Italy's ability to wage war within three months.<sup>81</sup>

On 30 September 1935, the CID advisory committee on trade questions in time of war, tabled its report Economic Pressure on Italy.<sup>82</sup> While it conceded that economic sanctions might have been decisive if imposed before hostilities had broken out, it doubted that they could be so any more without the establishment of an effective blockade. A pacific blockade, the planners believed, was an impossibility, and therefore,

The present economic situation . . . which we are now asked by the Cabinet to examine seems likely to end in a clear state of war before any economic pressure which could be brought to bear in the period prior to the declaration of war by Italy becomes effective.<sup>83</sup>

In any case, it seemed likely that only Austria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Russia, Spain and Turkey could be really counted upon to participate; and even these powers only if Great Britain and France gave a clear lead.<sup>84</sup>

The problem, in effect, was that anything likely to be effective, was equally likely to lead to war; and a blockade apt to

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<sup>80</sup> PRO CAB 24/256 CP 169(35) Economic Pressure on Italy CID Subcommittee on Economic Pressure.

<sup>81</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XIV no. 538 Memorandum Sir F. Phillips (Treasury) 5 Sep 1935.

<sup>82</sup> PRO CAB 47/8 ATB 120 (CID 1188-B) Economic Pressure on Italy Advisory Committee on Trade Questions in Time of War 30 Sep 1935.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

be decisive, was almost certain to result in hostilities. Any action likely to be effective would end in real war. Any war would tend to totality.<sup>85</sup> Eden, for one, was dissatisfied with this judgement. He thought it unduly pessimistic. It did, nonetheless, represent considered civil and military opinion.<sup>86</sup>

A further problem, was that the closure of the Suez canal, while militarily a simple matter, was legally a tricky business. In September, Captain Phillips gave his attention to the problem. He believed that this could be easily accomplished by the deployment of forces to the ends of the canal at Ras Sudr and Port Said.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Why it took so long to identify this problem is difficult to understand. The COS had come to a similar conclusion as early as April 1934. Neville Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, had asked them to consider the impact of disarmament on the ability to enforce sanctions. He wondered if blockade could be pacifically enforced; and, if not, if military sanctions could be limited to aerial bombardment. Admiral Ernle Chatfield, the First Sea Lord, doubted that economic pressure alone could ever be made effective. Mere sanctions were too slow and not frightening enough to lead to decision. The only effective economic sanction was blockade which could never be pacific unless the blockaded power were absolutely impotent. No power able to act would submit to blockade. If blockade were enforced, Chatfield considered that it would be impossible to "limit" the war in any fashion. "The Chiefs of Staff had pointed out that this [blockade] was impossible as it would lead to unlimited warfare: in other words, that military sanctions would inevitably lead to unlimited warfare . . . He [Chatfield] thought the general principle that the only deterrent was military sanction was right, but of course it meant the employment of all the forces of the crown: sea, land and air." PRO CAB 53/2 COS 123rd Mtg 17 Apr 1934.

<sup>86</sup> PRO CAB 47/8 ATB(EP) 12th Mtg 12 July 35.

<sup>87</sup> PRO ADM 116/3038 Action Needed in Connection with the Severance of the Line of Communications to the Italian Forces in East Africa D Plans to DCNS & CNS 7 Sep 1935.

A CCB could then be established at Aden.<sup>88</sup> In December, concentration of Air Units from Iraq and India to assist in the defence of the Canal commenced.<sup>89</sup> The Foreign Office, alerted to Service preparations, warned that closure of the Canal by HMG was specifically forbidden under Article One of the Suez Convention, though naval action outside the seven mile limit was allowed.<sup>90</sup> Planning to close the canal by fortification stalled while the Navy sought a legally acceptable formula.<sup>91</sup>

Operational planning in the Mediterranean, meanwhile, foresaw a level of ruthless action completely uncongenial to the thinking of Britain's leadership. In the event of active hostilities, Pound

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<sup>88</sup> PRO ADM 116/3038 op. cit., D Plans to C in C Med 11 Sep 1935.

<sup>89</sup> PRO CAB 53/5 COS 159th Mtg 13 Dec 1934.

<sup>90</sup> PRO ADM 116/3038 op. cit., W. Beckett (FO Legal dept) to Adm 11 Jun 1935.

<sup>91</sup> Eventually, Article I of the Suez Convention was circumvented by approaching the Canal Company through the Government of Egypt. The Canal Company promised to build concrete gun embrasures at both ends of the canal and to call in HMG for canal defence in the event of war. To ensure that there would be no delays, Lampson, the Ambassador to Egypt, and the Agent Superieure of the Canal Company, jointly drafted the request that the Government of Egypt would send in time of necessity. PRO ADM 116/3834 Defence of the Suez Canal Lampson to Halifax 11 May 1938. Even prior to this, however, predeployments of defensive stores had been made. By Spring 1937, six inch gun batteries and defensive stores were being held in Malta for movement to Egypt. Legal or not, the canal could be made defensible to naval attack within 14 days. ADM 116/3834 op. cit., Canal Terminal Port Defences 24 May 1937. The Foreign Office stressed that "Mr Eden attaches importance, however to the equipment in question being shipped to Egypt as unostentatiously as possible". ADM 116/3834 op. cit., Bomb and Gun Defences for Egyptian Ports and Haifa Gamble (FO) to Adm 26 Sep 1937. Eden's squeamishness was understandable. Britain's legal position in this matter remained questionable at best.

foresaw the movement of the Mediterranean fleet to Alexandria, and the Home Fleet to Malta.<sup>92</sup> Once this deployment was complete a major surface offensive would be possible.<sup>93</sup> By October 1935, Pound had completed an outline plan for a surprise attack by the Mediterranean Fleet, based on Furious, on the Italian Home Fleet at Genoa. This attack would be simultaneous with one on Italian Fleet units based at Cagliari Sicily by a Battleship group, based on Rodney and Nelson, from the Home Fleet. Following the neutralization of the Italian Fleet, the British would switch the focus of their attack to the annihilation by shore bombardment of Italian naval infrastructure.<sup>94</sup> Subsequent operations would aim at securing the control of the Central Mediterranean. French support was essential because the British had no Mediterranean harbour of their own capable of handling the Rodney and Nelson.<sup>95</sup>

The JPC had also given thought to the operational problem, and had produced a plan very similar to Pound's. In the event that it became necessary to impose sanctions on Italy, and given that these sanctions would likely lead to war, the Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean would be reinforced with an Aircraft Carrier, one-

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<sup>92</sup> Movement of the Mediterranean Fleet to Alexandria was authorized on 13 Dec 1934. PRO CAB 53/5 COS 159th Mtg.

<sup>93</sup> PRO ADM 116/3038 Italian Abyssinian Dispute. RN Precautionary Measures in the Mediterranean, Situation in the Mediterranean -- Proposed Counter Measures to Possible Italian Hostile Action Pound to Chatfield 20 Aug 1935.

<sup>94</sup> PRO ADM 116/3038 Italian Abyssinian Dispute. RN Precautionary Measures in Mediterranean Pound to Backhouse (C in C Home Fleet) 3 Oct 1935.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.



half of a Destroyer Flotilla and a Submarine Flotilla from the Home Fleet. The remainder of the Home Fleet would assemble at Portland prior to sailing for Gibraltar.<sup>96</sup> Once these dispositions were made, preferably before the war began, the decision would have to be made whether Britain would relinquish control of the Central Mediterranean to Italy. If so, then Malta would be evacuated, and Britain would have to accept the political consequences in Greece and Turkey, which the JPC judged would be harsh. The British would also have to accept that the French would face a much heavier weight of attack. On the whole, the JPC inclined to the view that the Central Mediterranean should be held. Thus it followed, if sanctions were to be enforced, it would be necessary to destroy the Italian Fleet.<sup>97</sup>

Subsequent British indecision then, should be read in the light of the conviction that economic sanctions, to be effective, would lead to blockade which would lead to war which could not be limited in scope or degree. Sanctions, according to British doctrine, meant dispositions for total war.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, opinion

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<sup>96</sup> PRO CAB 55/7 JP 115 General Naval Policy in the Event of Imposition of Sanctions Against Italy 2 Sep 1935.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> This was also the conclusion of the CID Subcommittee on Belligerent Rights. No limited blockade was possible. Contraband was anything the enemy saw fit to control. In war everything is controlled. Therefore everything becomes contraband. In WWI even baby bottles were contraband. To become effective, a blockade regime would of necessity spread until it reached totality. A total blockade could not be reconciled with limited war: it was a bludgeon not a rapier. CC AC/41/4/70; and PRO CAB 47/12 ATB(EPG) Subcommittee on Economic Pressure on Germany 8 Mtg 1 Jul 1938.

was nearly unanimous in London that effective sanctions would require commitment to other sanctionist powers. There could have been nothing better calculated than these two propositions to take the iron from British resolve. Finally, while being the member of the League best placed to play a leading part against Italy, Britain was also the member most vulnerable to Italian attack. By its nature, if not by conviction, Britain would be pushed to the forefront of the League's defenders. For Britain, against Italy, there was no limited liability. As British planning for war with Italy took shape this basic dilemma became steadily more obvious and inescapable. Not only would sanctions tend inexorably toward total war, but it would be a war, at its heart, an Anglo-Italian struggle for control of the Mediterranean.

**Sanctions:**

Meanwhile, in Geneva, the League of Nations continued to consider ways to combat Italian aggression. Soon after the Italian attack on Abyssinia the League of Nations Assembly established a coordination committee for the imposition of sanctions. Turkey, with Poland, the USSR, Rumania, Spain, Sweden and Yugoslavia represented the most irreconcilable element of what came to be known as the Committee of Eighteen. Turkey, as well, sat on the Coordination Committee, a more handy subcommittee of the Eighteen which acted as its directing body.<sup>99</sup> The Eighteen considered three forms of economic action: a boycott of Italian goods, the embargo of essential imports, and the organization of material support for

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<sup>99</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 263.

Ethiopia.<sup>100</sup> Its thoughts moving in the same direction as Britain's planners, on 14 October, the Coordination Committee agreed that member nations would provide support to League States acting in accordance with a League decision under Article 16 if attacked by Italy.<sup>101</sup>

Controversy quickly came to centre on the embargo of imports, and particularly on the suggestion that an embargo of oil would bring the Italian attack to a stand still. Measure IVA -- the oil embargo -- was unanimously adopted by the Eighteen. Rumania, Russia, the Government of India and Iraq all pledged to stop oil shipments to Italy. "Oil" the Committee of Eighteen concluded, "is an essential need and it is obvious that a complete embargo . . . would bring the war to a speedy end".<sup>102</sup>

Turkey, for the moment, was hot for sanctions and a "Law for the Carrying out of the Decision Taken by the League of Nations" -- enabling legislation to permit the application of sanctions -- was quickly passed through the Grand National Assembly with scarcely any dissent.<sup>103</sup>

France did not agree. In November, Laval warned Hoare in Paris that oil sanctions would be an act of desperation. Personally, he

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<sup>100</sup> PRO CAB 24/257 CP 200(35) Export of Materials and Implements of War Coordination Committee 27 Oct 1935. See also, Documents in Foreign Policy, p. 213-215.

<sup>101</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 263.

<sup>102</sup> PRO CAB 24/257 CP 200(35) Export of Materials and Implements of War Coordination Committee 27 Oct 1935. See also, Documents in Foreign Policy, 1935, p. 213-215 and, 222-223.

<sup>103</sup> Esmer, p. 40

was not prepared to take such a risk and could not recommend such a course to his Government. The best course, Laval thought, would be to follow a prudent course of conciliation.<sup>104</sup> In the end, France reacted to the League's decision to impose sanctions by announcing that it would participate in economic sanctions but nothing of a political or military nature including blockade.<sup>105</sup> In the League France used its influence to ensure that no sanction was imposed likely to end in military action.

Britain had few doubts that an oil embargo would be decisive, but also believed that rather than bringing the war in Abyssinia to an end, it would increase the chance of hostilities in the Mediterranean by leading to a "mad dog" act as Italy tried to avoid the verdict of economic pressure. The Cabinet wired Eden:

if pushed, avoid taking a lead in imposing oil sanctions but if another country proposed it and the proposals led to practical action, HMG would agree to participate if Rumania, the USSR and the Netherlands also agree.<sup>106</sup>

Rumania, the USSR and the Netherlands did agree.

The Cabinet began to get cold feet. Baldwin's feet were colder than most. The crisis, Churchill was later to write, convinced Baldwin of three things: firstly, that to declare effective sanctions meant war; secondly, "he was resolved that there must be

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<sup>104</sup> P. Reynaud, Memoires. Venu de la Montagne, (Flammarion: Paris), 1960. p. 457.

<sup>105</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 69 Hoare to Clerk (Paris) 11 Oct 1935.

<sup>106</sup> PRO CAB 24/257 CP 212(35) Dispute Between Italy and Abyssinia. Oil Supplies for Italy FO Memorandum.

no war; and thirdly, he decided upon sanctions".<sup>107</sup> Why Sanctions? To appear lacking in ardour for the League, the results of the 1935 election suggested, would be politically dangerous. The Conservative Party had pledged itself to a policy of strong support for the League and, on 14 November, had been rewarded with an enormous majority by the people of Britain.<sup>108</sup> Two weeks later, Dr. Aras attempted to revive the possibility of some kind of reconciliation with Italy to be followed by a general settlement in the Mediterranean and was quickly disillusioned. Not only would HMG, at this stage, not consider, publicly, accommodation with Italy but it was not interested in any commitments -- particularly to continental states like Rumania and Yugoslavia. Dr. Aras "was most wrong of all", the Foreign Office informed Loraine, in supposing that we were prepared even to consider giving any sort of guarantee in the Mediterranean".<sup>109</sup> Unwilling to go either forward or back, unwilling to consider heightened opposition or reconciliation, reduction in tension or acceleration of preparation, the Cabinet hung suspended by indecision. The result was that unhappy compromise the Hoare-Laval peace plan.<sup>110</sup> In the end, an oil embargo was not imposed although individual members of the League -- chiefly Rumania and Russia -- imposed it on their own accord.

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<sup>107</sup> Hibbert, p. 70.

<sup>108</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 54-55.

<sup>109</sup> PRO FO 1011/36 Oliphant to Loraine 25 Nov 1935.

<sup>110</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 271-325.

**Hoare-Laval:**

The Hoare Laval plan was at its basis an attempt to reconcile the British and French positions; to attempt, in Hoare's words, a "double line" of sanctions and conciliation vis-a-vis Italy.<sup>111</sup> Agreement on a common policy was reached in principle on 6 December between Hoare's deputy in the Abyssinian department, Peterson, and his French opposite number, St. Quentin. On 8 December, Laval and Hoare gave their approval. On 9 December, the agreement was leaked to the French press. By 10 December, things were beginning to unravel. News of the deal began to spread to Britain where it was greeted with outrage. The next day, Ethiopia rejected in advance the details of the plan. On 13 December, Eden half-heartedly communicated the plan to the League. Within a week, there was nothing left to do except to "shovel a few perfunctory spadefuls of earth over the corpse" in the League,<sup>112</sup> and nothing for Hoare to do but resign to save the Government. On 27 December, Laval escaped his own Golgotha by the narrowest of margins.<sup>113</sup>

One day after the League rejection of the Hoare-Laval plan, on 20 December, the representatives of the Little and Balkan Ententes met in joint session at Bled to discuss the Hoare-Laval proposals. Their reaction was one of unequivocal refusal to support Britain and France in this regard. They jointly "renewed their decision in favour of a strict and loyal application of the Covenant of the

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 310-311.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 325.

League of Nations and also in favour of common action among themselves in the circumstances of the moment".<sup>114</sup> Turkey had earlier made its own rejection of the plan quite explicit. A member of the Committee of Five -- the League Committee charged with finding a compromise solution to the Abyssinian crisis -- Turkey led Spain and Poland in refusing to consider the plan when it was submitted by France on 9 December.<sup>115</sup>

**Movement Towards Association with Turkey:**

Meanwhile, through December, the COS continued to make plans for war with Italy and to weigh the utility of Britain's potential allies.<sup>116</sup> France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Rumania, Russia, Spain, and Turkey were all considered potential confederates. Hungary, Austria, Poland and Germany were expected to help by limiting the conflict.<sup>117</sup>

Since war with Italy would occur in two phases -- Phase I: attainment of naval supremacy; Phase II: economic pressure -- aid was to be requested both to facilitate immediate operations and to intensify long term pressure. Turkey was to be approached for use of harbours, and docking facilities for Phase I. In Phase II, it

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<sup>114</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 84.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 306n

<sup>116</sup> PRO CAB 53/26 COS 415 Objectives in the Event of a War with Italy Chatfield 2 Dec 1935; and, COS 417 Objectives in the Event of a War with Italy 10 Dec 1935.

<sup>117</sup> PRO CAB 53/26 COS 415(JP) Assurances to be Obtained from Other Powers to Safeguard the Situation in the Event of an Aggression by Italy 30 Nov 1935.

was to remilitarize the Straits and close them to Italian vessels. It would also be approached to concert plans for the reduction of the Dodecanese should that be required. If this last operation were to be considered, the use of railways and aerodromes in Western Anatolia would be a prerequisite.<sup>118</sup>

In Turkey, meanwhile, Atatürk was speaking widely in support of the League of Nations. On 27 October, Atatürk addressed the Municipal Corporation of Ankara. He reminded them of the importance to Turkey of collective security and international guarantees.<sup>119</sup> On 1 November, he addressed a congress of the Republican People's Party (CHP). He told the assembled delegates that in the present state of international crisis it was Turkey's first duty to be strong, and its second duty to use its strength to fulfil its international obligations. "We sincerely desire" he said, "that the League of Nations will be able to use the present events to give a wider application to its principles and that its power to ensure peace will be increased".<sup>120</sup>

Despite Service advice that Britain needed allies, HMG remained fundamentally opposed to the idea of approaching other nations for support prior to the outbreak of hostilities. In a debate on the League of Nations in the House of Commons on 24 October 1935, Colonel Josuah Wedgewood asked if "His Majesty's Government has made or will make any approach to the Government of

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> PRO FO 371/19039 E6600/1213/44 Lorraine to Hoare 7 Nov 1935.

<sup>120</sup> PRO FO 371/19039 E6504 Lorraine to FO 4 Nov 1935.



Jugo-Slavia, Turkey and Russia with reference to the use of ports and naval assistance in case of attack by the aggressor?" "The answer", Hoare told him, "is in the negative".<sup>121</sup> Two months later, pushed by the COS, and with war seeming much more likely, the Cabinet decided to swallow this bitter pill;<sup>122</sup> by then somewhat sugared by the decision of the CID Deputy Chiefs of Staffs Subcommittee (DCOS), on 20 December, that there was no need for actual Staff conversations, but only for the details of what each Mediterranean power might be expected to do in the event of Italian aggression.<sup>123</sup> The COS request for information was passed to the Foreign Office.<sup>124</sup>

Accordingly, the Foreign Office approached France, Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia with the question as to whether Britain could depend on their support in the event that the imposition of economic sanctions led to Italian attack. Greece signalled the same day that it would support Britain in such a case.<sup>125</sup> Stoyadinovic, the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, answered that Yugoslavia would honour its obligations under the League, but must

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<sup>121</sup> Hansard Commons, Vol CCCV 24 Oct 1935.

<sup>122</sup> PRO CAB 23/83 Cab 3(36) 29 Jan 1936.

<sup>123</sup> PRO CAB 54/1 DCOS 5th Mtg (DCOS composition: VAdm A. James, MGen J. Dill, and AVM Courtney).

<sup>124</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 487 Eden to Waterlow (Athens), Loraine (Ankara), Campbell (Belgrade) 29 Jan 1936.

<sup>125</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 287 FO to Waterlow (Athens) 6 Dec 1935; and no. 319 Waterlow to FO 6 Dec.

consult its allies before giving a more definite answer.<sup>126</sup> The French, for their part, continued to balk at the idea of possible joint action. Approached by Chatfield and Eden, they "burke[d] the issue".<sup>127</sup>

Turkey's answer was most encouraging of all. After consulting with its Balkan allies, Dr. Aras formally advised London, Paris and Rome that Turkey would give immediate and total support to Britain in the event that it was attacked by Italy but would require a reciprocal assurance.<sup>128</sup> The Turks, he told Loraine privately, "understood their obligations under the covenant in exactly the same way" as did Britain.<sup>129</sup> Dr. Aras promised that he would encourage the Yugoslavs to take the same view. "In the event of Italian aggression" he said:

Turkey would regard herself as engaged in a military alliance of which she accepts fully the responsibility, dangers and consequences. But in order to maximize these wishes only preparation to ensure effective action.<sup>130</sup>

Loraine thought this answer "complete and unconditional acceptance of our thesis"<sup>131</sup> and seems to have taken little notice of Dr. Aras's reference to "preparation to ensure effective action". Aras,

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<sup>126</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 248 FO to Campbell (Belgrade) 5 Nov 1935; and, no. 309 Campbell to FO 9 Dec 1935.

<sup>127</sup> PRO CAB 24/257 CP 220 Report Cabinet Subcommittee on Defence Policy and Requirements 26 Nov 1935.

<sup>128</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II, p. 268; and, Documents of International Affairs, 1935, p. 223.

<sup>129</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 339 Loraine to FO 9 Dec 1935.

<sup>130</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 340 Loraine to FO 9 Dec.

<sup>131</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 340 Loraine to FO 9 Dec.

it seems probable, was referring to Staff conversations. Britain was not yet willing to go this far.

British planning for war against Italy in the Mediterranean continued through the Winter of 1935-1936. The Central Mediterranean continued to give cause for alarm. Here alone the Italians would enjoy an advantage on the outbreak of war. Malta would be seriously threatened. Unfortunately it was the only good port the British had. The British, their planning continuing along offensive lines, would seek to offset Italy's advantage by supply interdiction, attacks on Italian communications, and operations aimed at destroying the Italian Fleet -- in a word, by direct offensive action.<sup>132</sup>

In the Eastern Mediterranean, however, the situation would be excellent. Italy would be able to "make no serious attempt with surface forces to interfere with our control of her communications with East Africa". They had nothing capable of threatening the Mediterranean fleet at Alexandria. While the Air situation in Egypt caused the JPC some discomfort, they concluded nonetheless, that Britain was in a position to win the war, and to ensure the short term security of Egypt.<sup>133</sup>

The COS noted the continuing exchange of assurances with the Balkan powers. Yugoslavia had agreed, in the event of an attack by Italy on Britain, to make Air and naval attacks in the Adriatic,

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<sup>132</sup> PRO CAB 53/26 COS 421(JP) Defence of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East 19 Dec 1935.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

and to invade Istria. Greece had promised its cooperation. Turkey continued to out-do the others in its encouraging response. It promised to provide anchorages and repair facilities in the Sea of Marmora and to allow Britain to establish a contraband control centre to control Straits shipping. Even further, it promised the direct cooperation of the Turkish Navy and Air cooperation against the Dodecanese. Setting aside the DCOS decision that Staff contact was unnecessary, the COS recommended that conversations commence aiming at a joint attack on the Dodecanese.<sup>134</sup>

Italy, angered at the line Turkey was taking, threatened to renounce the Turco-Italian treaty of friendship. Turkish actions were "inconsistent with the engagements of the Turkish Government under their treaty of friendship with Italy".<sup>135</sup> Turkey replied to the Italian protest by asking, through Fethi Okyar, its ambassador in London, if it could depend on British naval support in the event of Italian attack. Britain replied that "His Majesty's Government could be counted upon to do their duty".<sup>136</sup> Ataturk himself was sceptical regarding Italy's willingness to go to war with Turkey. "It is unlikely that there will be any serious trouble between Italy and Turkey" he told Loraine on 2 December, "madmen don't as a rule fall foul of drunkards".<sup>137</sup> But, by December 1935, as the movement to war seemed to be gathering momentum and as

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden Minute 7 Jan 1936.

<sup>136</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XV no. 438 Eden to Loraine 8 Jan 1936.

<sup>137</sup> PRO FO 1011/62 Loraine to Hoare 2 Dec 1935.

it became clear what such as war would involve, there were second thoughts in both London and Ankara.

**Reservations Renewed:**

In London, Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, gave as his opinion that the oil sanction would be futile without the cooperation of the United States. Italy required only 8,000 tons of oil a day, and even with full embargo by League states, could get all of this from the Americas. Britain could take action against this trade by restricting the operation of British tankers, or by putting pressure on conglomerates operating in Venezuela and the United States, but Runciman thought it likely that Italy would reply by confiscating British assets -- in economic terms, a net loss for Britain.<sup>138</sup> Even Eden, the League's champion in the Cabinet, admitted that oil sanctions should only be imposed if they were certain to be effective and if the "collaboration of the Armed Forces of other members of the League could be counted on in the event of a resort to arms by Italy against a member of the League [i.e. Britain] participating in the application of economic sanctions".<sup>139</sup> While the Board of Trade noted the encouraging

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<sup>138</sup> PRO CAB 24/257 CP 236(35) Oil Supplies for Italy Runciman 9 Dec 1935.

<sup>139</sup> PRO CAB 24/259 CP 5(36) Dispute Between Italy and Abyssinia Eden 9 Jan 1936. It seems certain that earlier assessments of Italy's vulnerability to oil sanctions were much over-stated. In July 1936, Italy suspended all orders for Rumanian oil "to punish Rumania for M. Titelescu's attitude". Exporters of raw materials, including Rumania with its oil, were at least as vulnerable to disruption of trade as were consumers. G. Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, (Odhams Press: London) 1948. p. 15-16. Entry for 11 Jul 1936. The oil sanction, applied voluntarily by Rumania and Russia, was undermined by the decline in Italian requirements as a result

decline of Italian trade produced by sanctions,<sup>140</sup> it also noted that the economic cost to Britain was heavy.<sup>141</sup> The Cabinet agreed to continue to support sanctions -- fearing that if it did not "the whole principle of collective security would be put in question" -- but advised Eden that he must under no circumstances take the lead in Geneva in championing them.<sup>142</sup>

Turkey, for its part, was being actively discouraged from playing so prominent a part in the sanctions front by both France and the other nations of the Balkan Entente. By the Winter, the Turks were beginning to listen and their statements to Loraine regarding Turkish resolve to defend the League were not in accordance with what was being said in other capitals and to other representatives. As early as October, Dr. Aras was telling Kammerer that Turkish policy was in perfect accord with that of France -- hardly noted at this time for the firmness of its stand against

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of the economic retrenchment caused by the depression, and by the refusal of the US to participate in the sanctions front. M.J. Bonn, "How Sanctions Failed", Foreign Affairs, Vol 15 (Oct 1936), p. 350-361.

<sup>140</sup> Global imports from Italy had declined from L 630,278 per month in 1935 to L23,550 per month in 1936; exports from Italy had declined from L755,291 per month in 1935 to L39,637 per month in 1936. PRO CAB 24/260 CP 54(36) Trade with Italy Board of Trade 20 Feb 1936.

<sup>141</sup> Losses, in addition to trade, included L3,000,000 from debt on goods supplied to Italy before imposition; and L2,000,000 in lost contracts. PRO CAB 24/260 CP 70(36) Losses Due to Sanctions Board of Trade 5 Mar 1936.

<sup>142</sup> PRO CAB 23/83 CP 11(36) 26 Feb 1936.

Italian aggression.<sup>143</sup> In December, at the very time that the Turks were answering the COS questionnaire so forth-rightly and urging a vigorous policy on HMG, Dr. Aras was telling Kammerer that he had discussed the situation with Stoyadinovitch and Titulescu, his Yugoslavian and Rumanian counterparts, and that they had come to the conclusion that the best course for the Balkan Entente would be to organize their common policy parallel to that of the Little Entente, which followed the lead of France. A solution was to be found which involved neither abject surrender on the part of the League or undue humiliation for Italy.<sup>144</sup>

It is notable, however, that the appearance of official doubts coincided with the emergence of genuinely pro-British feeling in Turkey as Turks began to look to Britain as the champion of the League. The Turkish press, the French Embassy enviously reported to Paris, was rabidly Anglophile. Mussolini, on the other hand, was ridiculed and abused. A policy of drawing "a cordon of blockade about Italy" was widely advocated.<sup>145</sup> It is notable too, that doubts about British resolve did not become reservations about the League of Nations. While other of the smaller nations began to chaff at sanctions and the dangers they represented, Turkey was insistent that the League and its Covenant must stand as

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<sup>143</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XIII no. 112 Kammerer to Laval 26 Oct 1935.

<sup>144</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XIII no. 94 Kammerer to Laval 25 Oct; and, no. 411 Kammerer to Laval 14 Dec 1935.

<sup>145</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XIII no. 500 Kammerer to Laval 27 Dec 1935.

established.<sup>146</sup>

It would be wrong to take any of this as meaning that, by December, Turkish Statesmen were out of touch with public sentiment, playing a double game, or just plain woolly-minded. What Turkish wavering did indicate was uncertainty following from London's irresolution, and that Turkey was, therefore, beginning to bend towards the more conciliatory French position. The signals from London were weak and unclear; from Paris, strong and distinct.<sup>147</sup> Whatmore, by the Spring, most League supporters were as anxious to prevent a split between Britain and France as to discipline Italy.<sup>148</sup> An Anglo-French breach would hardly have strengthened League solidarity or brought the desired Mediterranean detente any closer; particularly as, according to M. Politis, the Greek Ambassador in Belgrade, the essential precondition for Dr. Aras' Mediterranean Pact was an Anglo-French understanding and an arrangement between these powers and Turkey.<sup>149</sup>

Once again, the Turks broached the idea of a general

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<sup>146</sup> Esmer, p. 48

<sup>147</sup> If Ankara sometimes criticised London for lack of resolution, it also criticised Paris for perseverance in a dangerous policy. As early as January 1935, the Balkan and Little Ententes were becoming increasingly afraid that France would desert them for entente with Italy. In Geneva, in January, Dr. Aras spoke in this sense to Laval. He told him that he had been talking with Jevtich, and Titulesco -- his Yugoslavian and Rumania opposite numbers -- and that they were in full agreement with him. DDF Series I, Vol IX no. 78 Laval to Naggiar 25 Jan 1935.

<sup>148</sup> PRO CAB 23/84 Cab 30(36) Memorandum by Eden 22 April 1936.

<sup>149</sup> DDF Series II, Vol II no. 168 de Dampierre to Flandin 6 May 1936.



Mediterranean settlement supported by interlocking guarantees. Previously rebuffed by London and Rome, their approach was made through Paris. The French were initially prepared to participate in such a scheme. On 19 November 1936, M. Corbin, the French Ambassador to London, talked to Eden about Aras' proposed Mediterranean Pact. Eden, while understanding why the Pact might be desirable, thought that the Duce would never accept it.<sup>150</sup> Eden was right. Ciano, still smarting from sanctions, had already said that Italy would not play any part in such a scheme.<sup>151</sup> This being the case, Eden did not see how France or Britain could join it either.<sup>152</sup> Somewhat later, M. Flandin, the French Foreign Minister, was himself suggesting a Mediterranean Locarno as part of a general settlement to follow the Italo-Abyssinian dispute.<sup>153</sup> He had no greater luck than Aras. Italy would enter such an agreement only on its own terms. Britain would subscribe to a general guarantee on no terms whatsoever.

Disappointed by the poor reception of their proposals, the Turks scolded both Britain and Italy. In December, Şükrü Kaya warned the Italian Ambassador that if Italy commenced hostilities against Britain, Turkey's attitude would be determined by its League obligations and that the rest of the Balkan Pact would be

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<sup>150</sup> DDF Series II, Vol III no. 511 Corbin to Delbos 19 Nov 1936.

<sup>151</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IV no. 177 Rome to Paris 19 Dec 1936.

<sup>152</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IV no. 188 Corbin to Paris 22 Dec 1936.

<sup>153</sup> PRO CAB 23/83 Cab 4(36) 5 Feb 1936.

apt to follow the Turkish lead.<sup>154</sup> On 26 February Aras spoke to Loraine. The Balkan Entente had just met under the presidency of General Metaxas of Greece, he said, and Balkan opinion was unanimous in seeing British policy as inconsistent -- one policy in Geneva and another in London; one language from the Foreign Minister and another from the Prime Minister. They suspected that they were being kept in the dark, and wanted, and felt that they deserved, greater candour from London.<sup>155</sup> If Britain did not give some sort of lead, it would find itself without followers. Loraine could make no reply.

On 12 April 1936, Loraine talked with Atatürk. Atatürk told him that the time had passed for consideration of what should be done to stop Italy: the time had come to decide what to do when Italy won a complete victory. Such a victory he thought, would make the Italians insufferable and dangerous because won in the teeth of League opposition. The best course, he thought, was normalization as quickly as possible, including recognition of the Italian conquest. While distasteful, such a course was "preferable to hiding behind a network of shams".<sup>156</sup> Whichever course was chosen, Atatürk thought it unlikely that Mussolini would be able to stop. Would the next attempt at restraint be more successful, Atatürk wondered, if nothing were done in the meanwhile? "If for

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<sup>154</sup> DDF Series I, Vol VII no. 474 Kammerer to Laval 22 Dec 1935.

<sup>155</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XIX no. 594 Loraine to Halifax 26 Feb 1936; and, no. 597 Halifax to Loraine 27 Feb 1936.

<sup>156</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Loraine to Eden 12 Apr 1936.

expediency's sake Italy had been allowed to get away with one successful aggression, it would be fatal to all hopes of peace and security if she were allowed to get away with a second one".<sup>157</sup> The inference was unmistakable. While recognizing what could not be denied, the friends of the League should enter into a more formal association to defeat or prevent the next aggression. Atatürk might as well have been talking to the wind as to London.

In May, Turkey, with British, Balkan and Sa'adabad support was elected to the Council of the League. Lorraine thought this an excellent development. Turkey was one of the most consistent supporters of the League. He looked forward to close collaboration between the Turks and the British delegations in Geneva.<sup>158</sup> Dr. Aras arrived just in time to receive the news that Addis Abbas had fallen.

On 10 May 1936, Aras came to visit Eden in Geneva. The League Council, Aras thought, should avoid making any hasty decisions. It should wait until the full body could be called in Emergency session. This would give the Italians time to think. In the meantime, the Eighteen should consult together to reaffirm existing sanctions and to ensure that if sanctions were to be lifted, this occurred as a coordinated movement so as not to leave any single nation as the particular target of Italian ire. Until then, he assured Eden, Article Sixteen still applied and Britain could be assured of assistance from Turkey if attacked. Within a year, Aras

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> PRO FO 1011/73 Lorraine to the King 5 May 1936.

thought, Italy would either have been reconciled to the League or would have attacked somebody else. A potential victim, he made no bones, was Britain. The target of the attack, Aras thought, might be in the Balkans but could equally well be the Sudan or Egypt.<sup>159</sup> Eden considered it unlikely that Italy would attack Britain. Aras replied that they would be driven to it. Aras thought it essential that Italy be made to feel its isolation. If Britain did not approach Italy, no one else would. It was for Italy to make the first move. Eventually, Aras thought, a satisfactory peace should be arranged and consummated in a Mediterranean Pact. Eden informed London:

Two factors impressed me from this conversation. First, that M. Aras did not seem to consider that His Majesty's Government's prestige had suffered by recent events. On the contrary, he assured me of support and friendship of Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece. Secondly, M. Aras scarcely mentioned Germany, and for him clearly it is Italian dictator only that exists.<sup>160</sup>

In fact, Aras's concentration on the Italian threat was understandable, as was Eden's scepticism regarding the possibility of Italian attack on the British position in the Eastern Mediterranean. Mad dog acts, after all, arise from desperation rather than spite. Turkey, for one, was a far more believable target if the objective of a potential Italian attack was to work off resentment against the sanctionist powers. It seems probable that Dr. Aras's greatest fear, at this juncture, was that Turkey was about to find itself, following the impending break-up of the

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<sup>159</sup> PRO FO 954/6 The International Situation Eden May 1936.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

sanction front, with no British alliance and having alienated itself entirely from Italy. As the Sanctions front began to move toward dissolution, therefore, the secret watch-words of Turkish policy became furtive rapprochement with Italy, and a steady determination that Britain not be allowed to disinterest itself, at least, in the fate of its Turkish friends; the public face of Turkish policy, however, remained vigorous support for the League and the covenant, the sanctionist powers, moving as a corporation toward eventual reconciliation with the Italian outlaw.

If, by the Spring, there was apprehension in Ankara, there were raging doubts in Admiralty House. If, in Turkey, there were questions and fears, in London there was something close to mutiny. On 19 November, the Chiefs of Staff noted gloomily that if the crisis were to continue past March 1936, the naval refitting program would be ruined.<sup>161</sup> This came at a time when the Japanese threat in the Far East was reawakening. In the New Year, with Naval weaknesses becoming more apparent, with Ethiopia collapsing, the state of crisis not abating, and the Mediterranean Fleet in a continued state of War Alert, naval criticism of Government policy became most explicit and loudly voiced.

Should, Inskip<sup>162</sup> wondered, Britain consider ensuring continued collective security through regional pacts? No, Chatfield replied straight away, such pacts were only slightly less dangerous

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<sup>161</sup> PRO CAB 53/5 COS 155th Mtg Future Situation in the Mediterranean 19 Nov 1935.

<sup>162</sup> Thomas Inskip. Minister for the Coordination of Defence.

than collective security. Under no circumstances should foreign policy be allowed to get out of line with defence policy again. What had Britain's championship of the League achieved? "At any moment, without warning, we are liable to be plunged into war with forces which were not adequate or properly disposed to meet the occasion".<sup>163</sup> Britain could not fight everybody. Once drawn into war, Britain was the most vulnerable of all nations. "If war came today", he warned, due to the delay in refits, Britain would only have seven Battleships for action against Japan.<sup>164</sup> At the first meeting of the Cabinet Committee on the Position of the Fleet in the Mediterranean on 19 May, Chatfield warned the Ministers that they were taking grave risks by keeping the Mediterranean fleet at war stations if all that was apprehended was "diplomatic tension" rather than war.<sup>165</sup> Many of the vessels on station in the Mediterranean badly needed to refit. Crews needed rest. It was essential that the crisis be brought to an end, and that the RN be stood down. Chatfield suggested that it be placed on fourteen days notice for operations.<sup>166</sup>

The Cabinet was more impressed by Chatfield than Aras and Atatürk; which is, of course, only to say that British fears carried more weight in London than Turkish fears. On 12 June 1936, it decided to raise sanctions unilaterally while confirming

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<sup>163</sup> PRO CAB 53/6 COS 174th Mtg 13 May 1936.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> PRO CAB 27/606 MF(36) 1st Mtg 19 May 1936.

<sup>166</sup> PRO CAB 27/606 MF (36)2 Memorandum by Chatfield.

assurances to sanctionist powers threatened by Italian reprisal.<sup>167</sup> On 4 July, the League itself, acting on a motion by Argentina, advised members to drop Sanctions.<sup>168</sup> On 9 July, Turkey conformed with the League decision and announced that it would raise sanctions from 15 July.<sup>169</sup>

On 27 June 1936, Eden spoke again with Aras in Geneva. Aras inquired as to the future direction of Britain's Mediterranean policy. Eden reassured him that after sanctions were raised "we should not disinterest ourselves in the situation of those powers in the Mediterranean who had collaborated with us while Article 16 was being applied"; moreover "we intended to maintain stronger forces in the Mediterranean than before the Italo-Abyssinian conflict arose".<sup>170</sup> Aras was "very glad to hear this". "He had himself", he assured Eden, "never believed the rumours that His Majesty's Government were going to abandon the Mediterranean".<sup>171</sup> Dr. Aras "inquired whether the assurances we were giving to the three Mediterranean Powers were to be identical with those which we

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<sup>167</sup> PRO CAB 23/84 Cab 42(66) 12 Jun 1936.

<sup>168</sup> A.L. Lowell, "Alternatives Before the League", Foreign Affairs, Vol 15 (Oct 1936), p. 102-111.

<sup>169</sup> PRO FO 424/280 J6168/G168/1 Loraine to Eden 9 July 1936. As something of a Parthian shot, on 20 September 1936, the Credentials Committee of the League, composed of France, Britain, Peru, the USSR, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, New Zealand, Greece and Turkey, voted to permit the Ethiopian delegate to sit in the Assembly even though the nation he represented had been completely over-run. Survey of International Affairs, 1935, Vol II.

<sup>170</sup> PRO FO 954/6 Eden to FO 27 Jun 1936.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

had given before, neither more nor less. I [Eden] said that this was so".<sup>172</sup> Aras asked if any decision had been made regarding a definitive Mediterranean Pact. Eden said that this had not been considered, and was not a priority, since Britain was not yet ready for negotiations with Italy. Before Britain took such a step, he assured Aras, it would be certain to consult with Turkey and other interested powers.

It is well that Aras received his assurances from Eden because, from Chatfield for instance, there would have been none. Even though they had insisted that the crisis be brought to an end, the Services faced the future in the Mediterranean with much reduced confidence. In 1935, the problem had been that war seemed likely. No one doubted that if it came Italy would loose. In 1936, the problem was that Britain was appreciably weaker in the Mediterranean and much more open to attack -- defence of Sudan, Kenya and Somaliland were new considerations -- and no one any longer took it for granted that Britain would win. If war came, it was now possible that Britain's League partners would stay out, and Britain might well find itself fighting alone.<sup>173</sup> Moreover, both

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> In East Africa, Italy had six army Corps, three Blackshirt, and three native Divisions; supported by 241 first line aircraft. In Libya they mustered 65,000 men with 81 first line aircraft. In comparison, the British had in Egypt and Palestine four Infantry Brigades (14 Battalions), and a Cavalry Brigade. In the Sudan they mustered only two Battalions; in Somaliland four Companies of Camel Corps; in Kenya the KAR (1,500 all ranks); and in Aden one Battalion. In the Middle East there were 196 aircraft of all descriptions. PRO CAB 53/28 COS 462(JP) The Situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and North East Africa from the Presence of Large Italian Forces in that Area as the Italo-Abyssinian Campaign



COS and JPC believed that Italy would take advantage of its recent victory to undermine British prestige in the Arab world through propaganda.<sup>174</sup> Britain, they warned, was too weak to be able to afford adventures or commitments anywhere.

Britain, Eden responded, was too weak to be able to overlook such friends as it still had. "Recent events", he advised, "have rightly or wrongly placed in doubt the capacity of Great Britain to maintain her predominant position in the Mediterranean, and even supposing the capacity to resist, her determination to do so".<sup>175</sup> British prestige had been much weakened, and according to Eden, Britain's position in the Near and Middle East had always been more dependent upon prestige than power. "We were unable to meet the Italian challenge, and, as a consequence, profound misgivings and hesitations have been manifested in Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Arabia and Palestine".<sup>176</sup> In Eden's opinion, the only way for Britain to restore its prestige would be to guarantee its recent collaborators. "In the case of Turkey and Greece such a

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comes to a Close 11 May 1936.

<sup>174</sup> PRO CAB 53/28 COS 497 Strategical Review by the JPC: Italy and the Mediterranean; CAB 24/261 CP 135(36) Possible Italian Pressure on Arabia as a Result of Italy's Success in Abyssinia FO Memorandum 9 May 1936; PRO CAB 53/43 COS 824 Strategic Importance of Egypt and the Arab Countries in the Middle East; and, CAB 24/282 CP 7(39) Strategic Importance of Egypt and the Arab Countries in the Middle East.

<sup>175</sup> PRO CAB 53/28 COS 476 Problems Facing HMG in the Mediterranean as a Result of the Italo-League Dispute Eden Jun 1936.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

guarantee", he advised, "would coincide with British vital interests".<sup>177</sup> Such a guarantee would be less a "commitment", in Eden's judgement, than a real and valuable accretion to imperial strength. Eden believed an agreement with Turkey and Greece would:

1. Establish local belief in British determination to protect its interests.
2. Enhance British prestige.
3. Warn Italy away from further adventures.
4. Stabilize Britain's position in Egypt, Palestine and Iraq -- all shaken by recent events.
5. Strengthen the Balkan Entente and reassure those left out of the agreement [i.e Yugoslavia and Rumania].
6. Counteract German influence.

If it wished, France could be associated with the alliance, though Eden thought that such association should be limited to the Western Mediterranean. In the East, Britain "must rely on her own efforts to strengthen her defences".<sup>178</sup> When sanctions were withdrawn, Eden concluded, guarantees should be continued and formalized. League prestige could not be salvaged; instead, Britain should concentrate on securing its own position in the Eastern Mediterranean in cooperation with Greece and Turkey. Perhaps one day, this alliance could be broadened, though Britain had not "reached the state where such a step need be contemplated".<sup>179</sup>

The COS did not agree. They replied to Eden's memorandum with

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

one of their own urging a much less forward policy.

Our interests lie in a peaceful Mediterranean and this can only be achieved by returning to a state of friendly relations with Italy. This should be our aim even in the earliest steps we take to liquidate the Mediterranean situation.<sup>180</sup>

Certainly, it was desirable to have Greek and Turkish friendship but only if this would not "increase or perpetuate tension". The COS judged that this would be precisely the effect of such an alliance. Furthermore, they thought, any alliance with these two would, by its nature, draw Britain into quasi-alliance with the Turks' Balkan allies who were "very weak and where purely British interests are very small".

The assistance we could expect from Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia is very small. This country would give more than it receives. The main burden would fall upon our Forces, and we hope that all means will be adopted to reduce the likelihood of war and the period of tension.<sup>181</sup>

If the advice of the COS were ignored, they warned, then definite defence arrangements would have to be made against Italy and this would require a complete revision of permanent imperial strategy, which had assumed since 1933 that Italy would not be an enemy.<sup>182</sup>

The COS might have improved their argument, given recent events, had they not continued: "such a declaration would appear to

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<sup>180</sup> PRO CAB 53/28 The Mediterranean as a Result of the Italo-League Dispute COS Memorandum Jun 1936.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> "No expenditure should for the present time be required to provide exclusively against attack by the United States, France or Italy". CAB 23/77 Cab 62(33) 15 Nov 1933.

offer provocation to Italy and carry the inference that we are not prepared to take at their face value her intentions of goodwill in the future". If Turkey and Greece were fearful of Italian reprisal then they could take comfort from the fact that Article Sixteen of the League Covenant still existed; and if that was too limp a hope on which to hang reliance, they could seek a guarantee from Italy.<sup>183</sup>

The COS were seconded by Hankey, still Secretary to the CID, in his Foreign Policy and Imperial Defence.<sup>184</sup> It is not hard to detect the smell of panic in Hankey's memorandum. Germany, he said was the irreconcilable enemy of Britain: Italy and Japan were the enemies of the League. Britain could deal with one enemy, but would never be able to handle three. Britain must, therefore, convert one or two of these enemies. It must avoid commitments. It must gain time. It must avoid thwarting Germany in the East. It must grasp the hand of Mussolini "repugnant though it may be".<sup>185</sup> If there were war with Italy, "France would run out as she did at Chanak and no other potential ally counts for anything at all . . . by such a war would we gain nothing. . . Probably the only result would be a

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<sup>183</sup> PRO CAB 53/6 COS 178th Mtg Annexure -- Withdrawal of Sanctions, Assurances to Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia 16 Jun 1936. It is difficult not to agree with General Hertzog that sanctions and the haggling over recognition "had dealt [the covenant] so heavy a blow that Articles 10 and 16 would have to be looked upon as nonexistent for the purposes of the smaller nations". CAB 32/130 E(AL) Commonwealth Conference 1st Mtg 21 May 1937.

<sup>184</sup> PRO FO 954/6 Foreign Policy and Imperial Defence Hankey 8 June 1936. This memorandum was written for a very restricted circle and so was never included in the collection of Cabinet Papers.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

world wide war involving the risk of [the] collapse of the British Empire; East and West and of Western Civilization".<sup>186</sup>

Plainly, the Cabinet was faced with contradictory advice. Uncertain which course was best, both disinclined to extend a guarantee and reluctant to take the risk that Turkey would make an unacceptable settlement with another power, the Cabinet directed "that the Minister for the Coordination of Defence [Inskip] should invite the Chiefs of Staff Subcommittee to consider and report on the proposals . . . for an Eastern Mediterranean understanding with Turkey and Greece".<sup>187</sup> In other words, HMG being unwilling to make a decision, the question of Mediterranean guarantees was referred back to committees for further study.

The COS considered this question anew on 25 June 1936. Chatfield, for one, "saw no advantage in giving Turkey and Greece such a guarantee". Deverell, the CIGS, agreed that it was "essential to have a friendly Italy", but was less inclined to underestimate "the advantage from the military aspect of having the cooperation of Turkey". Ellington, the Chief of Air Staff (CAS) saw the importance of Turkey in the case of war against Russia, but was inclined to believe that such an agreement "would result in our giving a great deal more than we might gain"; but he also reminded the other COS that they were not being entirely consistent as all previous reports had stressed the importance and utility of Turkish goodwill. No longer certain, the COS decided, in turn, to pass the

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> PRO CAB 53/28 COS 485 23 Jun 1936.

question down to the JPC.<sup>188</sup>

The JPC completed their report, Eastern Mediterranean: Understanding with Turkey and Greece, on 21 July.<sup>189</sup> This document clearly outlined the advantages of a joint guarantee with Turkey. A Turkish guarantee, the JPC thought, would allow Britain the necessary security to establish a secure base on Cyprus. Use of Turkish ports and airbases would allow Britain to strike heavily at the Italy position in the Eastern Mediterranean. In war, Turkey could close the Dardanelles to Italian merchant shipping. The Turks, unlike their Balkan allies, were good soldiers and would be able to defend their own country. Turkish influence would ease the need for internal security in Egypt, Palestine, Iraq and India. Turkey would not saddle Britain with additional commitments for the protection of its trade since it was not dependent on the Mediterranean route. Britain need not fear rebuff, the JPC considered: Turkey had been badly frightened by Italian threats and actions and would welcome an alliance. If Britain were unwilling, they continued, then Russia certainly, and Germany probably, would have no objections to making such an alliance. On the other side of the coin, the planners recognized that an alliance with Turkey would necessarily involve financial commitment since Turkey was not self-sufficient in arms. Finally, and most importantly, the planners recognized that if war came, Turkey was almost certain to

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<sup>188</sup> PRO CAB 53/6 179th Mtg 25 Jun 1936.

<sup>189</sup> PRO CAB 53/28 COS 500(JP) Eastern Mediterranean: Understanding with Turkey and Greece JPC 21 July 1936 (Composition: Phillips, Adam, Fraser).

be a combatant on one side or the other. In the previous war Turkey had cost the British 300,000 casualties and "possibly prolonged the war by two years". Britain should make whatever effort was required to ensure that such a tragedy did not reoccur. No matter how the cake was cut, the Planners concluded, "Turkey would be an additional commitment for us; but Turkey almost invariably participates in any European war and in the past she has proved far more of a drain on our resources as an enemy than she would have proved as an ally". While alliance with Greece was unadvisable, by alliance with Turkey, HMG would obtain "considerable advantages . . . without incurring comparable military disadvantages".<sup>190</sup>

The COS considered the JPC report on 27 July. They did not approve of the JPC conclusions. It is probably that had time not pressed the Report would have been returned for revision. The COS indicated the source of their disagreement on the covering memorandum attached to the JPC report when it was forwarded it to the Cabinet on 29 July.<sup>191</sup> This COS covering memorandum, encapsulated the dilemma debilitating British Mediterranean strategy in the prewar years. "Our own conclusions" the COS wrote, "are as follows":

- 4 (a) From the strategical point of view the first desideratum is a secure Mediterranean. This involves, as the primary consideration, the restoration of our former friendly relations with Italy. No action should be taken which is

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 10-11.

<sup>191</sup> PRO CAB 53/6 COS 183rd Mtg 27 July 1936; and, CAB 53/28 COS 506 Eastern Mediterranean: Understanding with Turkey and Greece 29 Jul 1936 (Composition: Chatfield, Ellington & Deverell).

liable to prejudice this primary consideration.

- (b) Subject to the above primary consideration, any step that can be taken to renew a peaceful situation in the Mediterranean will be an advantage from a strategical point of view.
  - (c) In particular, it is important to avoid an unfriendly Turkey or to throw her into the arms of a hostile power. The maintenance of friendly relations with that country is second in importance only to that of friendly relations with Italy. It is also important to avoid an unfriendly Greece in time of war.
  - (d) Our present circumstances are not favourable to the acceptance of fresh commitments, since some years must elapse before we should be in a position to give effect to them. Assurances, we suggest, are only too readily taken as pledges of support.
5. In the unfortunate event of the situation vis-a-vis Italy not improving, Turkey's cooperation and support will be of great value.
  6. To summarize, therefore, we recommend that everything possible should be done to maintain the most friendly relations with Turkey, but we consider nothing should be done that is liable to alienate Italy, and that no new military commitments should be entered into.<sup>192</sup>

Taken with previous advice, the COS gloss on the straight-forward JPC recommendations was likely to lead to rather torturous diplomacy. Britain must have Italian friendship; and therefore, it must avoid alignment with Turkey. But if Italy was an enemy, alliance with Turkey was essential. Nothing was more likely to make Italian friendship difficult to achieve than alignment with Turkey; conversely, nothing was more likely to make a Turkish alliance difficult to obtain in time of war than reluctance to make

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.



peacetime dispositions. Lastly, Britain must have allies against Italy because Britain was weak; but since weak, must avoid commitment to potential allies. An alliance without commitment is worthless -- as Hitler would have it, "an alliance the purpose of which does not include the intention of war, is without sense or value".<sup>193</sup> If the Italo-Abyssinian crisis first made Turkey a concern of British strategy, it also marked the inauguration of a policy of contradiction marked both by fear of making a Turkish commitment and fear of losing the Turkish connection.

The Cabinet, plainly, was faced with irreconcilable advice. Eden argued for a system of guarantees linking Britain, Turkey and Greece -- Britain's recent collaborators -- and looked to this to bring about a change of Italian policy. In effect, Eden was proposing something like the policy of guarantees followed by HMG after the Spring 1939. The planners argued for a bilateral agreement with Turkey, and while accepting that this was apt to be costly -- financially and diplomatically -- looked to such an arrangement to increase British security against a hostile Italy. The COS argued for an arrangement with Italy, and accepted, albeit with many rearward glances, that this might imperil Turkish friendship, which they considered essential if their primary purpose miscarried. Unclear which course was correct, the Cabinet embraced a policy of paradox.

Henceforward British policy failed to satisfy any one. Turkey

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<sup>193</sup> G. Bychowski, Dictators and Disciples, (International Universities Press: New York) 1948.

was pursued vigorously enough to create a false impression of real alignment while Britain continued to shy at the prospect of formal engagement. It was a policy of many allusions but few pledges; of many words but nothing written. The relationship between the two countries remained an engagement to ally rather than an alliance. Turkey, meanwhile, was left with neither an alliance with Britain nor an accommodation with Italy; with neither security in the Mediterranean nor Mediterranean detente. Despite this, a lasting result of the Abyssinian crisis seems to have been popular goodwill for Britain in Turkey where there had been little before. Loraine wrote in November:

The Turks feel that we have done far more than anyone else to uphold the Covenant of the League and the doctrine of collective security. Had there been merely words on our part, they might have been sceptical. But behind the words there was the concentration of naval force in the Mediterranean. That language the Turk understands best: and it meant to him that he would enjoy the same sympathy and support if he were attacked.<sup>194</sup>

"England" the Polish Ambassador told Loraine, "is today the most admired and popular country in Turkey".<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Hoare 4 Nov 1934.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

### Chapter III -- Montreaux

#### **Preliminary Moves:**

By June 1936 another matter was competing with sanctions for the attention of Britain's policy-makers: the continuing Turkey ambition to remilitarize the Straits -- rapidly becoming less a desire than a demand. Turkish motivation in this question was initially no different from that of any of the other nations defeated in World War One. Turkey wished to normalize its position at the Straits as Germany in the Rhineland, and Bulgaria in Thrace. This basic desire was intensified by political developments in the years prior to 1936. Previously, although disarmed, the security of the Straits had been provided for by a triple guarantee: League action under Article sixteen of the Covenant, provision of the Montreaux Treaty for collective action by signators, and the promise of universal disarmament which would have normalized the Straits by making the Straits regime "normal" for all other waterways.<sup>1</sup> The first of these guarantees to fall was disarmament.<sup>2</sup> The second, collective action by signators, no longer had any meaning after the Abyssinian crisis when effective collaboration between the principle signators began to break down. The third, League action under Article Sixteen, was rendered

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<sup>1</sup> M. Pernot, *"La Politique Italienne dans la Mediterranee", Politique Etrangere*, Vol I, No. 2 (Apr 1936), p. 54-66. Pernot identifies the first two of these guarantees but misses the third.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting that at the last meeting of the Disarmament Conference in May 1935, the Turks themselves were one of the leaders of the "security-first" group against the disarming Anglo-American bloc. *Survey of International Affairs*, 1935, Vol I, p. 38-9; and, "Draft Recommendation of the Turkish Delegation", *Documents of International Affairs*, 1935, p. 168.

nugatory by the failure of sanctions against Italy. In more concrete terms, insofar as Turkey's wish to refortify the Straits was based on real fear it seems to have been driven by fear of Italy, combined with anxiety that France, at least, could not be trusted, and by reemerging doubts as to Russian intentions. Given these causes of anxiety, the Turkish desire for a forthright arrangement with Britain -- by 1936 becoming a fixation of Turkish foreign policy -- is much more understandable. Also comprehensible is the absolute insistence that the Strait's regime be normalized and recognized as a matter of Turkish concern alone.

The question of Straits revision was first raised at the MacDonald Disarmament conference in 1933, and the Turks discouraged -- if that word can be stretched to include refusal backed by threats.<sup>3</sup> Sir John Simon and Paul Boncour warned Dr. Aras that the disarmament conference was hardly the time or place to raise the question of Straits remilitarization.<sup>4</sup> Later in the year, Dr. Aras brought up the question again. This time at a meeting of Black Sea nations aimed at establishing a regional pact. Neither Bulgaria nor Yugoslavia could be brought to agree to something too much in Russia's interest for their liking.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the refusals and warnings, however, by March 1934, the Turkish Army was showing evidence of more than the usual level of

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<sup>3</sup> PRO CAB 53/25 COS 387 Demilitarized Zone of the Dardanelles COS Memorandum 19 Jul 1935.

<sup>4</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 601.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

activity in Thrace. Later in the month, a considerable sensation was caused by the announcement that a military Inspectorate would be established in Thrace. In Turkey, previous changes in military organization had generally come concurrent with momentous political initiatives. Loraine noted that the last Inspectorate organized was in Kurdistan following the rebellion of 1933; the last before that had been in Macedonia prior to World War One and had constituted the last attempt to save that province for the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup> Rumour in Ankara was that the new Inspectorate portended the remilitarization of either the Straits or the Bulgarian frontier.<sup>7</sup> As the Inspectorate encompassed Edirne [Adrianople], Kırklareli, Tekirdag and Çanakkale, it could just as well have been either.<sup>8</sup> On 4 April 1934, Loraine informed the Foreign Office that it was the opinion of his Staff that the Turks were attempting to gain the ability to remilitarize the Straits.<sup>9</sup> He promised London that he would abstain strictly from the subject of the Straits regime, and requested instruction as to what he should say if the Turks raised the question.<sup>10</sup>

On 17 April, Dr. Aras, presiding at a meeting of the fifty-eighth session of the League Council, directed attention to the unsatisfactory Straits regime. His speech failed to elicit sympathy

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<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 1011/35 Loraine to Oliphant 3 March 1934.

<sup>7</sup> PRO FO 1011/34 Loraine to Oliphant 8 Mar 1934.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 1011/34 Loraine to Oliphant 4 Apr 1934.

<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 1011/35 Loraine to Oliphant 17 Mar 1934.

for Straits revision. Upon Aras taking his seat, Sir John Simon, speaking for Britain, rose to deliver a very definite rebuttal.<sup>11</sup> For the moment, Dr. Aras was silenced once again. Aras, in this initiative, appears to have been acting without the knowledge of either the Foreign Ministry or of Prime Minister İsmet İnönü. Kammerer believed that he was receiving his instruction directly from Atatürk at this time.<sup>12</sup> It is not without significance that Atatürk's Greek friend and ally Venizelos was in Paris attending in person this session of the Council.<sup>13</sup> It was also well noted by the delegates that M. Litvinov, also personally in Paris, was quick to express strong support for Dr. Aras's proposal.<sup>14</sup> Litvinov's support, however, very probably came unprompted and sprang naturally from Russia's constant desire to limit access to the Black Sea.

In June, Dr. Aras spoke privately to Simon about the relationship between the two nations and about the threatening international environment. During the conversation, Aras brought up the question of Straits remilitarization. Signor Lojacono, the Italian Ambassador in Ankara, questioned Loraine about this conversation on 8 July. Loraine assured him that "a clapper had been put on the matter, any way for the time being, and we are

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<sup>11</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XI no. 263 Corbin to Laval 11 Jul 1935; and, League of Nations Official Journal, May 1935.

<sup>12</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 249 op.cit.

<sup>13</sup> Venizelos had been returned to power by a recent coup d'état.

<sup>14</sup> League of Nations Official Journal, May 1935, p. 603.

assured that the Turkish Government were not going to press the matter".<sup>15</sup> Lojacono thought that it would be only a matter of time before the Turks returned to the subject again. If so, he said, it would be necessary for all the powers to act together to uphold the regime established at Lausanne. He warned that it would be Turkey's strategy to split the powers and play them against each other. Loraine assured him that Britain would act in concert with the other signators of the treaty.<sup>16</sup> For the moment, Anglo-Italian rapprochement precluded both closer friendship between Britain and Turkey and British support for Straits revision.

After Simon's continued rebuff of Dr. Aras's proposals, the Turks relapsed into silence. Outside London, this was not interpreted as a good sign. It was believed in Paris that the Turks were communing with their Russian allies and would take their cue from them. Corbin, the French Ambassador to London, warned:

The example of Germany does not authorize the governments to interpret optimistically an attitude of silence and that if the Straits regime came to be modified, it would be brusquely and in such a manner as to place London before a *fait accompli*.<sup>17</sup>

On 5 November, with sanctions against Italy about to commence, such was the fear that the Turks were about to unilaterally close the Straits that for three days no commercial shipping passed through

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<sup>15</sup> PRO FO 1011/35 Loraine to Oliphant 8 Jul 1934.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Loraine was left wondering as to Lojacono's motive. "I do not wish you to infer from this that in my opinion Lojacono is a twisting, intriguing diplomatist" he wrote to Oliphant, "but the creases in his mind are Italian, congenital and therefore ineradicable".

<sup>17</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XI no. 263 Corbin to Laval 11 Jul 1935.

the Straits for fear of being locked in the Black Sea.<sup>18</sup> Whether Simon liked it or not, he was being fixed to the horns of a real dilemma. The other European Powers were disposed that Lausanne be upheld, but also inclined to leave to Britain the odium of defending it. Turkey was actively seeking to better its friendship with Britain as the most trustworthy of the Great Powers but was hardly likely to consider a slap to be sign of goodwill. It was generally agreed in London that if Turkey could not find British friendship then it might turn, however reluctantly, to Berlin. On the one hand loomed Chanak, on the other Gallipoli. In addition, as we have seen, British planning for conflict with Italy during this time when it seemed likely that sanctions might give way to war included as an important part that Turkey should further the economic strangulation of Italy by closing the Straits. Effective closure of a demilitarized feature was problematic; effective defence of such a feature once closed against the weight of naval attack that Italy could produce was more so. In this way, once Britain had accepted sanctions, the realities of British strategy began to argue for, rather than against, Turkish remilitarization of the Straits. After November, therefore, continued British reluctance to countenance remilitarization represented the lapse between changing reality and perception of reality rather than well considered policy.

In fact, events in the Spring lent credence to French fears that the Turks were moving toward an accommodation with Russia and

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<sup>18</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 603.



toward possible confrontation with whichever powers were disposed to uphold the Lausanne regime. Through February 1935, the Consuls continued to report that the Turkish Army was very obviously on the move to Istanbul and Thrace. Steamships had ceased taking passengers and were arriving in Thrace full of soldiers.<sup>19</sup> The Eastern Districts were being emptied of soldiers in favour of Western commands. The inference was obvious. Turkey was moving, at least, to gain the ability to defend the Straits, and, at worst, to unilaterally remilitarize them.

On 18 March, Dr. Aras talked with Loraine about the Straits regime. He indicated that it was the Turkish belief that movement towards the normalization of the Rhineland should set a precedent for similar initiatives in the matter of Straits. Loraine requested instructions. The Foreign Office response was calculated to destroy all such illusions in the mind of Dr. Aras:

We see . . . that Tewfik Rüstü [Dr. Aras] has once again trotted out the fallacy that the demilitarized zones provided for in the Lausanne Peace Settlement are analogous to the military clauses of the other post-war settlements . . . Tewfik Rüstü can be under no misapprehension after what passed last year about the opposition Turkey would encounter not only from ourselves but from France and Italy if she proceeded to refortify the Straits. . . . We have no doubt that your reception of Tewfik Rüstü's remarks in regards to the Straits was adequately chilling, and are satisfied that no good would be done by pursuing the matter further at the present time. But if Tewfik Rüstü should at some future time again unburden himself in a similar strain, it would be well, by gently countering his arguments, definitely to discourage the whole idea of Straits refortification.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 37/19038 E1536/919/44 Loraine to FO 28 Feb 1935.

<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 1011/36 Oliphant to Loraine 30 Mar 1935.

Nothing daunted, Dr. Aras told Loraine in April that it was his intention to raise the matter again in Geneva.<sup>21</sup> Bulgarian rearmament, he said, had undermined the basis on which the Treaty of Lausanne had been negotiated. In the face of this new insecurity, a regime that was the "only remaining military servitude amongst those created by [the] treaties of peace" was intolerable.<sup>22</sup> Once this matter was settled, Aras assured Loraine, Turkey would seek an Anglo-Turkish treaty of mutual assistance within the League framework. By its nature, he said, such a treaty would be associated with the recently signed Franco-Russian treaty since each partner of the Russo-Turkish treaty was bound to sanction alliances entered into by the other. On this foundation, Aras thought, might be erected a larger Mediterranean association including Italy and the Balkan states reinforced by bilateral agreements between the members.<sup>23</sup>

If Bulgarian rearmament was indeed the cause of Turkey's worry, then the Turks had more cause for resentment than alarm. It was France, the champion of treaties, and not the outlaw Germany, that was conniving at Bulgarian rearmament in clear violation of

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<sup>21</sup> Aras did raise the matter in Geneva on 17 April 1935 at the 85th session of the League. PRO FO 371/19038 E5908/919/44 Eden to Hoare 30 Sep 1935.

<sup>22</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E2407 Loraine to FO 12 Apr. Later, Aras talked with the French Ambassador to Sofia. He would, he said, not mention Bulgarian rearmament at Geneva. Except for this, he was satisfied with Bulgarian policy and did not wish to link the issues. DDF Series I, Vol X no. 179 Labouret to Laval 12 Apr 1935.

<sup>23</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E2407 Loraine to FO 12 Apr 1935.

Article Four of the Treaty of Neuilly.<sup>24</sup> In December, the Yugoslavs refused to permit passage of French war material by rail to Bulgaria. The French assured them that the war material was not for expansion but for replacement and thus did not constitute a breach of the Treaty.<sup>25</sup> By March 1936, however, Brandt, Cruseot and Schneider had contracted to supply a considerable quantity of artillery to the Bulgarians. Due to the size of the shipments, the French were driven from the excuse that these arms were intended for replacement only and fell back on the weaker defence that if France provided the arms Bulgarian rearmament could be controlled.<sup>26</sup> Dr. Aras was to complain later, when a French company had contracted to build submarines for Bulgaria, that:

If Bulgaria succeeded in placing orders for submarines in Italy or Germany [the] movement would be just as malevolent but less objectionable, because neither of those countries kept up much pretence of observing their treaties. But if France, champion of treaties, accepted orders, it would be disastrous. As for the United Kingdom, he did not believe you would ever contemplate taking such an order.<sup>27</sup>

It seems probable that only good manners kept Aras from mentioning the London agreement for German naval rearmament by way of sardonic

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<sup>24</sup> See DDF Series I, Vol XI no. 14, 66, and, 67; Vol XIII no. 283, 306, and, 363; Series II, Vol I no. 240.

<sup>25</sup> DDF Series I, Vol VIII no. 363 De Danpierre to Laval 10 Dec; and no. 306 Labouret to Laval 28 Nov 1935.

<sup>26</sup> DDF Series II, Vol I no. 240 Flandin Circular 27 Feb 1936.

<sup>27</sup> PRO FO 424/282 R7689/43/67 Lorraine to Eden 18 Nov 1937.

comment on HMG's concern for the sanctity of treaties.<sup>28</sup> While Bulgarian rearmament did annoy the Turks and increased their desire to normalize the Straits, it served mainly as a pretext. Turkish military measures aimed to prepare for remilitarization preceded and did not follow Bulgarian weapons purchases.

Turkish military arrangements and Aras' warnings under-scored for Loraine the obvious: that the Turks were very serious about Straits revision. While he conceded that "the Turks will think many times before they unilaterally abrogate any stipulations of the Treaty of Lausanne", he also insisted that "if [the] question cannot be settled in a way which commands their willing consent, they will probably end up reoccupying these zones".<sup>29</sup> On 9 May 1935, Mr. Rhy Davies questioned HMG in the Commons regarding the rumours that Turkey contemplated refortification of the Straits. Simon answered:

I have no information which would justify the assumption that Turkey contemplates any violation of her obligations under the Straits convention of Lausanne, such as would be involved in her fortification of the Straits at the present time.<sup>30</sup>

Simon was not telling the entire truth.

Dr. Aras did not raise the matter again at Geneva in May. The Foreign Office concluded from this that Loraine had been

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<sup>28</sup> The Turks considered this treaty to be a spiteful tit-for-tat response to the Franco-Russian Rapprochement rather than anything serious in itself. DDF Series I, Vol XI no. 263 Corbin to Laval 11 Jul 1935.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E3069/919/44 Loraine to Vansittart 11 May 1935.

<sup>30</sup> Hansard Commons, Vol CCCI 9 May 1935.

exaggerating the degree of Turkish resolution.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Aras and Atatürk had come to the conclusion that precipitate Turkish action would give a very wrong impression if coinciding with Italy's moves in Ethiopia. It would seem that Turkey was seeking to profit from Italy's challenge to the League, or that it was linking its support for the League with a change in the Straits regime.<sup>32</sup> In June, Aras advised Morgan of the decision to let the question of the Straits rest for the moment. Turkey, he said, wanted to be friendly with England, and was determined not to let the Straits interfere. He warned, however, that Turkey would not allow itself to be treated worse than other ex-allies of Germany.<sup>33</sup>

In the Summer, after careful consideration of the available evidence, the Foreign Office decided to amend its policy regarding the Straits question. No longer would it be Loraine's job to dissuade the Turks. "We have carefully considered suggestions in your letters", wrote Vansittart to Loraine on 3 August 1935, and "have reached the conclusion that much [the] best course will be to lie low and await developments".<sup>34</sup>

The Service Ministries had been considering the matter as well and had come to quite a different conclusion. Where the Foreign Office revised, the COS reversed. Until 1935, the COS were adamant

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<sup>31</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E3342/919/44 Helm Minute 29 May; Hankey Minute 30 May; also, E3342/919/44 Baggallay to Loraine 30 May 1935.

<sup>32</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XIII no. 511 Kammerer 30 Dec 1935.

<sup>33</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E4260/919/44 Morgan to Hoare 11 Jun 1935.

<sup>34</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E4567/919/44 Vansittart to Loraine 3 Aug 1935.

that the Straits should be kept open. By July 1935, however, they were no longer certain. Service opinion, at this juncture, was influenced by two overriding considerations: firstly, that Britain no longer possessed the power to hinder refortification and might as well get the credit for fostering what it could not prevent; secondly, as planning for war with Italy developed, it became obvious that it would be a splendid thing for a friendly Turkey to have the ability to close the Straits to the vessels of a common enemy.

On 30 July 1935, the COS considered the question of the Straits. Chatfield opened the discussion with the observation that:

Turkish preparations for the remilitarization of the Dardanelles zone, by means of mobile defence, had now so far advanced that a free passage was, in fact, already denied.<sup>35</sup>

This might, he thought, make it necessary "to reverse the previous advice which had been given on the question".<sup>36</sup> General Sir Archibald Massingberd-Montgomery, CIGS, gave as his opinion that:

There might be advantages in accepting the fact of militarization. He felt sure that the tendency of the co-signators of the treaty would be to place the responsibility for maintaining the treaty on us if they could do so. It was desirable to avoid that position, and there was nothing to be gained by it . . . on the other hand if we could take the initiative in allowing remilitarization we might be able to get Turkey's friendship.<sup>37</sup>

There was no opposition. The COS quickly came to the unanimous

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<sup>35</sup> PRO CAB 53/5 COS 147th Mtg 30 Jul 1935.

<sup>36</sup> In 1933 the COS had examined the question and had advised against remilitarization. PRO CAB 53/2 COS 100th Mtg.

<sup>37</sup> COS 53/5 147th Mtg op. cit.

conclusion that advocating, rather than opposing, the remilitarization of the Straits would be an excellent way of winning Turkish friendship without it being necessary to enter into anything smacking of increased commitment.<sup>38</sup>

The COS memorandums, Demilitarized Zone of the Dardanelles 19 July and 6 August 1935, set-out the new Service consensus for the benefit of the Government.<sup>39</sup> At the time of Lausanne, according to the COS, the major advantage of the open Straits had been to permit pressure to be brought against Turkey. Such was the state of the Turkish Forces then that months would pass before the Straits could be closed, and in the interim, Turkey might be defeated. But even at the time of the first request for a revision of the Straits regime, in 1933, this advantage had largely disappeared. For one thing, in the years after 1923, the Turkish capital had been moved to Ankara. Nevertheless, in 1933, the Admiralty had judged that whatever Turkish friendship Britain might gain by permitting revision, would be short lived and over priced.<sup>40</sup> Straits revision was simply too valuable a *quid pro quo* to squander. The Admiralty had also feared that such a revision would set a bad precedent for other cases -- viz. the Aegean, Thrace, the Rhineland, and Danzig. By 1935, however, it was clear that Turkey was prepared to press the claim. It had also become clear in the interim years that

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> PRO CAB 53/2 COS 387 Demilitarized Zone of the Dardanelles 19 Jul; and, COS 389 6 Aug 1935.

<sup>40</sup> COS 387 op. cit.

Turkey had substantially achieved the independent ability to close the Straits. Observation posts, telephones, and lights were all in place. Mines and Artillery were held in depots awaiting movement to already prepared positions. Effective closure of the Straits, intelligence revealed, could be achieved within twenty-four minutes with Britain having "no means of preventing Turkey closing the Straits should she wish to do so".<sup>41</sup>

British intelligence seems to have been correct. In September, information was received from the Polish General Staff that the remilitarization of the Dardanelles was already far advanced. Dugouts, gas bunkers, telephone lines and duplicate lines were already in place. Guns were in position one mile outside the demilitarized zone. The heavy guns defending Izmit had been moved. No-one knew where, but everyone was making the same guess. New roads to the Dardanelles had been constructed and placed under military control. No non-Turks were allowed out of Istanbul in the direction of the Thracian interior.<sup>42</sup>

While the COS considered that a vulnerable Turkey was a friendly Turkey, and was inclined to accept that "if the demilitarization of the Straits increases the feeling of vulnerability so much the better"; they also believed that failing permission or a guarantee, Turkey would "in all probability reoccupy the Straits". While acknowledging that the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E5847 Collin Minute (Eastern Department) 27 Sep 1935.



remilitarization of the Straits might supply a precedent for the Rhineland, the COS could not overlook that the Straits, already were, in all probability, effectively remilitarized. If the remilitarization of the Straits would make it more difficult to pass a Fleet into the Black Sea should that be necessary, it was highly probable that the Balkan Entente was behind Turkey, and highly improbable that Italy and France would stand by Britain if it insisted on the maintenance of the Straits regime as it stood. Finally, if, "the odium of protesting must . . . fall on Great Britain as the sole supporter of the Lausanne Treaty which has the courage to object . . . Great Britain may lose Turkish friendship and gain nothing in return".<sup>43</sup>

When all sides of the issue had been weighed, the COS concluded that it was no longer possible to ensure unimpeded passage through the Straits. Turkey might forego remilitarization for a guarantee, but from the COS viewpoint, that was like treating stomach ache with strychnine. The disadvantages of remilitarization were outweighed by the value of Turkish friendship -- especially given the "danger that she may drift into the Russian camp or ally herself with Germany if Great Britain does not maintain friendship with her".<sup>44</sup> Given this, if Britain took the lead:

we should doubtless gain her gratitude. Nor should we lose militarily anything considerable for ourselves, since the straits are not only in fact, already to a great extent denied, but also Turkey failing the agreement of the Powers, may imitate Germany and proceed

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<sup>43</sup> COS 387 op. cit.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

to unilateral repudiation of the treaty.<sup>45</sup>

Britain would not only win Turkey friendship by a vigorous policy, but give the world an outstanding example of the benefits to be gained by fair dealing. The remilitarization of the Straits would be the show piece of a policy of general appeasement.

On 13 August, Loraine complained to Vansittart that FO instructions to "lie low" were not in accordance with those the Service Attaches were receiving from Admiralty House, Adastral House and Horse Guards. The Attachés had been instructed to seek out prominent Turks and taken the initiative in discussing possible revision of the Straits regime. The Military Attaché, Major Sampson, in explanation of his instructions, told Loraine that:

They [COS] are afraid that if we go on stifling Turkish views on the subject we shall one day be faced with a fact accompli and then bang will go any certainty of our control over the straits and our war cemeteries. They feel that something may be saved if we take the initiative. Yesterday I was told that the C.I.G.S had actually started the ball rolling to the F.O.<sup>46</sup>

In November, Oliphant replied from the Foreign Office:

I am sure that you realize that although we welcome the genial conclusion of the Chiefs of Staff we did not share their view that His Majesty's Government should at present take the initiative in informing the Turks of our support for their claim to remilitarize the Straits. Meanwhile the Chiefs of Staff memorandum has been considered by the C.I.D who, while in principle approving the recommendation of the Chiefs of Staff, left the question to be raised by the Secretary of State if and when the need arose for implementing the policy. Sir Samuel explained that the question had better be left

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<sup>45</sup> COS 389 op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E5072/919/44 Loraine to Vansittart 13 Aug 1935.

over at present.<sup>47</sup>

Loraine, who agreed with the Service Ministries rather than the FO, minuted obstinantly that the "Importance of Turkish friendship outweighs disadvantages of complete remilitarization of the straits".<sup>48</sup>

Throughout August news of military preparations in Thrace and in the Straits areas continued to arrive in Ankara. From Sofia, Cavendish-Bentinck reported that small boats, probably from Russia, were landing war material by night in Eastern Thrace. According to his Military Attaché, Russia was fulfilling a promise to provide the material necessary to refortify the Straits.<sup>49</sup> On 3 August, the Consul in Trabizon (Trebizond) reported that The Turkish Army was moving to Thrace from the East. Information that he had received indicated that all Eastern Districts except Van had been reduced in strength by 30 to 40%.<sup>50</sup> Major Sampson, the Military Attaché (MAA), confirmed this report.<sup>51</sup> On 31 August, Loraine reported that the Turks had quietly announced in the July edition

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<sup>47</sup> PRO FO 1011/36 Oliphant to Loraine 28 Nov 1935.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Loraine Minute.

<sup>49</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 unnumbered Cavendish-Bentinck to FO 22 Aug 1935. In manoeuvres 21-25 August, Soviet manufactured tanks and armoured cars made their first appearance in Turkish units. This was also the first exercise in which Air forces and chemical units played a part. PRO FO 371/19041 E5663/4809/44 Sampson to Morgan to FO 22 Sep; and, 33/54/35 Morgan to Hoare 14 Sep 1935. By the beginning of the war, the Turks had received at least 100 T26 light tanks, fifty T37 tankettes, and thirteen type A.27 armoured cars from Russia. WO 287/141 Notes on the Turkish Army.

<sup>50</sup> PRO FO 371/19041 E4809/4809/44 Loraine to FO 3 Aug 1935.

<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 371/19041 E5663/4809/44 Morgan to FO 13 Sep 1935.

of the Official Gazette that a new fortified zone would be established at Kirkklareli in Thrace, and although not actually in the demilitarized zone, it was close to its borders.<sup>52</sup> Soon after this, Kirkklareli was declared a military zone barred to foreigners. A new Division, the 46th, it was discovered, was under formation there.<sup>53</sup> It seems probable that these preparations were both intended to give the Turks the capability to close the Straits, and to prepare Turkey for possible hostilities against Italy in defence of the League.

By 22 September, the situation had cleared sufficiently for Major Sampson to report that the burgeoning strength of II Corps (Istanbul) and III Corps (Corlu) made it obvious that the object of the redeployment had been to provide for better defence of the Straits against direct attack. Lorraine was only stating the obvious when he wrote on 12 August:

It would create a most unpleasant situation if the Turks, as they certainly are able to do from a physical point of view, took the law into their own hands and just marched into the zone, finding that their cosignators of the Lausanne treaty were either disinclined to meet their wishes or evasive of discussion.<sup>54</sup>

Şükrü Kaya told a group of Armenian delegates soon after that Turkey would "not hesitate to take whatever measures were necessary, if we found ourselves face to face with unexpected

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<sup>52</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E5371/919/44 Lorraine to FO 31 Aug 1935.

<sup>53</sup> PRO FO 371/19041 E5663/4809/44 Sampson to Morgan to FO 22 Sep 1935.

<sup>54</sup> PRO FO 1011/90 Lorraine to Wigram 31 Aug 1935.

eventualities".<sup>55</sup> Cryptic as this was, it is doubtful that anyone mistook the reference.

On 12 September, anxious both to wreck the chances of Anglo-Turkish rapprochement and to prevent revision of the Straits regime, the Bulgarian Foreign Minister gave the British Ambassador in Sofia, Cavendish-Bentinck, a copy of a document which he claimed was a military protocol dated 14 November 1926 to a Russo-Turkish treaty concluded in 1923.<sup>56</sup> The protocol was said to have been concluded between Tewfik Rüşdi Bey (Dr. Aras), Şükri Kaya Bey (Şükrü Kaya), and M. Karakhan, in 1935 Soviet Ambassador to Ankara, on behalf of their respective countries.

According to the Bulgarian document, both parties had agreed to the refortification of the Dardanelles. The USSR promised to support Turkey in all attempts to accomplish this. It further declared that the Black Sea Fleet would be available for the defence of the Straits, and that when the time came for refortification, Russia would supply the material required. Turkey, in return, agreed only to store material provided in anticipation of an opportune moment.

In Ankara, Morgan and Major Sampson questioned the authenticity of the protocol. Lorraine was inclined to accept it as genuine.<sup>57</sup> At the Foreign Office, Scott-Fox, A.K. Helm and Rendel

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<sup>55</sup> DDF Series I, Vol XII no. 436 Kammerer to Laval 12 Oct 1935.

<sup>56</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E5568 Cavendish-Bentinck to Hoare 12 Sep 1935.

<sup>57</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E5947/919/44 Morgan to FO 28 Sep 1935.

were disposed to agree with Morgan. As Rendel minuted, the "document is certainly very suspect".<sup>58</sup> There had been, so far as anyone knew in London, neither a treaty of 1923 nor a military protocol of 1926. Rendel was, however, convinced that in September 1936 at least, if not in November 1926, Dr. Aras was acting in secret league with the Soviets in the matter of Straits revision.<sup>59</sup>

On the other hand, Cavendish-Bentinck, like Loraine, accepted the document as authentic. The Bulgarians, he wrote, had never claimed that it was a reliable facsimile, but rather a copy hastily made from a copy sent to the commander of III Corp (later General Orbay) by the Second President of the General Staff, General Assim (later General Gündüz) on 14 November 1926. The wealth of marginal detail, he thought, went a long way to establishing the legitimacy of the document since it added nothing to the document's authenticity, and therefore, would not have been included had the document been a forgery.<sup>60</sup>

Lord Chilston, from Moscow, was also inclined to accept the document as genuine. The People's Commissar for Defence, Marshal Voroshilov, had travelled to Ankara in February 1935, and the rumour in Moscow was that the talk in Ankara had been of military cooperation; moreover, that Voroshilov had received an assurance from the Turks that the Straits would be closed in time of war if

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Rendel Minute.

<sup>59</sup> PRO FO 371/5115/26/44 Rendel to Loraine 3 Sep 1936.

<sup>60</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E6217 Cavendish-Bentinck to FO 1 Oct 1935.

the USSR wished it.<sup>61</sup> Later, in December, Chilston wrote again. The Bulgarian Minister in Moscow, Dr. Mihalchev, had apprised Chilston of his belief that Moscow and Ankara were conniving at the remilitarization of the Straits. Dr. Mihalchev had heard rumours that Voroshilov had offered the Turks everything required to build the fortifications including experts to assist, and Soviet officers to command. The Turks, the rumour was, had accepted the experts and the material but politely refused the commanders. When Chilston questioned Mihalchev regarding the existence of a formal arrangement between Turkey and Russia, the Bulgarian had hotly denied that any written pact existed. "Turkey and the Soviet Union", he had said, "are such very close friends and collaborators that none was necessary". Chilston believed that Dr. Mihalchev's ignorance was proof that the document was not a Bulgarian forgery.<sup>62</sup>

When all the available evidence is examined, it would be difficult to either prove or disprove whether a formal agreement between Turkey and Russia existed. Dr. Aras often said that Turkey had no obligations except those recorded in the League of Nations under Article Eighteen of the League Covenant.<sup>63</sup> On several occasions he categorically denied that Turkey had any undertakings with Russia; but as Cavendish-Bentinck pointed out, it was certain that there were military protocols to the Balkan Entente not

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<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E6618 Chilston to FO Oct 1935.

<sup>62</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E7411 Chilston to FO 20 Dec 1935.

<sup>63</sup> PRO FO 371/19039 E5124 Loraine to FO 26 Aug 35.

recorded with the League, and so it was obvious that Turkey did not consider that Article Eighteen of the League Covenant always applied.<sup>64</sup> Only two things can be confidently asserted: the first, that such a protocol easily could have existed; the second, that the Bulgarians were doing themselves no favours by suggesting to the British that the Turks might be conspiring with the Russians to remilitarize the Straits. They were, effectively, blackmailing the British on Turkey's behalf and the British, in the prewar decade, were particularly vulnerable to blackmail. True or false, the Bulgarians were doing work that the Turks might have done for themselves to good effect.<sup>65</sup> Whatever the case, if true, the existence of such an understanding would go far to explaining subsequent Soviet dissatisfaction at Montreaux and later when the Turks remilitarized the Straits in partnership with Britain and preceded with British, rather than Russian, assistance.

On 14 September 1935, Aras returned to the charge. In a speech delivered to the League Assembly, he expressed his regrets that general disarmament had not worked. But since it had obviously failed, he claimed that to deny the Turks the right to fortify the Straits was to deny them the means of defence.<sup>66</sup> Although Turkey did not object to the demilitarized zones on its Bulgarian and

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<sup>64</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E6217 Cavendish-Bentinck to FO 1 Oct 1935.

<sup>65</sup> The consistent Turkish denials that such an agreement existed, in a perverse fashion, is one of the best arguments that there was a secret agreement with the Russians. By denying that there was any such thing, the Turks were making their desiderata more rather than less difficult to obtain.

<sup>66</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E5908/919/44 Eden to Hoare 30 Sep 1935.



Greek frontiers, it would not permit the continued demilitarization of the Straits. In 1935, the Lausanne regime was, Aras declared, unique, detrimental and unfair.<sup>67</sup> Before actually delivering this speech, Aras had shown it in draft to Eden. This speech was the last public mention of the Turkish desire to remilitarize the Straits until after the final debacle of the Ethiopian sanctions. London's response was not positive. Sir Samuel Hoare, then Foreign Minister, cabled Loraine:

In the circumstances I am convinced that any action by you which could be interpreted as incitement to treaty revision would at present be most inopportune. It would cost us far more both with France and [the] Little Entente than we could hope to gain vis-a-vis Turkey. If initiative is again taken by [the] Turks you should keep me informed.<sup>68</sup>

By December, Dr. Aras was warning Loraine that the Italians themselves had approached him and were anxious to act as brokers for the normalization of the Straits regime. "Sometimes" he told Loraine, "it is useful not to understand what is being suggested. This was one of those occasions. I acted imbecility [sic] and did not understand". The Turks wanted an understanding with the British and were "loath to look to any other quarter".<sup>69</sup>

In January 1936, there were linkages in the British press of the Turkish wish to remilitarize the Straits with their cooperation in the defence of the League. Oliphant thought these "nothing more

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> PRO FO 1011/62 Hoare to Loraine 28 Nov 1935.

<sup>69</sup> PRO FO 371/19038 E7175 Loraine to FO 10 Dec 1935.

than an attempt at intelligent deduction by an enterprising press".<sup>70</sup> Numan Menemencioğlu, the Turkish Secretary General, had assured him that the Turks would never link the two questions.<sup>71</sup> "Would that all Governments" wrote Oliphant, "were so sensible as Monsieur Menemencioğlu".<sup>72</sup>

No doubt the Turk always has the Straits at the back of his mind, but he probably feels that if collective security within the Covenant can be made a reality he will stand to gain as much as anybody and the question of the Straits will then become relatively unimportant -- while remaining a grievance which can be trotted out as opportunity offers.<sup>73</sup>

#### Montreaux:

In the Spring, things began to move quickly. On 6 March, Germany reoccupied the Rhineland. Dr. Aras used the occasion of a special meeting of the League Council in London, called to discuss League reaction to the German action, to return to the question of Straits revision.<sup>74</sup> On 1 April, Germany announced the reintroduction of conscription.<sup>75</sup> Obviously, it could not longer be maintained that remilitarization of the Straits would provide a

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<sup>70</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Oliphant to Loraine 6 Jan 1936.

<sup>71</sup> Menemencioğlu informed Loraine that he had discussed the Straits regime with the FO while in London in March. PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 2 Apr 1936.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 604.

<sup>75</sup> The reoccupation of the Rhineland more than anything put the Straits forcibly back on the agenda. To Turkey, the normalization of the Straits became even more than hitherto "a question of the dignity and honour of the nation". DDF Series II, Vol 1 no. 534 Lescuyer (Istanbul) to Flandin 30 Mar 1936.

parallel for the German case when the Rhineland had been remilitarized already and Germany was busy overthrowing the last vestiges of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>76</sup> It was, by April, also patently obvious that Italy would win the war in Abyssinia. The Ethiopian collapse, if this were necessary, underlined the failure of collective action as applied by the League as established to provide security. On 10 April, willing to wait no longer, Dr. Aras announced to a meeting of the Republican People's Party that it was his intention to raise the question of Straits revision again.<sup>77</sup> Fethi Okyar, the next day, presented to the British Foreign Minister a note to the effect that Turkey wanted a revision of the Straits regime established at Lausanne, because "Article Eighteen of [the] Lausanne Straits Convention is no longer of any value in the present conditions". By Article Eighteen, the signators jointly bound themselves to guarantee the demilitarized Straits. Obviously this had no validity in 1936 with Italy, a principle signator, a declared aggressor.<sup>78</sup> The Turks considered the matter most urgent. Fethi Okyar told London that Atatürk judged it vital that the Straits regime be changed before the end of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute nullified the guarantees

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<sup>76</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 604.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> CAB 24/262 CP 168(36) The Montreaux Conference to Consider the Revision of the Straits Convention of Lausanne Eden 15 Jun 1936. The French received an identical note. DDF Series II, Vol II no. 57 Kammerer to Flandin 11 Apr 1936. Menemencioğlu told Kammerer that the situation in Europe rendered a joint guarantee worthless. The Straits regime was "perime" and "vermoulu": no. 107.

under Article Sixteen of the League Charter.<sup>79</sup> By this time, the British had withdrawn their objections, and Foreign Office opinion had moved into line with Service insistence.

All the Mediterranean powers, the Dominions, Japan and Germany were invited to attend a proposed conference to consider the question of Straits revision. On 16 April the British replied that they would attend the conference. In the light of current events, London concluded, the Turkish request was "fully justified".<sup>80</sup> The French also promised to attend.<sup>81</sup> The Russians accepted the invitation with bad grace.<sup>82</sup> The Germans and the Italians rejected the invitation, also with bad grace.<sup>83</sup> The Greeks and Yugoslavians

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<sup>79</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E1923/26/44 Fethi Okyar to Eden 11 Apr 1936.

<sup>80</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 607.

<sup>81</sup> The French also circularized the powers to the effect that they supported the Turkish moves. DDF Series II, Vol II no. 107 Flandin circulaire 23 Apr 1936.

<sup>82</sup> Litvinov's explanation was that he thought the Turkish request came at the wrong moment. He had spoken to Dr. Aras in London, and had thought that there had been an understanding. DDF Series II, Vol II no. 95 Payert (Moscow) to Flandin 19 Apr 1936.

<sup>83</sup> On 15 June 1936, the Turkish Ambassador tried to convince Ciano that it was in Italy's interest to attend the conference, and that Turkey much desired Italian participation. "Turkey would be content", the Ambassador told him, "with a formula which, without committing us in any way, would give the impression that we were formally participating". Ciano "gave him no grounds for hope". Italy was too angry about the "judicial error at Geneva" to consider attending such a conference. G. Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, (Oldhams Press: London) 1948. p. 4. Entry for 15 June 1936. Although Ciano did not mention it, it may be that Italian reluctance was increased by unwillingness to see Turkey, a Russian ally, as door-keeper in full rights to the route of egress from the Black Sea. In a bipolar world -- Black and Red -- in Roman eyes, Turkey was a good deal too red. M. Pernot, *"La Politique Italienne dans la Mediterranee"*, Politique Etrangere, Vol I, No. 2 (Oct 1936), p. 56; Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 610; and

readily agreed to go. The Rumanians and Bulgarians, with more to lose, after some consideration and grumbling, also said that they would be there.<sup>84</sup> Lord Stanhope, from the Treasury, was chosen as the British representative and would go armed with full powers.

By 21 April 1936, Ankara was full of rumours that Turkish troops were entering the Straits demilitarized zone. These rumours were not entirely without foundation.<sup>85</sup> The next day, Dr. Aras told Loraine that Turkey was considering precautionary measures prior to the proposed conference.<sup>86</sup> It was thought by the President, he said, that such measures might be required to ensure against surprise attack by Italy.

It would not take very long to organize the preliminary defence of the Straits sufficiently to defeat a surprise attack, but if the hostile force -- the allusion of course being to Italy -- did succeed in affecting a lodgement owing to the present military vacuum in the Straits it would take a long time and much sacrifice to eject it.<sup>87</sup>

Aras reminded him that while the Turks had been "fanatically scrupulous" regarding the demilitarized zone, the international situation no longer permitted this to be the case.

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1937, Vol II, p. 179-180.

<sup>84</sup> The Rumanians had no choice. They could, as Toynbee correctly points out, attend or give up any hope of a Turkish Alliance. The Bulgarians, also with much to lose, could gain from a successful revision a powerful argument of use in their own on-going campaign for nullification of the more onerous portions of the Treaty of Neuilly. Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 610.

<sup>85</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Loraine to Oliphant 21 Apr 1936.

<sup>86</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 25 Apr 1936.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

Remilitarization, Aras assured him, would be a matter of some few hours. The fifteen inch (38 cm) guns required, existed, and were in position to be quickly moved to preconstructed underground bunkers. The mines necessary to close the Straits were in storage at the Gulf of Ismid. Plans existed to repel an attack on the Straits, to defend the coast opposite the Dodecanese, and to defend Smyrna. "Under every plan" he assured Aras, "every unit and every reservist would know exactly what to do and where to go. Each man would move at once to the place where he was needed".<sup>88</sup> If preliminary occupation were permitted, Aras saw no objection to the presence of troops from the principle guarantor nations in the Straits, or to the use of Attachés to monitor the movement -- Italian troops and attachés only excepted.<sup>89</sup>

Lorraine's response was in accordance with Foreign Office instructions:

It seems hardly credible that the Turks should have thought that an occupation of the demilitarized zone concurrent with a request for the revision of the convention that created them, could reasonably be interpreted as not being a breach of that convention. . . . I did not mince my words at all and told them quite flatly that what they proposed would be, and would be regarded as a definite breach of their engagements.<sup>90</sup>

Lorraine did note, however, that at least Turkey had approached Britain before making this move and had not, like Germany,

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Given later Turkish impatience to obtain mines and heavy guns for Straits defence, it seems certain that there was a strong element of bluff in Dr. Aras's statement of Turkish capabilities.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Lorraine to Oliphant 25 Apr 36.

presented Britain with a *fait accompli*. "I don't think" he concluded, "it would be an exaggeration to say that 3 years ago Turkey at large would have supported a forcible reoccupation of the Straits zone because it would have been a smack at England".<sup>91</sup>

By early May, it had become obvious that it was Atatürk and not Aras who was behind the reappearance of the Straits question.<sup>92</sup> By the end of the month, Loraine was having to act vigorously to persuade the Turks not to "shove their forces into the Straits" prior to the conference.<sup>93</sup> On 10 May, Dr. Aras told Eden that the Straits conference should be convened at Lausanne shortly after the extraordinary session of the League set for 20 June. He warned that the revised regime would be much more complex than that established at Lausanne, and promised that in order to ensure adequate coordination between the British and Turkish delegations, the Turks would prepare a draft agreement and discuss it with the British prior to the actual conference.<sup>94</sup>

Long before the first meeting of the conference, it was apparent that British policy had come to conform entirely with Service opinion.<sup>95</sup> "It is most important on general grounds" wrote

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 8 May 1936.

<sup>93</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 22 May 1936.

<sup>94</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 10 May 1936.

<sup>95</sup> The Admiralty's judgement that Britain could not stop remilitarization seems to have worked its magic on the French as well. In April, Vansittart communicated this news to the French whose views were subsequently in close harmony with London's. DDF Series II, Vol II no. 87 Flandin Circulaire 17 Apr 1936.

Eden at the Foreign Office, "that it should be made clear that treaty revision by agreement can pay as well as, or better than, unilateral repudiations . . . it is most important that this concession -- which we could not in any case resist -- should be made as generously and completely as possible from the outset".<sup>96</sup> Unable to frustrate remilitarization, unwilling to take upon itself the full odium of doing so if it could, and anxious to give the world a salutary lesson in the profits to be gained by fair play, Stanhope went to Geneva to ensure that Turkey got its way at the conference table.

On 14 July, the conference held its first session. Agreement was reached on the last day -- 20 July 1936. Considering that most of the powers present considered the Straits an important or even a vital concern -- Titulescu said that "if the Straits are the heart of Turkey they are the arteries of Rumania": Litvinov called them "the vital nerve of Russia"<sup>97</sup> -- there was remarkably little dissention. The only major point of disagreement came over the provision for passage of ships in the case of a war in which Turkey was neutral.

The first proposal, sponsored by Russia, Turkey and Rumania,

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<sup>96</sup> PRO CAB 24/262 CP 168(36) op.cit.

<sup>97</sup> DDF Series II, Vol II no. 337 Ponsot to Delbos 22 Jun 1936. For the Conference, see, Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 584-645; and, A. Deluca, Great Power Rivalry at the Turkish Straits: The Montreaux Conference and Conversation of 1936, (Columbia: New York) 1981. Of the two, the Survey's account is much superior. Deluca's discussion gets lost in the details of negotiations and fails to identify the major themes of the conference.



was for a blanket closure of the Straits in time of war to nonlittoral powers. Obviously Britain would not support this.<sup>98</sup> The second proposal, backed by Russia, Rumania and France foresaw a regime under which Turkey would be obliged to close the Straits in time of war except to ships acting in virtue of the Covenant of the League and of any regional pact to be concluded in the future within the framework of the Covenant whether Turkey was a member or not and "irrespective of any pronouncement of the League".<sup>99</sup> The obvious reference, of course, was to French guarantees to Rumania by virtue of the Little Entente and to the Franco-Russian treaty. Britain could not support such a regime because it would deny it the ability to send ships into the Black Sea except in support of some regional alliance -- an unlikely case in 1936.

Britain's own position was that Turkey should have the discretionary power to discriminate between nations based on its own treaty relationships. In general, the British supported a regime which would see the Straits open in time of war unless closed to both belligerents, or closed by virtue of Turkey's treaty relations.<sup>100</sup> In this way, Britain hoped to turn its friendship with Turkey to advantage by securing a regime in which the Turks could open the Straits to the RN and close them to common enemies.

Litvinov agreed to accept the British proposal in exchange for

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<sup>98</sup> Hansard Commons, Vol CCCXV col 1119-1123, speech by Eden 27 July 1936.

<sup>99</sup> PRO CAB 23/85 Cab 52(36) 15 Jul 1936.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

an arrangement whereby the naval forces which nonlittoral powers could maintain in the Black Sea in time of peace would be limited to a set fraction of the largest fleet of a littoral nation. Eventually a compromise based on these two propositions was hammered out. A force-limiting provision was balanced by a regime which would allow the Turks to discriminate between nations based on their status *vis-a-vis* the League and Turkey's treaty relations. In general, this compromise meant that in the most crucial, and therefore, controversial case, in time of war Turkey being neutral, whether the Straits were opened or closed to any particular power was less a matter of legality than diplomacy, less a joint decision of the signators, than a fiat of the Government in Ankara.

Throughout the conference, the strongest argument for agreement was the certain knowledge of all the delegates that if the conference broke down the Turks would do precisely as they liked.<sup>101</sup> On 15 July, when it seemed unlikely that agreement would be reached, Loraine informed King Edward VIII that:

The failure of the conference at Montreaux hitherto to reach satisfactory agreement on the revision of the Straits convention has made the Turks and especially, I fear, President Kamal Atatürk, nervous and even irritable. Should the conference be unable shortly to reach agreement, I am afraid there is quite a possibility of the Turks taking the law into their own hands as regards the occupation and fortification of the Straits zone.<sup>102</sup>

To avoid another Rhineland Britain was willing to make substantial concessions; moreover, Straits refortification no longer endangered

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<sup>101</sup> PRO CAB 23/85 Cab 52(36) 15 Jul 1936.

<sup>102</sup> PRO FO 1011/73 Loraine to the King 15 Jul 1936.

but underscored British strategy. If a Fleet deployment to the Black Sea against Russia became more politically difficult, this described a case increasingly unlikely. On the other hand, the closure of the Straits to Italian vessels became a military possibility -- and this was much desired and of greater probable utility than the freedom surrendered. In this sense, Montreaux was a victory for British policy rather than a compromise of British interest.

Despite some minor criticism in the House of Commons, the Montreaux Straits agreement was well received in Britain.<sup>103</sup> In the Commons, on 27 July, Eden exhibited the convention as a triumph of British statesmanship. Eden told the House:

From the point of view of General European politics the conference has shown that treaty revision by negotiation and agreement, in accordance with the normal procedures and normal principles of international relations and practice, can lead to an agreement more favourable to all concerned than the methods of repudiation or the methods of the modification of treaty engagements by unilateral action.<sup>104</sup>

Austen Chamberlain followed Eden. "I do not wholly like the Straits convention" he said, "but I am not for a moment going to criticize the Government for having made it, and I rejoice that the question has been settled with goodwill on all sides".<sup>105</sup> Even the

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<sup>103</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCXIV, 15, 20, and 21 July 1936.

<sup>104</sup> Hansard Commons, Vol CCCXV col 1119-1123, speech by Eden 27 July 1936.

<sup>105</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCXV col 1166. Mr. Morgan-Jones asked the House: "Is there one of the subjects discussed this afternoon, with the one exception, namely the Dardanelles, upon which we have really been given definite knowledge? And we need not thank the Right Honourable Gentleman for telling us anything about the

officials of the Foreign Office had been brought to concede that more had been gained than lost with the revision of the Straits regime. "Montreaux is indeed good" wrote Oliphant in August, and I rejoice that we have at least that feather in our cap".<sup>106</sup>

In Turkey, the actual reoccupation was something of an anticlimax. Husnu Kilkis's 20th Division moved in immediately after the signature on 26 July. A few hours later the Turkish soldiers left again. There were no barracks for them in the Straits. Not until March 1937 did remilitarization began to become a reality.<sup>107</sup> On 31 July, İsmet İnönü, to wild applause, thanked Dr. Aras in the Grand National Assembly for his work in obtaining a settlement so much in accordance with Turkish desires and interests.<sup>108</sup>

The Germans disliked the Montreaux agreement. They considered that it increased the possibility of effective cooperation between the French and Russians.<sup>109</sup> They also disapproved of the references it contained to the League of Nations -- Germany not being a member.<sup>110</sup> The Turks were not disposed to value highly

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Dardanelles. The only assurance he could give us was to what is to happen to the Dardanelles in time of peace. In time of war goodness only knows what will happen. Ibid. col 1195.

<sup>106</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Oliphant to Lorraine 6 Aug 1936.

<sup>107</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E1802/528/44 MAA to Lorraine to FO 18 Mar 1937.

<sup>108</sup> Inonu, p. 298. Speech of 31 July 1936.

<sup>109</sup> PRO FO 424/282 A10085/4671/45 Wigram Minute 15 Dec 1936.

<sup>110</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 405, Weizacker to Ankara 16 Jun; and, No. 407 Ankara to Ribbentrop 27 Aug 1937.

German reservations, and warned them that they were not free to pick and choose between the Montreaux and Lausanne agreements -- particularly as they were signators of neither. "If German reservations were maintained", Aras warned, the "German Government would find themselves confronted with a very positive Turkish counter-reservation": they would cease to enjoy the benefits of a signator.<sup>111</sup>

The rather chilly Russian reaction caused rather more concern in Ankara. On 10 October 1936, Dr. Aras came to see Eden. "The Soviet Government", Aras said, "had lately been showing some dissatisfaction towards their Turkish friends. It was not that their relations had ceased to be correct and even close, but that the Soviets seemed to wish to thrust upon the Turks an excess of friendliness".<sup>112</sup> He wondered if it might be possible to make an agreement "not to allow the warships of an aggressor power to pass through the Straits against Soviet Russia". The Soviets in return, he said, would place the Black Sea Fleet and the Red Air Force at the disposal of the Turks in certain circumstances. On the whole, though, he judged the Soviets to be happy with the recent Anglo-Turkish rapprochement as they considered that this relationship prevented either from entering into relationships more inimical to

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<sup>111</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1141/141/44 Loraine to Halifax 22 Feb; E1198/141/44 Loraine to Eden 24 Feb; and E1202/141/44 Loraine to Eden 24 Feb 1937.

<sup>112</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 10 Oct; and PRO FO 424/280 E6231/5280/44 Eden to Vansittart 1 Oct 1936.

the Soviet Union.<sup>113</sup>

Eden considered that the modification to the Montreaux regime suggested by Aras was either innocuous, in which case it was pointless, or substantive, in which case it would represent a change to the Agreement as signed. Rendell, at the Foreign Office, agreed and approached Fethi Okyar in this regard. Okyar agreed that Eden's conclusion was "self evident"<sup>114</sup> and was doubtful that it would be wise for Turkey to acquiesce to the Russian demands; to do so would suggest dependence rather than alliance, and moreover, "would be joining one of the political groups the division of Europe into which was at present one of the greatest danger to world peace".<sup>115</sup> The Ambassador was "distinctly embarrassed by M. Aras' proposal".<sup>116</sup> While nothing came of Dr. Aras's proposal, the resemblance between his description of Soviet desiderata and the Bulgar document cited previously is suggestive.

The Montreaux agreement represented the final normalization of Turkey's status among nations. It represented, also, a much needed diplomatic fillip for both Britain and the League of Nations. All of these three -- the Turks, Britain, and the League -- were vigilant that the world not miss the significance of what had transpired. In Britain, the Foreign Office went out of its way to ensure that its news department pumped-up the negotiations and gave

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E6499/5280/44 Eden to Morgan 15 Oct 1936.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

proper publicity to the Turkish statesmen involved.<sup>117</sup> "So, at the moment" wrote Loraine, "we appear to be partners in a mutual admiration society. Long may this continue".<sup>118</sup>

Taken with the Abyssinian crisis, as it must be since the two were concurrent, the problem of the Straits tells us much about Turkish fears in the middle of the decade and of some of Britain's lasting anxieties. Abyssinia and Straits revision were not connected in Turkish foreign policy; indeed, the Turks set aside their campaign to regain full sovereignty over the straits until the Abyssinian crisis had been played out. What was significant to the development of Turkish policy, was that the attitude Turkey adopted in both questions was derived from Turkish fears: fear, primarily, that a combination of great powers was being formed around France and Italy which would shut out smaller nations like Turkey. It seems probable that Turkey's ultra-cooperative attitude regarding sanctions, its absolutely jacobin adherence to the League, and its courting of Britain prior to Montreaux, sprang, at least in part, from a desire that Britain, at least, be prevented from disinteresting itself in the fate of its Turkish friends. That is, Turkish policy at this time, derived largely from Turkey's perceptions of what constituted British policy; it being a vital Turkish interest not to fall too far out of step with Britain because Turkey believed that if it did so, it would soon be walking alone in an increasingly dangerous world.

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<sup>117</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Loraine to Oliphant 16 Apr 1936.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

Britain, for its part, was also afraid: afraid that too close an accommodation with the Turks would hamstring its efforts at reconciliation with Italy and lead to unwelcome commitments; fearful also, that failure to satisfy some of the Turks' desires would lead to the estrangement of Turkey and its unacceptable attachment to an unfriendly power. It was the dynamic between these irreconcilable propositions which led to the much vaunted Anglo-Turkish "friendship" while ensuring that nothing more substantial could develop. It also seems certain that in British minds, if not in Turkish, Montreaux and Sanctions were linked. Linked, first of all, in British planning for war with Italy, which included as an important part the proposition that it would be a good thing for the Turks to have the ability to close the Straits. Linked, as well, through British anxiety that the friend and collaborator of the sanctions front be rewarded for good conduct, thus providing a sterling example of the benefits to be gained by international fair play. Linked, finally, by concern that, whatever the cost, Turkey, friend of the League, not become Turkey, remilitarizer of the Straits despite the League and against Britain.



Chapter IV -- After Montreaux: Towards a Plan for War with Italy  
Turkey's Quest for an Alliance with Britain:

In the months after Montreaux, the Turks again began to try to entice the British into some more formal bilateral arrangement. Indeed, by May 1936, Atatürk was declaring quite bluntly that this was the next item on the Turkish foreign policy agenda. On 16 May, Loraine presented new letters of credence. Atatürk spoke to him for several hours about the international situation. Italy had won in Ethiopia, he thought "not by force of arms but by corrupting Ethiopia to the point of disintegration and by the desertion of the Negus".<sup>1</sup> Sanctions, Atatürk judged, had obviously failed and there seemed little point in continuing them. He doubted, however, that Mussolini would be satisfied with this conquest. Mussolini had declared his goal to be the reestablishment of the Roman Empire, and Atatürk was inclined to believe that he meant it. Any nation in the Eastern Mediterranean could be the next target. The threatened nations should use the interim before the next attack, Atatürk thought, to strengthen and associate themselves in order to "build up such an array of effective force and cohesion as to render further expansion a far too hazardous venture for Italy to take".<sup>2</sup> Germany also, Atatürk thought, was becoming a greater danger. Turkey's course was clear. It desired an alliance with France and Britain against the present Italian and future German threats. If Russia could be brought into this alliance so much the better.<sup>3</sup> A

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<sup>1</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Loraine to Eden 16 May 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

few days earlier Atatürk had been talking to a friend. "I notice", said the friend, that "you are drawing a good deal closer to England". Atatürk replied: "Drawing closer? I have thrown myself into the arms of England".<sup>4</sup>

Loraine, again, was uncertain how to respond to the Turkish overtures. "If", he wrote London, "it is reasonable to suppose Turkish friendship and political support is a valuable asset now, and might in an emergency become a vital one . . . [then] we ought to make a bigger effort than we have hitherto put forth to sweeten that friendship on our side and to clinch it".<sup>5</sup>

Eden, for his part, did not doubt that the Turkish approaches were genuine. He thought that given the close relationship between British and Turkish policy,

It is natural that the Turkish Government should wish to have something tangible to point to for the purposes of the Grand National Assembly and of public opinion . . . [the difficulty] is to find a formula which, while reassuring the Turks . . . would neither create an uncongenial commitment for ourselves, nor act as a possible provocation elsewhere, nor be an obstacle to the achievement of broader pacifications.<sup>6</sup>

In a strange fashion, Turkey's uncompromising support of the League and actions on the sanctions committees had undercut even Eden's willingness to move to a more formal relationship. The Cabinet, including Eden, had come to fear that the Turks might use a British alignment to lead the British into conflict and commitment. "Only

<sup>4</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Loraine to Eden 8 May 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Eden to Loraine 1 Aug 1936.

think" Eden wrote, "of the play which Aras would be tempted to make with such an assurance".<sup>7</sup> An alignment with Turkey, if the Turks chose to make use of it in an unacceptable fashion, might become what London feared most: an uncongenial commitment, a possible provocation, and an obstacle to broader pacification. As Britain moved towards accommodation with Italy, it did not wish to be saddled with any irreconcilable Turkish baggage. Dr. Aras, by being more "British" than the British in the sanctions front, had lessened the chance that his broader policies would be successful.

Unwilling to permit Anglo-Turkish relations to go further in the direction they had been travelling, but not anxious for them to return from whence they had come, Britain increasingly resorted to informal means to buttress its relationship with Turkey. Loraine had shown the way earlier. In 1934, he had written to his superiors in London that:

No exchange of amities with Eastern states conducted between individuals however highly placed or even between Governments leaves very much impression unless associated with some public gesture which is intelligible to and strikes the imagination of the general mass of the population.<sup>8</sup>

Although it was not initially planned as such a gesture, the visit of King Edward VIII to Turkey in September 1936 quickly came to symbolize Anglo-Turkish friendship while not binding Britain to anything at all.<sup>9</sup> The visit had been intended by the King as an

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<sup>7</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Eden to Loraine 19 Aug 1936.

<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Loraine to Eden 29 Jun 1934.

<sup>9</sup> Planning for the visit had actually begun before the death of George V. PRO FO 1011/36 Oliphant to Loraine 20 Aug 1935.

informal junket with Mrs. Simpson. The Turks turned it into something little short of an occasion of state -- receiving an embarrassed Edward VIII in Istanbul with "grand magnificence".<sup>10</sup> While in Turkey, the King met most of the leading Turkish statesmen. It was a mark of the importance of this visit for the Turks that his Aide while in Turkey was General Fahrettin Altay, the COS of IV Corps at Gallipoli. Altay, at this time, was the second most highly rated soldier in the Turkish Army.<sup>11</sup>

The King's visit was followed by a much publicized courtesy call of the Turkish Fleet to Malta in October 1936.<sup>12</sup> The visit of the Fleet had been planned for 1935 but was postponed following the Dip Burnu incident.<sup>13</sup> In December, Mr. Wyatt of the Ottoman Bank, suggested to the Deputy Director of Naval Plans, and to several prominent Turks, that it might be a good idea if the Mediterranean Fleet made a visit to Istanbul. Suad Davaz, Turkish

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<sup>10</sup> "La Turquie et la Crise Europeene", Politique Etrangere, Vol III, No. 5 (Oct 1938), p. 491.

<sup>11</sup> PRO FO 1011/91 Loraine to Wigram 5 Dec; and, FO 1011/73 Loraine to the King 28 Nov 1936.

<sup>12</sup> Also by İnönü's visit to London for the coronation of George VI and Ascot. Both in 1936 and 1937 İnönü attended Ascot, and would have gone in 1938 if he had remained in office. The Foreign Office wrote Loraine: "We will remember about M. Célal Bayer, the new Prime Minister, being also a horse lover, and when next we want anything out of the Turks, perhaps an invitation to Ascot may oil the wheels". PRO FO 1011/92 Loraine to Hardinge 9 Apr, 16 Mar 1937; FO 1011/93 Hardinge to Loraine 16 May; and Loraine to Hardinge 26 Apr 1938.

<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 371/19036. Turkish proposal to make visit: E252 Loraine to Simon 11 Jan 1935. Acceptance by Admiralty: E2449/252/44 3 Apr 1935 Le Maitre (Adm) to Helm (FO), and M.05336/35 13 Dec 1934 C in C Med to Adm. Loraine notified: FO 1011/36 Oliphant to Loraine 30 Apr 1935.

Ambassador to Paris, and Fethi Okyar, Wyatt informed the Foreign Office, were "clearly delighted with the idea".<sup>14</sup> The Admiralty was horrified at Wyatt's doings and rejected the idea in view of the difficult position in the Mediterranean. Wyatt was called to Whitehall and told that neither the Admiralty nor the Foreign Office appreciated his brand of informal diplomacy.<sup>15</sup>

By August 1936, however, the Admiralty were most anxious for courtesy visits to be resumed and wished the Turks to make the first move by coming to Malta.<sup>16</sup> The invitation was delivered and accepted on 21 August.<sup>17</sup> When the visit of the Turkish Fleet took place at the end of October, Dudley Pound, C in C Med, judged the event an "unqualified success".<sup>18</sup> Atatürk also was pleased with the results of the visit. In Ankara, Loraine was having supper in the Angora Palace Hotel with Dr. Aras and Cêlal Bayer when Atatürk appeared with his entourage. Atatürk read to the guests the transcript of Pound's welcoming speech to the Turkish squadron. Drinking and dancing followed until 5:30 a.m.<sup>19</sup> In Rome, there was

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<sup>14</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Oliphant to Loraine 5 Dec 1935.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E4867/1373/44 Eden to Loraine 10 Aug 1936.

<sup>17</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E5307/1373/44 Loraine to Eden 21 Aug 1936.

<sup>18</sup> GR CHT 4/10 Pound to Chatfield 23 Oct; and 20 Nov 1936.

<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 24 Nov 1936. Hitler appears to have been annoyed at the growing Anglo-Turkish friendship. In January 1937, Dr. Aras told Loraine that Hitler had invited the Turkish fleet to make a visit to Kiel as a "grandiose manifestation of Turco-German friendship". The Turks ignored the offer. FO 424/282 E264/264/44 Loraine to Eden 12 Jan 1937.

no drinking and dancing. Mussolini was terrifically angry at the visit of the Turkish Fleet to Malta especially coming so soon after Edward VIII had pointedly excluded Italy from his Mediterranean cruise.<sup>20</sup>

On 4 December, Lorraine informed Eden that given the satisfactory nature of recent events, he thought that Turkey was ready to accept British friendship without any formal agreement.

There is little if any risk of our being approached from the Turkish side with a request for a commitment of any sort on paper; either by the signature of a pact or whichever.<sup>21</sup>

Lorraine thought that the need for such an agreement had been obviated by the firmness of the position of Eden, by the understanding of Fethi Okyar, by Lorraine's friendship with leading Turks, by the satisfactory outcome of Montreaux, and by the new climate of intimacy produced by the King's visit and the visit of the Turkish fleet to Malta.<sup>22</sup> The Turks were, Lorraine concluded, satisfied with the present state of Anglo-Turkish relations and required "no commitments other than those that pertain morally to gentlemen".<sup>23</sup>

Lorraine was wrong. Indeed, it is hard to see how he could have continued to harbour this misapprehension. Atatürk had spoken

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<sup>20</sup> C. Seton-Watson, "The Anglo-Italian Gentleman's Agreement of January 1937 and its Aftermath", The Fascist Challenge, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>21</sup> PRO FO 1011/63 Lorraine to Eden 4 Dec 1936.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

plainly and at length on this subject to King Edward VIII during his visit to Turkey. He began by telling the King about his war experiences -- how he did not like German Generals and had not been impressed by their ability. He had always, he assured the King, been confident that Germany would lose the war because any powers arrayed against Britain were "foredoomed to ultimate defeat". He wanted an alliance with Britain, Atatürk said, and was dissatisfied with the negative results he had obtained so far. Britain, he thought, was being "deliberately evasive". It showed "a lack of appreciation of the value of Turkish friendship".<sup>24</sup> This was hardly the voice of a man desiring no commitments.

The only result of Turkey's angling for an alliance was a Cabinet decision that in the event of war Britain would appoint a liaison mission at the outset, and if Turkey were a combatant, would offer to protect Turkey's communications, coasts and ports, provide economic support, and consider joint operations against the Dodecanese. This decision was not communicated to the Turks.<sup>25</sup>

As was usual in this period, when disappointed by the British, the Turks began to mend their fences with Italy. In February 1937, Orme Sargent warned Loraine of a possible Turco-Italian rapprochement. On 4 February 1937, Dr. Aras had gone to visit Ciano in Milan.<sup>26</sup> Reconciliation does indeed seem to have been the

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<sup>24</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E824/188/444 Loraine to Eden 29 Jan 1937.

<sup>25</sup> PRO CAB 51/4 Cab 61st Mtg Dec 1936.

<sup>26</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XVII no. 170 Loraine to FO 12 Feb 1937; and, G. Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, (Odham's: London) 1948, p. 93-95.

Turkish intention. "The visit", Ciano wrote, "was more of a ceremony of expiation than of a political meeting". It was "an act of contrition". Ciano was forced to confess, however, "that he [Aras] recited the *mea culpa* with amazing impudence".<sup>27</sup>

Britain continued to fear the possible consequences of Turco-Italian reconciliation. "Present relations between Italy are characterized by absence of tension as well as absence of cordiality", the Foreign Office judged: "We think they had better remain so".<sup>28</sup> An Italo-Turkish rapprochement would be a "psychological enhancement" of the Italian position in the Eastern Mediterranean and would underscore for the smaller nations the ostensible lessons of the failure of the sanctions front.<sup>29</sup> "Negotiations between Italy and Turkey", the FO concluded, "should not be started and you should, if you think wise, use your influence with M. Aras accordingly. Obviously however, great discretion on your part will be necessary".<sup>30</sup>

What was Dr. Aras doing in Milan? What seems most likely, is that once again, the Turks were afraid of being left out of a

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<sup>27</sup> Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p. 95. Entry for 4 Feb 1937. "Rüstü Aras began by making an exaggerated and strong declaration of friendship for Italy and of admiration for the Duce. I refrain from describing the series of acrobatics he performed in order to demonstrate, by citing a list of instances -- all of them negative -- his supposedly constantly favourable attitude towards Italy". No real business seems to have been transacted at the meeting. It was, as we might expect, mainly a mending of bridges.

<sup>28</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XVII no. 369 FO to Loraine 3 Apr 1937.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



Mediterranean detente by their Western friends, and, once again, these fears seem to have been justified. Dr. Aras's trip to Milan had been preceded by a month by the Anglo-Italian conversations leading to the Gentlemen's agreement of 2 January 1937.<sup>31</sup> In going to Milan, Dr. Aras was not so much moving away from Britain as rushing to stay parallel with British policy as it manoeuvred toward the appeasement of Italy. Turkey was less concerned with achieving rapprochement with Italy, than with avoiding the consequences of an exclusively Anglo-Italian accommodation. Returning from his meeting with Ciano, in February, Dr. Aras paused long enough in Belgrade to issue a joint communique with Stojadinovic "saluting" the Gentlemen's agreement "with satisfaction".<sup>32</sup> Two weeks later, on 18 February, the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente issued a communique supportive of the British initiative.<sup>33</sup> Thus the two were linked. If Britain wished it, the order of the day would be reconciliation with Italy; but Britain must recognize, Aras might have said, that this reconciliation must be broadened to include Turkey and its Balkan allies which were not to remain outside as Britain's reserve allies against the day that Anglo-Italian rapprochement turned sour.

Dr. Aras did not say this. Instead, apprised of British fears, he rushed to reassure the British of Turkish fidelity. By the time

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<sup>31</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 652-666; and, Documents of International Affairs, 1936, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 661

<sup>33</sup> Documents of International Affairs, 1936, p. 349.

of his trip to Milan, Aras was speaking routinely as if Turkey and Britain were allies.

England, he said, was not merely a power but a world power: she was ubiquitous: her interests lay everywhere: now that the basic coincidence of Turkey's interests with those of Great Britain was established and the decision had been taken by the Turkish Government to mold their local policy in harmony with the United Kingdom's world policy, Turkey was realizing that the possibilities for good, in every way of cooperation with the United Kingdom were far greater even than she had dreamed them to be.<sup>34</sup>

If there were war, "Turkey would fight on the side of England. Not at once however. She would wait and see what side Italy would come in on . . . But once the Italian decision was taken, and whatever it was, Turkey came into the war: on England's side. That was the rock bottom for Turkey".<sup>35</sup> Further, on 6 April, Dr. Aras told Loraine that Turkey was most emphatically not negotiating with the Italians "but that every now and then he discusses [the] general situation in a friendly tone" with them. One of the things, Aras said, that he discussed with Ciano, was how to stop Italy being so disagreeable to the United Kingdom. Loraine wrote that he, himself, had "never detected any desire on the part of the Turks to widen the scope of their friendship with Italy".<sup>36</sup> Given Ciano's account of his discussion with Aras, it seems certain that the Turks were not contemplating anything more drastic than a mending of bridges. In June, however, İnönü stressed to the Grand National Assembly,

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<sup>34</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Loraine to Eden 24 Feb 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XVII no. 377 Loraine to Eden 6 Apr 1937.

and one expects intended to advise the British thereby, that Turkey's relationship with Britain was by no means a "private club" and could, and should, be widened to encompass other powers.<sup>37</sup>

Nyon:

By the Spring, however, the possibility of any formal Anglo-Turkish accord was receding into the background as Britain began to slide back into the diplomatic ground from which it had been driven by the Abyssinian crisis. HMG continued to hanker for a detente with Italy, and if it could get one, any formal relationship with Turkey would be largely irrelevant. It was fortunate for the prospects of the Anglo-Turkish relationship, if not for British foreign policy in general, that Britain's movement back toward Italy, by the Summer, was arrested and reversed by the reaction of the powers to the outbreak of Civil War in Spain.

On 17 July, two days after the expiration of sanctions, the Spanish Army in Morocco mutinied.<sup>38</sup> The revolt quickly spread through the principle garrison towns in Spain itself. The lingering state of crisis, which had temporarily abated after the fall of Addis Abbas, became more acute than ever. General war seemed much more likely as Europe began to divide into two camps -- Blum's newly elected Popular Front Government in Paris and the Soviets aligning themselves behind the Loyalists, and the Fascist regimes behind Franco's insurgents. In November, Germany and Italy

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<sup>37</sup> İnönü, p. 322. Speech 14 June 1937.

<sup>38</sup> C. Seton-Watson, "The Anglo-Italian Gentleman's Agreement of January 1937 and its Aftermath", The Fascist Challenge, op. cit., p. 278.

recognized the Burgos Government. Soon, Italian and German "volunteers" on one side faced the International Brigades, armed and advised by the Russians, on the other. The threat of war became particularly acute after the collapse of the neutrality patrol in June of 1937 following a Loyalist air attack on the Deutschland. Submarine piracy became rife in the Mediterranean.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, the Spanish civil war made little impact until sinkings by unidentified submarines began. Most alarming for the Turks, these submarines were operating inside the Straits themselves. This seemed to highlight, in the most embarrassing possible way, Turkish vulnerability and military unpreparedness while raising the possibility of dangerous international complications for a Turkey only just restored to full sovereignty over the Straits.<sup>39</sup>

On 14 August 1937, the Ciudad du Cadiz was sunk by an unidentified submarine in the Straits. The submarine surfaced, chased the Ciudad du Cadiz to within two and a half miles of shore, and after firing eight cannon shots into the stricken vessel, torpedoed it twice.<sup>40</sup> Four days later, another Spanish vessel, the Armero, was torpedoed and sunk half a mile from the Island of Tenedos. The attacker had been flying the Nationalist flag, but was neither a Spanish type nor marked as a Spanish vessel. The patrol craft Avansof managed to rescue seventy-nine survivors before the

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<sup>39</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1937, Vol I, p. 342n.

<sup>40</sup> DDF Series II, Vol VI no. 351 Ponsot to Delbos.

Armero sank.<sup>41</sup> The Hamidie signalled that it had sighted a submarine in the area of the sinking. All Turkish naval vessels put to sea and all aircraft took to the air. The submarine escaped. The next day, 19 August, the Spanish Government requested that the Turks accept responsibility for the safety of Spanish ships in Turkish waters. An embarrassed Dr. Aras did not reply.<sup>42</sup> An incensed Kemal Atatürk rushed back from manoeuvres in Thrace and ordered that if there was a submarine in the Straits it was to be found and sunk.<sup>43</sup>

Aras came to see Loraine. Turkey would, he promised, circularize the powers, "and will point out the undesirability and danger of this extension of the Spanish Civil War to [the] Eastern Mediterranean".<sup>44</sup> Submarines found in the Straits, he warned, would henceforward be sunk without warning.<sup>45</sup> He had hoped that such things had ended with the Abyssinian crisis.<sup>46</sup> The Turks, he said, were resolved to take all necessary measures for surveillance and security and were determined to meet torpedoes with the depth

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<sup>41</sup> DDF Series II, Vol VI no. 328 Ponsot to Delbos 18 Aug 1937.

<sup>42</sup> BIA, Vol XIV, No. 5 (4 Sep 1937), p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> PRO FO 424/282 W1599/23/41 Loraine to Halifax 23 Aug 1937; and, Survey of International Affairs, 1937, Vol II, p. 348.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> DDF Series II, Vol VI no. 351 Ponsot to Delbos 24 Aug 1937; and, BIA, Vol XIV, No. 5 (4 Sep 1937), p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> DDF Series II, Vol VI, no. 339 Ponsot to Delbos 18 Aug 1937.

charge.<sup>47</sup> On 29 April, as if to underline Turkey's naval impotence, a French vessel was chased by a submarine from the Aegean Sea well into the Dardanelles. The Turks could do little aside from announcing that a planned courtesy call of the Turkish Fleet to Yugoslavia and Italy was cancelled.<sup>48</sup>

It was not just the embarrassment of being unable to ensure the safety of foreign vessels in waters recently become territorial that bothered the Turks. The Turks possessed very little antisubmarine (ASW) capability and were becoming worried about the state of their maritime communications. A Mediterranean dangerous to shipping meant that Turkey's land communications increased in importance. Reliance on land lines, of course, meant increased dependence on either Russia or Germany. Given Turkey's attempt to redirect its Foreign Policy, this was hardly a desirable development. For the moment, the Turks had little choice. On 12 July, Dr. Aras arrived in Moscow for a week of conferences with the Soviets. At the end of these, it was announced that the common "interest of both countries demands the preservation of their relation of friendship in full as a stable element in their foreign policies".<sup>49</sup> Two months later, the Turks approached Germany to

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<sup>47</sup> PRO FO 424/282 W1599/23/41 Lorraine to Halifax 23 Aug 1937; and, DDF Series II, Vol VI no. 351 op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> BIA, Vol XIV, No. 5 (4 Sep 1937), p. 40.

<sup>49</sup> BIA, Vol XIV, No. 2 (24 Jul 1937), p. 55; and Documents of International Affairs, 1937, p. 423.

facilitate deliveries of essential materials by rail.<sup>50</sup>

In some ways, Italian submarine piracy came in answer to British prayers. Statesmen and military planners in London had been wracking their brains for a painless way to refurbish British prestige in the Mediterranean. On 20 July 1937, the Defence Plans (Policy) Subcommittee of the CID met with Inskip in the chair.<sup>51</sup> It was its purpose to try to think of a way to demonstrate British power in the Mediterranean. A cruise by the Fleet was considered but rejected as too provocative and because the Fleet available was too small. With only two Flotillas of Destroyers with the Mediterranean Fleet since 1935, there was cause for speculation as to whether the Fleet would even be able to defend itself against submarine attack. Try as they might, the planners could think of no safe way to demonstrate British power.<sup>52</sup>

At the end of August, the French suggested that a conference be called to discuss the situation in the Mediterranean, rapidly moving beyond control. London thought this an excellent idea.<sup>53</sup> On 3 September, Vansittart met with the French Chargé to discuss the coming conference. Quickly, they reached basic agreement on a

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<sup>50</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 408, Note of Secretary of State MacKensen 27 Sep 1937.

<sup>51</sup> PRO CAB 16/182 DP(P)9 Relations with Italy Minutes of a conference held 15 Jul 1937. The Committee was composed of Inskip (chair), Eden, Hoare-Belisha, Vansittart, Deverell, Swinton, Chatfield and Ellington -- in other words, the Service Ministers and Heads sitting with FO representation.

<sup>52</sup> PRO CAB 16/182 DP(P)9 op. cit.

<sup>53</sup> PRO CAB 23/89 Cab 34(37) 8 Sep 1937.

common Anglo-French line, and that Russia, Italy, and Germany would all be invited to attend the proposed conference. On 5 September, British and French Ambassadors received instructions to invite Albania, Bulgaria, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Italy, Roumania, Turkey and the USSR.<sup>54</sup> Germany and Italy refused to attend.<sup>55</sup> Albania did not reply. No one cared, and the conference went on without them. Italy, after all, was known to be the 'pirate' state. Germany was not a Mediterranean power. Albanian participation mattered so little, that "when she subsequently applied to be associated with the Nyon declaration the FO did not even bother to reply".<sup>56</sup>

At 4:30 p.m. 10 September the delegates met at Nyon. At 11:00 a.m. 11 September, agreement was reached. On 14 September the instrument was signed.<sup>57</sup> Six days later, patrols began. Agreement was achieved so easily because the British and the French delegations, anxious to prevent a repetition of the sanctions fiasco, met 6-9 September and established identity of views on technical matters.<sup>58</sup> Captain Phillips, Director of Naval Plans, accompanied the British delegation to Nyon carrying with him in his

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<sup>54</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XIX no. 123.

<sup>55</sup> Initially, Ciano wanted De Jure recognition as a precondition for attendance. Later he refused point-blank to attend under any circumstances. The Russians would be there and they had just accused the Italians formally of being responsible for the sinkings. DBFP Series II, Vol XIX no. 124 and 126 Ingram to FO. Survey of International Affairs, 1937, Vol II, p. 341-348.

<sup>56</sup> CC DUPO 4/6.

<sup>57</sup> Text of Agreement: DBFP Series II, Vol XIX no. 172.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.



luggage the naval plan worked out with the French. Chatfield wrote later of Nyon: "The French having agreed to it, and no one else being present who knew anything about submarines, the few counter-proposals were not difficult to deal with, so Mr. Eden brought us home".<sup>59</sup>

At Nyon, the smaller powers were all anxious to help, but had little naval power and no ASW capability. In this question more than most, they were, as Chatfield later complained, "only voices".<sup>60</sup> What quickly became obvious also, was that none of them wanted help from the USSR. "The extent of this feeling which was shared by all -- even the Turks in spite of their friendly relations with the Soviet Russia", Dudley Pound informed London, "was surprising".<sup>61</sup> No one should have been surprised. The Turks were not anxious to establish a precedent for opening the Straits to the Soviets. Also, they knew that if the Soviets were allowed out, the Italians would be certain to hold the Turks accountable after the crisis had ended.

It was agreed at Nyon that the British, who were to be responsible for patrolling the Eastern Mediterranean, would request assistance from the smaller powers. The smaller powers would grant it, and be allotted patrol zones. Since they would not be able to adequately patrol their zones with the naval forces at their

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<sup>59</sup> E.M. Chatfield, It Might Happen Again, (Heinemann: London) 1947, p. 93.

<sup>60</sup> ibid., p. 88.

<sup>61</sup> CC DUPO 4/6 Geneva to FO 15 Sep 1937.

disposal, the smaller powers would, in turn, request aid from the British, who would provide it. The Russians, very largely, were left out in the cold. It was Eden's belief, shared by his naval advisor Pound, that the Soviets were prevented from protesting by their anxiety that the world not learn the extent of their unpopularity and isolation.<sup>62</sup> "The Soviet Government", Litvinov said, "had no axe to grind, and sought only to ensure the elimination of piracy". However, he warned, all must understand that the Soviets had as much right in the Mediterranean as anyone else and would protect their rights.<sup>63</sup>

Theoretically, the Greeks and the Turks were responsible for the Aegean.<sup>64</sup> In reality, the Greeks and the Turks would restrict themselves to providing bases for patrolling vessels: Lemos and Skyros from the Greeks, Eritrea from the Turks -- provided that there were no overflights of fortifications.<sup>65</sup> The Turks, of course, were responsible for patrols in the Dardanelles; and both Greeks and Turks for patrolling their territorial waters.<sup>66</sup> Turkey desired to participate more fully, Dr. Aras admitted later, but did

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> BIA, Vol XIV, No. 6 (18 Sep 1937), p. 42-43.

<sup>64</sup> Eden had first suggested this on 7 Sep as a way of providing effective patrols without unduly frightening the Italians; but neither Turkey alone, or Turkey and Greece together, had enough destroyers to patrol a zone without assistance. PRO CAB 24/271 CP 213(37) The Situation in the Mediterranean Eden 8 Sep 1937; also, DBFP Series II, Vol XIX no. 134.

<sup>65</sup> PRO FO 424/282 W17342/23/41 Chamberlain to Athens and Istanbul 17 Sep 1937.

<sup>66</sup> CC DUPO 4/6 Geneva to FO 15 Jul 1937.

not have enough sound ships to take on anything more strenuous than Dardanelles defence.<sup>67</sup> Britain, it was agreed, would operate in the Eastern Mediterranean up to the Dardanelles and excluding the Adriatic.<sup>68</sup> From 17 September, the Greeks and Turks refused port facilities to Italian vessels.<sup>69</sup>

On 18 September, Menemencioğlu introduced the Nyon agreement to the Grand National Assembly. The aim of the agreement, he told the delegates, was to prevent a war which could only be a catastrophe. He called on those "great powers which still remained outside the arrangement to adhere".<sup>70</sup> On 28 September, İsmet İnönü announced his resignation "for reasons of health" from the Turkish premiership.<sup>71</sup> One rumour was that he had opposed Atatürk's policy at Nyon as too confrontational.

The Antisubmarine patrols were a startling success. Submarine piracy quickly disappeared; not least because on 4 September Mussolini had ordered a stop to sinkings. On 30 September, not liking its position on the outside of something frighteningly like a Mediterranean pact, Italy adhered to the agreement and took over

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<sup>67</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E6412/67/44 Loraine to Halifax 27 Oct 1938. We should remember, however, that at the time Aras told Loraine this, Turkey was trying to negotiate an armaments loan intended primarily for naval purchases.

<sup>68</sup> BIA, Vol XIV, No. 6 (18 Sep 1937), p. 42-43.

<sup>69</sup> S. Roskill, Naval Policy Between the Wars, Vol II, p. 9.

<sup>70</sup> PRO FO 424/282 W17959/16618/41 Morgan to Chamberlain 21 Sep 1937.

<sup>71</sup> BIA, Vol XIV, No. 7 (2 Oct 1937), p. 45.

responsibility for patrols in the Adriatic.<sup>72</sup> Pound, Esteva, and Beynotti met that same day to allot the Italians their patrol zones.<sup>73</sup>

Nyon, if nothing else, drove the British and Turks closer together by associating them in what was, in effect, an informal alliance against Italy. In addition, the procedure adopted at Nyon of formally associating the smaller powers with the actions of the Great had an excellent effect on Anglo-Turkish relations. On 22 September, Dr. Aras came to see Eden in Geneva. Having failed to be reelected to the League Council he was going home. His greatest regret, he said, was that he would not be able to work with Eden in the future. "Nothing had given him or his Government more satisfaction than the excellent relations which had been established between our two countries".<sup>74</sup> In regards to the present situation in the Mediterranean:

Atatürk was not, M. Aras gave me to understand, unduly apprehensive for the future of the Mediterranean. In his view Signor Mussolini was a gambler who had had a very lucky throw at the gambling table in connexion with Abyssinia, unhappily for him however he had not been wise

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<sup>72</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol XIX no. 214 FO to Paris 30 Sep 1937. From Jul 1936, Mussolini was attempting to break the isolation which followed the Abyssinian crisis and Montreaux. He promised the Yugoslavians, Greeks, and Turks that "Italy has never contemplated, nor is contemplating any aggressive action against any of them in retaliation for past sanctionist policy". He also recalled tradition friendships with Greece and Turkey and promised to act always in the spirit of these. No assurances, he promised, were necessary against Italy. Hansard, Commons Vol CCCXV col 1119-1128, speech by Eden 27 July 1936.

<sup>73</sup> Roskill, Vol II, p. 386.

<sup>74</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E5587/315/44 Eden to FO 22 Sep 1937.

enough to get up from the table after that one success and was making further throws.<sup>75</sup>

Ciano was to come to Ankara, Dr. Aras said, though he could hardly see why since there was nothing to talk about. Dr. Aras was "not prepared to improvise topics unless he was first sure that they would fall in with our views". Dr. Aras concluded by sounding Britain on a bilateral naval agreement. Eden said that such an agreement would not be possible.<sup>76</sup>

Ciano did not go to Turkey, instead, frightened by its isolation, Italy adhered to the Anti-Comintern pact in November, withdrew from the League in December, and in January 1938, announced a significant increase in its naval construction program. The British continued to worry about their prestige in the Middle East. In 3 November 1937, with the Nyon patrols still functioning -- and Italian disgrace still institutionalized -- the Cabinet met to consider the matter. They could still see no easy way to make an impression in the Mediterranean without provoking Italy.<sup>77</sup> In December, Turkey requested that patrols cease. Not possible, HMG answered: the danger to shipping still existed and the patrols must go on.<sup>78</sup>

#### Planning for War with Italy in 1937-1938:

Nyon marked the last time that war with Italy was viewed in

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> PRO CAB 23/90 Cab 40(37) 3 Nov 1937.

<sup>78</sup> PRO FO 424/282 W16197/11/44 Halifax to Lorraine 22 Dec 1938.

isolation. Thereafter, the case of war with Italy became little more than a complication in planning for war with Germany. On 5 July 1937, the Cabinet decided that future defence spending was to be directed against Germany, that no very large expenditure was to be incurred in the Mediterranean, and that future defence planning was to be guided by these rules.<sup>79</sup> On 3 February 1938, the COS requested terms of reference for planning against Germany. In light of recent events, the COS wrote, such planning was obviously required. Planning for war in the Mediterranean and Middle East in any case, they noted, was complete. For our purposes, these documents represent a watershed.<sup>80</sup> Hitherto, Turkey had been considered for its utility as an ally against Italy acting alone, henceforward this was not the case. Planning focused on the case of war with Germany, and of war with Germany and Italy. Cases and conclusions in future documents were adulterated by the necessity to plan for two very different cases arising in tandem: continental war with Germany, and littoral war with Italy in the Mediterranean. To determine the basic importance of Turkey for British strategy in the Mediterranean, then, it is useful to give consideration to planning to meet the case of war with Italy as it existed before the German threat began to dominate the strategic horizon.

On 27 January 1937, the JPC published its Review of the Military Situation in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North

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<sup>79</sup> PRO CAB 24/270 CP 183(7) 5 Jul 1937.

<sup>80</sup> PRO CAB 53/36 COS 678 Appreciation of the Situation in the Event of a War Against Germany 3 Feb 1938.

East Africa.<sup>81</sup> This was the first instalment on the Mediterranean plan, and was meant to provide terms of reference for subsequent planning and to list operational plans already in existence.<sup>82</sup> The JPC noted that they had been instructed to consider the primary case of single-handed war against Italy, and the secondary case of war against Italy and Germany with France and Belgium being British allies. The attitude and utility of Turkey and Spain was to be considered in each of the above cases.<sup>83</sup> The JPC's Mediterranean and Middle East Appreciation was completed in July.<sup>84</sup> This appreciation with subsequent amendments, remained Britain's basic plan for war in the Mediterranean until September 1939.

Britain, the JPC believed, was much stronger than Italy. It would be able to face war with Italy with assurance everywhere except the Central Mediterranean -- and even here, the only difficulty would be in the short term. While Britain could not lose, it was possible that it might suffer some initial set-backs, particularly if Italy were to make a surprise attack, or if there were some unforeseeable political occurrence damaging to British regional strength.

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<sup>81</sup> PRO CAB 53/30 COS 546(JP).

<sup>82</sup> Plans already in existence: naval operations in the Mediterranean; reinforcement of Palestine, Egypt, and Iraq from India by air; reinforcement of the RAFME from HM ships; reinforcement of the Sudan and Egypt via Kilindini; reinforcement via the Red Sea; reinforcement of Aden; defence of East Africa, Somaliland and the Sudan. Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> PRO CAB 53/32 COS 603(JP) 24 Jul 1937.

How was Britain to defeat Italy? It would win by the steady application of economic pressure. Italy, the JPC considered, was particularly susceptible to this sort of warfare because of its low levels of gold and foreign currency holdings and its import dependence. Moreover, 80% of Italy's imports came, and 40% of its exports went, by sea, and therefore were subject to interdiction. Action against Italian trade, it was thought -- particularly against Rumanian petroleum -- would have a decisive effect over time. "The essential weakness of Italy" the planners concluded, "lies in her dependence on seaborne imports".<sup>85</sup>

No close blockade or even very vigorous action would be required, the planners thought, because 60% of the Italian imports came by sea through the Straits of Gibraltar, while another 25% (including the crucial Rumanian oil) came through the Straits. The JPC considered that most of the neutrals, including Turkey's Balkan allies, would be willing to do business with Italy on a cash and carry basis. But a Turkey active against Italy would be in a position to make such commerce difficult if not impossible.

If the Dardanelles were closed to Italian trade her economic situation would soon become critical, and the supply of petroleum products would prove a decisive factor after initial reserves had been expended. If she enjoyed free access to Mediterranean and Black Sea countries, Italy might obtain, so long as she could pay in acceptable value, sufficient raw materials to help her pursue a naval and air war for a considerable time.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid. See also, L. Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez. Britain's Mediterranean Crisis, 1936-1939, (Cambridge: London) 1975. p. 107-113.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.



If economic war were waged resolutely, and if Britain was able to obtain an alliance with Turkey, therefore, "scarcity of everything might well bring about a final disintegration of the Italian economic situation and the end of the war".<sup>87</sup>

Turkey, of course, was a political problem not lying in the planners province. They considered, however, that although Italy would try to maintain Turkish friendship, and although Turkey would be reluctant to enter a war, Turkey "would be likely to intervene on our side as soon as it became clear that she could do so with no great risk to herself".<sup>88</sup> Since Britain's war plan was unlikely to lead to great risks, it was probable the planners thought, that Britain could count on Turkish assistance.

While the prognosis was good in the long run, the planners noted with considerable anxiety some of the more glaring strategic weaknesses in the Mediterranean. For one, the RN had no sufficient base in the Eastern Mediterranean. For another, Italy's regional Air superiority was daunting (6:1 or 1416:180 aircraft regionally deployed). Turning their attention to imperial dependencies, the JPC doubted that Britain's position in the Middle East would be a source of much strength. They thought it probable that the already pervasive anti-British feeling would become more virulent. This

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid. Ironside, then Commander designate Middle-East, GOC Gibraltar, also came to this conclusion. "The greater part of their trade comes through the Straits of Gibraltar or the Suez Canal; but Turkey has the power to shut off all the oil coming from Roumania or Russia . . . ". Col R. MacLeod (edt.), The Ironside Diaries, (Constable: London) 1962. p. 45. Entry for 10 Jan 1938.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

meant that forces deployed to Palestine would not be available for deployment elsewhere. It was "doubtful", they thought, that Egypt and Iraq would fulfil their treaty obligations. The Turkish alliance, the planners hoped, would help offset regional unpopularity. Despite all of this, the planners concluded, with Air and Land reinforcement from India, British forces in the Middle East would be able to hold their ground, and economic forces would prove decisive in the end.<sup>89</sup>

It would be wrong to conclude from this that the Services were anxious for a show down with Italy. Nothing could be more untrue. The COS constantly pressed the Government to make some sort of agreement with Italy, however unfavourable, in order to free forces for possible operations in the Far East. Planning for single-handed war in the Mediterranean, they told the Cabinet in August 1937, had only reinforced this conviction.<sup>90</sup> The Services were confident that if it came to war, Britain would win, but not confident that such a war and such a victory would serve the wider interests of Britain, and, therefore, the COS were invariably avid for rapprochement with Italy and constantly advised that it would be worth paying a high premium to get it. The only restriction they sought to place on Government initiatives aimed at gaining Italian friendship was that military conversations be avoided. Even more than they wished to avoid the charge that the British were "trying to make new friends at the expense of the old", they were horrified

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p. 6-20.

<sup>90</sup> PRO CAB 53/32 COS 608 Anglo-Italian Relations 12 Aug 1937.

that conversations might "reveal the nakedness of the land so far as military and air forces are concerned".<sup>91</sup> "Anything", they told the Cabinet, "that can be done at the present time . . . to dispel the mutual suspicion which darken Anglo-Italian relations would be of the greatest advantages from the military point of view".<sup>92</sup>

The COS were aware that their views did not exactly correspond with those of the Foreign Office under Eden. In April 1937, the Foreign Office was warning the CID Plans Policy Subcommittee that war with Italy "was by no means remote" and that dispositions should be made to prepare for this eventuality.<sup>93</sup> The difference of opinion here was more than apparent. The Foreign Office tended to insist that the possibility of war with Italy could not be discounted if British foreign policy was to be effective while the Services were prone to answer that the possibility of war with Italy must be discounted to permit planning and deployment against other, more dangerous, contingencies; in other words, that the possibility of war with Italy must be eliminated if the empire were to be defended effectively.

From the Admiralty, Chatfield constantly advised the Government that he had the "greatest misgivings" regarding British preparedness. "There appears", he advised the Cabinet, "to be only two alternatives; either a real rapprochement with one at least of our potential enemies must be achieved, or else the whole tempo of

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> PRO CAB 53/7 COS 203rd Mtg 20 Apr 1937.

our rearmament program ought to be accelerated at all costs".<sup>94</sup> Since the Cabinet could not see its way clear to greatly increasing the pace of rearmament, rapprochement -- preferably with Italy -- appeared to be the only choice. Chamberlain, not an original strategist, was inclined to agree with Chatfield's argument. In September, he wrote to his sister:

You should never menace unless you are in a position to carry out your threats and although if we have to fight I should hope we should be able to give a good account of ourselves, we are certainly not in a position in which our military advisors would feel happy in undertaking to begin hostilities if we were not forced to do so.<sup>95</sup>

Moderate rearmament and vigorous appeasement were the hallmarks of his policy.

The Mediterranean, Middle East, and North East African Appreciation, was released by the COS in its final version on 21 February 1938.<sup>96</sup> The appreciation, like the drafts, considered the war in the Mediterranean in two cases: single-handed conflict with Italy, and war with France and Belgium against Italy and Germany. While not so "pure" in spirit as the drafts -- the Cabinet decision that future planning was to focus on the German threat was made after the planning sequence had already begun<sup>97</sup> -- it is of considerable importance in indicating the drift in Mediterranean

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<sup>94</sup> PRO CAB 53/8 COS 227th Mtg 19 Jan 1938.

<sup>95</sup> CC NC 18/1/1068 Neville to Ida Chamberlain 1 Sep 1938.

<sup>96</sup> Terms of reference: COS 573 op.cit.; 1st Draft Appreciation: COS 603(JP) op.cit.; 2nd Draft Appreciation: PRO CAB 53/33 COS 619 22 Sep 1937; Final Appreciation: CAB 53/37 COS 691 21 Feb 1938, and WO 33/1507.

<sup>97</sup> PRO CAB 24/270 CP 183(7) op. cit.

strategy away from confrontation with Italy, and thus, away from alignment with Turkey.

The COS began by noting that once Britain was at war with Germany, its primary concern would be to defeat Germany. The Mediterranean would be marginalized. There might be Army reinforcements. There would be no Air reinforcements. It would not be a matter of war against Italy and Germany, but of war against Germany with Italy coming in a poor second. In the case that Japan were to enter the war, considered later, it was judged that the Mediterranean would become more marginal still.

If war did come to the Mediterranean, however, the same basic conditions which had guided planning in the drafts still pertained. Indeed, the COS gave as their opinion that Italy, since the publication of the drafts, had grown more vulnerable to interception of seaborne imports.<sup>98</sup> They also noted that if war with Germany would marginalize the Mediterranean, it would also work to the economic disadvantage of Italy, since Germany, in anything but a short war, would monopolize sources of supply. Britain's general strategy would be to concentrate almost all available naval force in the Mediterranean,<sup>99</sup> stand on the

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 49

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 49. Planned war strengths Mediterranean Fleet (expressed: establishment/planned reinforcement):

Station	Btlshps	BtlCr	ACC	8"Cr	6"Cr	Dest	misc
Eastern Med	3/0	1/0	1/1	4/2	3/3	45/14	from Home Flt
Gibraltar	0/2					0/18	from Home Flt
Red Sea				0/1	0/1	0/9	from Far East

**Malta: 7 Subs, 6 MTBS, 3 Minesweepers**

defensive and rely upon "superior financial economic and naval resources ultimately to bring decisive pressure to bear upon Italy, whose strategic position, though relatively strong, would remain generally inherently weak".<sup>100</sup> British action against Italy, as planned previously, would be to annihilate Italian trade by closing the entrances to the Mediterranean -- Gibraltar, the Suez and the Dardanelles.

Turkey was important in a Mediterranean war for a reason much different than its ability to close the Straits to Italian commerce. Once again, a Turkish alignment, it was thought, could be used to buttress Britain's waning prestige. The COS noted that:

British prestige in the Middle East is at a low ebb and our failure to influence Italian policy either in Abyssinia or Spain has reacted unfavourably on Arab opinion: the Iraqi Government will almost certainly be faced with some internal unrest resulting from Italian propaganda and bribery, and we cannot rely on their continued support if our prestige were still further reduced by some initial Italian success.<sup>101</sup>

The COS were becoming seriously worried about German influence in the Arab world. In Palestine, they thought, Arab feeling, encouraged by Axis propaganda, might harden irrevocably against them. In the rest of the Middle East, a "serious degree of hostility" was expected. The COS judged that "if this hostility was exploited and turned actively against us, our military position would become untenable in peace as well as in war".<sup>102</sup> Britain,

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 59

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> PRO CAB 53/10 COS 266th Mtg 5 Jan 1939 (Composition: Backhouse, Adams, Pierce).

they thought, could no longer take it as granted that Egypt and Iraq would honour their treaties. Backhouse, in conclusion, recorded that "Arab hostility was a matter of grave concern to the Chiefs of Staff, and if it materialized would profoundly affect our position in the Middle East".<sup>103</sup> As the British position in the Middle East became steadily more feeble from internal disorder, the Turkish attachment came to have increasing value as an offset to Axis propaganda and inherent Arab disaffection.

A sign that Turkey's place in British Mediterranean strategy was growing in prominence came when the planners considered the likely effect of Russian intervention on the Allied side. In 1938, it appeared to the planners that the principle utility of Russian intervention would be to ensure active Turkish participation. Russian intervention, it was thought, would make it "highly probable that Turkey would intervene on our side in the hope of regaining the Dodecanese".<sup>104</sup> Turkish intervention "would have far-reaching effects and must greatly improve our situation in the Mediterranean, and to a great extent Turkey's attitude will determine the value of Russian intervention".<sup>105</sup> Halifax, at the Foreign Office, agreed with the analysis of the Service Chiefs that economic warfare against Italy would prove decisive.

The economic situation under the three militant dictatorships -- Germany, Japan and Italy -- is a question of tantalizing importance. It is important

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 74

because upon the economic strength or weakness of these three countries depends their ability in the long run to force upon their reluctant neighbours the policies of expansion upon which, in different measure, they have embarked.<sup>106</sup>

"The Laws of economics" he said -- a thought congenial to his Cabinet colleagues -- "must tell in the end".<sup>107</sup> Italy, in particular, he judged, "certainly has of late been living beyond her means, and, unless she can improve her international trade position and cut down unproductive expenditure, she may well find herself, sooner or later, in the international bankruptcy court".<sup>108</sup>

Turkey's place in Mediterranean strategy, in the year since the drafts, therefore, had substantially increased because a new prominence was being given to economic as opposed to conventional warfare. Previous plans, and the draft appreciation, had foreseen any number of offensive operations. In the final appreciation, these had been almost precluded. Victory would come through economic force, and this victory against Italy was expected to be all the more certain and decisive in the event that there was war against Germany as well. In general terms, Turkey's prominence in Imperial strategy waxed with the emphasis placed on unconventional strategies, and with the degree of threat -- more important against Germany and Italy, than simply against Italy, and more important

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<sup>106</sup> PRO CAB 24/279 CP 215(38) Economic Situation of Italy Halifax.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.



still against Germany and Japan and Italy. Thus, and this is important, Turkey was most important in those cases which Britain was least disposed to consider and of greatest utility in those cases which, by their nature, tended to marginalize the Mediterranean theatre. Turkey, in short, became steadily more important in Britain's Mediterranean Strategy, but the Mediterranean itself through 1937-1938 increasingly became a strategic backwater.

This, of course, was only a symptom of a greater disease. As early as 1936, the planners were aware that all was not well with Imperial Strategy. So various and many were the threats faced by the Empire that it was clear that no single plan would suffice for all.<sup>109</sup> Imperial Defence made no sense, the COS complained; moreover it could be made neither comprehensible nor comprehensive in its entirety.<sup>110</sup> The planners were, the COS said, living hand to mouth without leisure to consider the over-riding defence policy. Thus, imperial strategy came to be conceived through the medium of several models all equally demanding and equally likely to monopolize imperial resources. Imperial strategy became indecisive, at least in part, because the models used to comprehend it cancelled each other out. In the case above, we have considered an artificially pure case -- war in alliance with Turkey against Italy. It is worthy of note that each draft of this appreciation

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<sup>109</sup> PRO CAB 53/29 COS 514 Annual Review for 1936 (Covering Memorandum) Hankey.

<sup>110</sup> PRO CAB 53/29 COS 519 Imperial Defence Policy 28 Oct 1936.

was more circumspect than its predecessor because the threat considered had become less pure than previous. It was not doubted that there were sufficient resources to defeat Italy, but these resources could not be jeopardized since they were required against other enemies. Germany appeared as a complication in planning against Italy and Italy in planning against Germany, and Japan in planning against both. The general effect was to paralyse all.

Anglo-Turkish relations, at this time, part and parcel of imperial strategy, come to suffer from the same paralysis. Turkey was important to Britain in the Mediterranean: alliance with Turkey might be fatal. Turkey must be a friend, but not too obviously a friend -- and this in the same document, and not once but throughout. This dilemma resolved itself into the continued insistence that while Britain should "in no circumstances commit ourselves to any military guarantee . . . we should be justified in going to any steps short of a military guarantee".<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, by 1937, nobody, including the COS, placed much value in any kind of guarantee except of the military kind or in friendship short of alliance.

From 1938, it was never thought probable that Britain would be fighting Italy alone, but Italy in tandem with, or after war had broken out with one of the other enemies. In such a situation, it would be important, if possible, to keep Italy out. The Turkish alliance was one of the casualties of this policy. Valuable as Turkey might be against Italy, if such an alliance would antagonize

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<sup>111</sup> GR CHT 3/1 Memorandum by CNS on League of Nations Reform.

Italy, then the planners judged that Britain would "lose more than we should gain by the treaty".<sup>112</sup> Until the Spring of 1939, and then only briefly, the Chamberlain Government never quite gave up hope that Italy might be detached from the Axis and never flagged in its insistence that any formal arrangement with Turkey would make Italy less tractable.<sup>113</sup>

Even in planning to fight the economic war, Britain's sharpest sword, the planners were willing to hobble Britain with this consideration. In September 1938, Halifax asked the COS to consider the effect of Blockade on Italy. If at war with Germany, he asked, would it be necessary to blockade Italy too; and if so, would the cost of Italy's entering the war outweigh the benefits of effective blockade. The COS answered:

In the initial stages of war with Germany, it is of the highest importance that Italy should be kept out, so that we have time to develop our defensive position in the Middle East, having in mind future eventualities both in the Mediterranean and the Far East.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, it was not just that the Government was being given conflicting advice, but that even in its purest cases, Imperial strategy itself contained powerful contradictions. If the Anglo-Turkish friendship was put on a siding in the year after Eden's

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<sup>112</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 COS 873(JP) Alliance with Turkey and Greece 1 Apr 1939.

<sup>113</sup> BR CC 18/1/1054 Neville to Ida Chamberlain 28 May 1938. "The Anschluss and the Anglo-Italian Agreement together have given the Rome Berlin axis a nasty jar and in our future Central and Eastern European policy we may hope for a good deal of genial help from Italy".

<sup>114</sup> PRO CAB 53/9 COS 252nd Mtg 23 Sep 1938.

resignation, it was at least partly because the Cabinet was notified by its Service advisers of two things:

1. That Turkey would be an important ally against Italy; but imperial reality dictated that there must be no alliance against Italy.
2. That Turkey's utility as a possible ally increased with the desperation of the case considered; but the worse the case considered, the less willing were the planners to consider it as possible and the more marginal did action in the Mediterranean become.

There were several ways out of these dilemmas. Eden, for instance, had indicated one, and at least in part, was driven from his job because HMG found his solution unpalatable. Until the end, however, the Chamberlain Government continued to toss itself on their horns.

By way of final conclusion let us note this. By 1938, all planning against Italy, and thus most consideration of Turkey's place in imperial strategy, had become dependent upon two premises which formalized the dilemmas we have indicated above:

1. The "overriding consideration is that we should not alienate Italy and if possible we should detach her from the Axis".
2. "If we fail to detach Italy or consider this to be impossible it is a matter of considerable importance that Turkey should be on our side".<sup>115</sup>

Basic political reluctance to assume any obligation toward the Turks was underscored by a strategic analysis which placed the utility of an alignment with Turkey below that of Italian neutrality and judged the two to be irreconcilable -- and this before the German question came to dominate and further complicate the situation.

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<sup>115</sup> PRO CAB 55/3 JPC 245 Mtg 27 Mar 1939.

## Chapter V -- The Politics of Dependency

As has been seen, by the end of 1937, Germany had displaced Italy as first among Britain's enemies. This, of course, was bound to have an impact upon the position of Turkey in British strategy. But as British planners began to try to fit Turkey into the German matrix they were confronted by a problem which did not exist in consideration of the Italian case -- the fact that Turkey could contemplate German hostility with much less sang froid than with Italy; and this not only because Germany was infinitely more powerful, but because Germany had built up a position in the Turkish economy crucial to its operation. While London realized that German economic dominance would have to be off-set if a connection conceived in relation to the Italian threat was to be reforged for use against the German menace, it remained reluctant to take the steps necessary to combat German economic influence. The Turks, for their part, had come to view the position occupied by Germany in their economy with considerable alarm and looked to their British "ally" to assist them in breaking the Reichmark shackle. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that, for the Turks, one of the chief potential benefits of an Anglo-Turkish relationship would be that it might lessen an economic dependence on Germany grown politically dangerous.

### **The Elements of Turkish Dependence on Germany:**

After 1934, Turkey was not seeking a momentary accommodation with Britain, but fundamental realignment of its foreign and economic policy. By 1939, this much was obvious to British statesmen. "I cannot help thinking" wrote Halifax:

that Turkey sees more in the Anglo-Turkish relation than military assistance against totalitarian aggression. She sees it as a means of escape from economic and possibly political servitude to a country [Germany] whose good intentions she distrusts fundamentally, and she looks to Great Britain with whom her political ideals are identical, to assist her in her aims.<sup>1</sup>

What Halifax came to realize was that the converse was also true -- that there could be only feeble resistance to "totalitarian aggression" if the economic servitude had not previously been lifted. A political realignment could not occur, Turkey being a developing nation, unless accompanied by an alteration of economic reality and if the alignment were to have a military dimension, it would have to be attended by a shift both in weapons acquisition policy and long term defence arrangements. One of the strongest paradoxes of Anglo-Turkish rapprochement in the years before the war, was that while Britain welcomed the political realignment of Turkey, it conspired in the creation of a economic and military dependency on Germany. Turkish reliance on Germany, in turn, undermined Turkish efforts to move closer to the West.

It would be redundant here to describe the Turkish economic position prior to the war. Suffice to say, that Turkish development policy, the collapse of equitable international exchange attendant upon the Great Depression, and the policies of Dr. Schacht, had combined to produce an economic situation inimical to Turkish economic independence and which made Turkey an economic vassal of

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<sup>1</sup> PRO CAB 24/288 Financial and Economic Assistance to Turkey  
Halifax Jul 1939.

Germany.<sup>2</sup> Briefly stated, the elements of Turkish dependence were as follows:

1. Like most developing nations, Turkey had redirected its agriculture away from the satisfaction of needs and toward the production of materials internationally marketable. Dr. Schacht's policies made the Germans much the most important customers of Turkey. The first result of any move towards conflict with Germany, then, would be the collapse of a trade

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Schacht's "New Plan" followed the collapse of international economic exchange attendant upon the great depression. In general, it involved the creation, after 1933, of a web of bilateral barter arrangements with the nations of South-East Europe by which Germany would obtain crucial raw materials in exchange for manufactured articles. The arrangements worked better than Schacht could have hoped or the Balkan partners wanted and quickly led to something like German economic dominance of the region. In 1931, Germany received 10.7% of Turkish exports and supplied 21.3% of its imports. By 1936, Germany was receiving 51% of Turkish exports, and supplying 45.1% of its imports. By September 1935, Germany was receiving 83% of its import requirements by barter. See, PRO FO 433/5 C3249/772/18 German Economic Penetration in Central and South-East Europe 6 May 1938; H. Schacht, The Old Wizard, (Houghton, Mifflin: Boston) 1956. p. 304-340; Account Settled, (George Weidenfeld: London) 1948. p. 69-81; C. Weisband, Turkish Foreign Policy 1943-1945, (Princeton: Princeton) 1973. p. 95-101; M. Hitchens, Germany, Russia and the Balkans, (Eastern European Monographs: Boulder) 1983; Royal Institute of International Affairs, South-Eastern Europe. A Political and Economic Survey, (Oxford: London) 1939; "Germany and the Resources of South Eastern Europe", BIA, Vol XV, No. 8 (23 Apr 1938); William Hale, "Anglo-Turkish Trade Since 1923. Principles and Problems", Four Centuries of Turco-British Relations, William Hale and Ali Ihsan Bağis (edts.), (Eothen Press: London), 1984. p. 80-102; C. P. Kindleburger, The World in Depression 1929-1939, (Penguin: London) 1973; O. Koyman, & A. Sonmez, "The Social and Economic Background to Turkey's Noninvolvement in World War II", Studia Balcanica, Vol VII. 1973; H. Rauschnig, "La Politique de IIIe Reich dans l'Est et Sud-Est Europeen", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 4 (Aug 1939), p. 349-359; "Drang Nacht Sudosten", Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 526-533; A. Fisher, "Germany's Economic Policy in South-East Europe", Survey of International Affairs, 1937, p. 459-464; "German Trade Policy in SE Europe", Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol I, p. 43-76; R. Boyce "The World Depression, World War: Some Economic Origins of the Second World War", and, R. Overy, "Hitler's War Plans and the German Economy", Paths to War, R. Overy (edt.), (MacMillan: London) 1989.

which had become crucial to Turkey's political and economic well-being.<sup>3</sup> In this way, while German dependence upon certain Turkish exports placed a weapon in Allied hands, the German market, in itself, constituted a powerful counter weapon.<sup>4</sup>

2. A Turkish embargo might hurt the Germans, but the Turkish producers would face disaster. Since the Turkish Government marketed most Turkish products through a system of state monopolies the damage would be three-fold: the producers themselves would loose their most important market; the Government would loose a large part of its revenue; and the products which the Government purchased from the Germans with the profits from the monopolies would no longer be available.<sup>5</sup>
3. Germany's half of the trade consisted of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods essential for the middle-term functioning of the Turkish economy. The second result of trade

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<sup>3</sup> This was more the case since Turkey's industrialization was being financed on the backs of the Turkish labour force, the wages of which, declined steadily through the decade to the point where any economic disruption involved potential political disaster. Berberoğlu, p. 60-63.

<sup>4</sup> This was most especially the case since Turkey's trade had been ravaged by the Great depression. In 1929, Turkey had imported 256 million Lira of material with exports valued at 155 million Lira. By 1933, imports had declined in value to 74.6 million Lira and exports to 96.2 million. Recovery thereafter was fueled almost entirely by trade with Germany while trade with other Western nations continued to languish. UN Statistical Office, Year Book of International Trade Statistics, (UN: New York) 1950. p. 149. See also, Berberoğlu, p. 47-48; and, B. Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, (Oxford: London) 1961. p. 276-277.

<sup>5</sup> The most extreme case of such dislocation would be in Turkey's nascent metallurgical industry. Chrome mining, for instance, was at once Turkey's most strategically important, and most quickly burgeoning industry. It was also a profitable Government monopoly, one of the industries most reliant on the German market, and one of those least likely to be able to redirect its production toward politically more congenial markets. BIA, Vol XV, No. 8 (23 Apr 1938), p. 7. It was also the industry to which Turkey looked to provide the engine of its development programs. See, for example, C. Bayar, "Ekonomi Bankası Celâl Bayar'ın, İlk Beş Yıllık Sanayi Programı Hakkında Gazetecilere demeci", Celâl Bayar'ın T.B.M. Meclisinde Yaptığı Kanun Tekliflerinin Esbabı Mucibeleri, Özel Şahingiray (edt), (Doğuş: Ankara), p. 1955. p. 92-94.



embargo would be the virtual collapse of the manufacturing sector of the Turkish economy as technical help was withdrawn, spare parts ran out, and the railways ceased to function. In this sense, factories built by the Germans for the Turks in their drive towards economic autonomy would be only so many hostages, and would not increase -- as had been intended -- but decrease Turkey's political flexibility.

4. Finally, since the Turkish Army obtained many of its armaments and all of the machinery for its arms factories from Germany, in the event of breach of relations, it would soon be unable either to service the arms it had or to feed those still functional. Thus, Turkey's ability to defend itself would decline absolutely. In this sense, every German weapon placed in Turkish hands made it less likely that Turkey would ever be able to turn against Germany.

This was not a condition peculiar to Turkey, but one it shared with all Balkan nations.<sup>6</sup> Like the others, by 1937, Turkey was looking for ways to escape from this dangerous dependency upon a nation whose foreign policy goals were becoming increasingly inimical to Turkey's own. The search gained urgency as the desire to oppose German political expansion in the Balkans grew -- hardly an option while Turkey was dependent upon Germany for its economic existence.<sup>7</sup> Unless this could be changed, the economic limitation

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<sup>6</sup> See, A. Polonsky, The Little Dictators. The History of Eastern Europe Since 1918, (Kegan Paul: Boston) 1975; and, G. Ranki, Economy and Foreign Policy. The Struggle of the Great Powers for Hegemony in the Danube Valley 1919-1939, (Eastern European Monographs: Boulder) 1983.

<sup>7</sup> "There is still another truth which requires that, in order that a country may have an independent national policy, the greater part of its foreign trade must not be directed towards a single country. To however small an extent foreign trade becomes the monopoly of a single country, it is very difficult to pursue an independent national policy, even if this country should be an ally. When national policy, the aim of which is independence, and national trade, the object of which is profit, can no longer go side by side, national trade must make a sacrifice". Saraçoğlu, 14 December 1939, quoted from C. Weisband, Turkish Foreign Policy 1943-1945, p. 100.

would continue to be political limitation as well.<sup>8</sup>

**The Problem of Exchange:**

It was through better economic relations with Britain, France and the United States that the Turks sought political freedom.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately for the Turks, Western economic policy in the years prior to the war did not combat the growth of German influence, but underwrote it. The crux of the problem was exchange. The fact was that the products that Turkey had for sale were widely available, and worse, in the British case, were available from countries benefiting from Imperial preference. Tobacco, for instance, a high value product which the Turks had in large quantity, had no British market after the First World War.<sup>10</sup> Figs, raisins, and nuts -- other major Turkish cash crops -- either had little UK market, or were available from Australia which regarded its British market with a jealous eye. Turkey simply could not sell in Britain products of sufficient value to obtain the goods it would need if German trade were to be reduced.

By May 1936, the Turkish account under the Trade and Payments

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<sup>8</sup> King Boris described this brutal economic reality and its connection to political choice to Bulgarian representatives abroad in April 1939: "Bulgaria conducts an independent foreign policy without obligations to anyone and will continue to do so, so far as possible. . . Her economic ties to Germany make it impossible for her to put herself on the side of the Democracies and against the totalitarian states. The search for credit in the West remains fruitless". D.C Watt, How War Came, (Heinemann: London) 1989, p. 277.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Lorraine to Eden 22 Feb 1937.

<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Lorraine to Oliphant 13 Mar 1936.

Agreement of 1935 ("the Clearing") was short 600,000 pounds.<sup>11</sup> Turkey desired to increase its purchases of British goods -- particularly of military material -- but was stymied by British reluctance to counterbalance these purchases by taking more Turkish exports. "Turkey's present difficulty" wrote Loraine, "is to obtain sterling for paying for what she wishes to obtain from the United Kingdom. The only way at the present time of obtaining more sterling is to sell more to the United Kingdom than she does at present".<sup>12</sup> This much was obvious. What was not so clear was how a reluctant British market could be induced to absorb more Turkish goods.

In the French case, it was not that Turkey had trouble selling in France, but that French quotas artificially restricted trade. By 1936, the Turks were complaining that trade with France was rapidly

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<sup>11</sup> PRO FO 1011/73 Loraine to King Edward VIII 5 May 1936.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. The "Clearing" was an agreement whereby corresponding banks in the UK and Turkey would paid exporters in their respective countries for goods shipped while crediting to the opposite bank money for goods received. Because there was less demand in Britain for Turkish, than in Turkey for British goods, the British half of the clearing was notoriously slow in payment.

collapsing to the benefit of Germany which took up the slack.<sup>13</sup>

The natural outcome of Western reluctance to buy Turkish produce was to drive down the value of the Turkish lira, which in turn, made Western manufactured articles much more costly than would normally have been the case.<sup>14</sup> And the natural result of this, of course, was to reinforce German trade which was orchestrated by Berlin with an eye to political as much as financial advantage.

But this was only part of a long and sorry story. Turkey's trade with Britain and France was hobbled also by Western, particularly French, insistence that Turkey service its portion of the Ottoman debt. By the Treaty of Lausanne, debt payment recommenced in 1931 and soon came to consume 13-18% of the Turkish

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<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 13 Mar 1936. Account of a conversation with Sükri Saraçoğlu, Fethi Okyar, and Kaik Kurtoğlu.

French Trade With Turkey 1926 to 1936 (in millions of lira)

Year	Import from France	Export to France	Difference	% of Total
1926	32.097	22.064	- 9.452	12.9%
1927	29.173	16.911	-14.242	12.2%
1928	29.169	18.452	-10.717	11.8%
1929	26.690	19.618	- 7.072	11.5%
1930	15.499	18.437	+ 2.958	11.3%
1931	12.788	12.156	- .632	9.8%
1932	7.190	7.820	+ .630	8.0%
1933	4.903	6.182	+ 1.279	6.9%
1934	6.440	2.809	- 3.631	5.2%
1935	4.184	3.640	- 1.144	3.9%
1936	2.335	3.828	+ 1.493	2.9%

Source: G. Tongas, Ataturk, (Librairie Orientiste: Paris) 1937, p. 89.

<sup>14</sup> The "price scissors" -- falling prices for commodities and rising cost of manufactured goods -- caught the economies of all the nations of South-Eastern Europe in the decade prior to the war. Polonsky, p. 179-181.

budget.<sup>15</sup> What did this mean? Turkey traded with the West to obtain Western currencies, but then used these to meet debt coupons rather than to buy Western manufactures. The nonproductive trade in currencies, of course, further depressed the price obtainable for Turkish produce by deflating the Lira and priced Western manufactures still higher by inflating Western currencies.

By February 1937, Ottoman debt service required 360,000 Lira monthly, had fallen two months behind, and was steadily falling further into arrears.<sup>16</sup> The problem was, that under the 1933 agreement the Debt Council had the right to take the payment in any Western Currency it cared to name.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately for the Turks, the value of Western currencies had been pegged to the French monetary law of 25 June 1928. Until 1937, payment had been made in French Francs. But in February, the French went off the gold standard, and the Debt Council insisted that payment henceforward be made in US Dollars -- a gold currency.<sup>18</sup> This demand enormously inflated the value of the Turkish debt service because it meant that the Turks would have been required to buy a gold currency and exchange it into Francs as if they too had remained pegged to gold. In effect, the Turks would have been compelled to buy Blum francs as if they were Gold francs, while the French would receive them for the trash they were. Dr. Aras was terrifically angry at what he

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<sup>15</sup> Berberoglu, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> PRO FO 371/29862 E794 Wyatt to Reid 5 Feb 1937.

<sup>17</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E794/425/44 Note to file 4 Feb 1937.

<sup>18</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E957 Wyatt to Baggallay 12 Feb 1937.

considered French sharp practice. "Germany and France", he told Loraine, "never cease their efforts to cheat and outwit the Turks about these obligations".<sup>19</sup> Ali Riza Reyman told the Ottoman Debt Commission that the Turks would pay and could pay -- but in Turkish Lira, not in American Dollars.<sup>20</sup>

While London could see the Turk's difficulty, they considered nonetheless that if the British accepted the proposal to pay in Lira, or a later promise to pay in kind, they would "merely be exchanging a right to be paid in cash for a promise of payment in goods". Further, the Treasury considered that it would be "perfidious" of Britain, in regards to France, "to connive at the Turk's ignoring their *pari passu* obligations".<sup>21</sup> London, like Paris, refused to consider this proposal. The problem was, as Dr. Aras sought to explain in April, not that the Turks did not wish to make debt payments, but that, under existing circumstances, they could not make them -- at least in the form desired.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, Turkish rearmament further burdened an exchange situation already carrying a heavy load. Practice what austerities it might, and tax as high as it would, the fact remained that Turkey had to go outside for weapons, and could only pay for them with Lira or by selling primary products in a glutted foreign

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<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E1314 Loraine to FO 5 Mar 1937.

<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 Ali Riza Reyman to Ottoman Public Debt 5 Feb 1937.

<sup>21</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E1701 Waley (Treasury) to Baggallay 24 Mar 1937.

<sup>22</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E2284 Loraine to Oliphant 24 Apr 1937.

market. The more Turkey sold, the lower the price obtainable for its produce would drop, and lower still sink the Turkish Lira.<sup>23</sup> By 1937, it was obvious that Turkish rearmament would not be possible through the customary financial channels. Whatever expedient was adopted, in the considered judgment of the Director-General of the Ottoman Bank, Turkey's exchange position would not permit it to raise free currency for direct purchase, sell enough to finance rearmament through the clearing, or service large enough loans by exports, to pay for rearmament.<sup>24</sup> Like a man trapped in a morass, the more strenuous were Turkish efforts, the deeper Turkey sank. The reward of Turkish virtue, given the economic and financial conditions of the day, was not affluence but insolvency; the fruit of austerity, economic weakness rather than military strength.

Finally, in the decade before the war, Turkey was following a

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<sup>23</sup> For example, a Turkey decision in June 1936 to spend 67 million lira over nine years for artillery acquisition, met with head shaking in London and the observation that this decision was apt to have no other effect than to increase Turkish exchange liabilities considerably. PRO FO 424/280 E3823/3823/44 Morgan to Eden 17 Jun 1936.

<sup>24</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Memorandum on the Turkish Financial Situation Loraine to Oliphant 13 May 1937. Garelli judged that through the various Clearing agreements, Turkey could raise 95,000,000 Lira p.a, of which 28,500,000 Lira p.a would be available to the Government. With another 3-4,000,000 Lira from non-clearing countries, and making allowance for freights, insurance etc. Turkey would have 30,000,000 Lira in foreign currency for expenditure. Unfortunately for the Turks, this amount would not even provide for full service of existing debts. Garelli concluded that "the solvency or otherwise of the Turkish Government after . . . [1939-1940] will depend on the extent on which military expenditure is reduced". Of course, with the war approaching, this was not possible.

policy of repatriating Foreign owned companies, particularly railroads,<sup>25</sup> mining concerns and public utilities. Normally, these concerns, once obtained, were consolidated into state monopolies administered by one or another of the Government directed banks; in the case of industry and mining, the Eti bank -- "nothing more or less than a monopoly" in the judgement of an expropriated mine owner.<sup>26</sup> Repatriation too resulted in an outflow of capital with no corresponding inflow of necessary imports, and therefore, tended to inflate foreign currencies. It could have been as little comfort to shareholders as to the Turkish Government that repurchase was often effected by exchanging shares for Government bonds or by expropriation against a Government royalty.<sup>27</sup> In either case, Turkey was placed in the unenviable position of exchanging deflated Lira for inflated Western currencies and sending these out of the country, not to purchase products, but as royalties and interest payments. This is not the whole tale. Enterprises of this nature were disproportionately owned by British and French companies, and therefore, the deflation of the Lira in relation to the Franc and

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<sup>25</sup> A considerable amount of money was spent acquiring railroads. To acquire and finish the Divrik-Erzincan railroad alone, over twelve years, cost the Turks, 300 million lira in new building, and 200 million lira to acquire private companies. PRO FO 424/282 E7721/81/44 Loraine to Halifax 14 Dec 1938.

<sup>26</sup> PRO FO 371/19041 E5079 Mines and Minerals in Turkey Russel 9 Aug 1935. See also, PRO FO 371/20967 E2148/1508/44 Kerr (Baghdad) to FO 7 Apr; and E2326 Loraine to FO 23 Apr 1937, for the story of Turkish oil rights in Iraq -- made over to a French consortium in exchange for mineral concessions in Anatolia. Also, E3895/1564/44 Welsch to Bowker for the case of the Constantinople Telephone Company.

<sup>27</sup> PRO FO 371/19041 E5097 op. cit.



the Pound from this cause was disproportionate in relation to other Western currencies including the Mark. Past economic success, in the harsh prewar world, steadily became both an economic and political handicap.

By 1939, the Lira was trading at 9.8 to the Pound Sterling. The floating rate was more on the order of 5:1.<sup>28</sup> In other words, the Lira, in the process of exchange, was devalued by half in order to make Turkish produce attractive to British buyers. Clearly, the system as established worked to the disadvantage of producers and consumers in both countries. The largest loser was the Turkish Government -- caught in the scissors of being both the largest exporter of undervalued Turkish goods through its system of government monopolies, and the largest importer of overvalued manufactured good. The only people benefiting from this situation were Western bondholders . . . and the Germans.

The bondholders' spokesmen -- the Board of Trade, the Banks, the Treasury, the Exchequer -- constantly opposed any initiative likely to damage bondholder interest; which is to say, any measure not of strictest financial orthodoxy; which is further to say, any measure likely to reduce the disastrous imbalance. They feared, among other things, that any relief granted Turkey in this matter would lead to similar demands from other countries.<sup>29</sup> Any political benefits arising from a more accommodating attitude, they thought, would be over-balanced by financial loss.

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<sup>28</sup> CC GLLD 20/5 Belgrade Papers Lloyd Memorandum 15 Dec 1939.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 1011/34 Oliphant to Loraine 28 Jun 1934.

Because of this impossible financial position, after 1936, the Turks were increasingly being driven to transactions of doubtful financial wisdom in order to meet their foreign exchange obligations. By February 1936, the Turkish Clearing with France was blocked to such an extent that it was becoming useless. It was cleared by the simple expedient of a German delivery of coal to France, the value of which was credited to the Turkish Clearing in Paris, and the German Clearing in Ankara. In January 1937, once again, this expedient was resorted to in order to service the 1934 loan for the repatriation of the Smyrna-Cassaba railroad.<sup>30</sup> It would be hard to imagine a more economically and politically damaging transaction. In effect, France was financing German imports from Turkey.

By April 1937, the Turks were in default on the 1909 City of Constantinople Loan.<sup>31</sup> The Clearing account was useless for payment. It was fifteen months in arrears.<sup>32</sup> The Ottoman Debt Commission threatened recourse to arbitration. If it did this, the Turks warned, payment on these bonds would stop altogether.<sup>33</sup> The Turks were, in fact, threatened by the comprehensive financial

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<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E634 Pinnant (Treasury) to Waley 22 Jul 1937.

<sup>31</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 Hopkins (Treasury) to FO 21 Apr 1937.

<sup>32</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 Ferrar to Baggallay 5 May 1937.

<sup>33</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E2267 Wyatt to Baggallay 27 Apr 1937.

collapse which had menaced since May 1936.<sup>34</sup> It was in these conditions that İnönü went to Britain in May, bringing with him two officials of the İİ bank, to see if he could not obtain some financial relief in the form of a loan.<sup>35</sup> Turkey was, in effect, bankrupt. After January 1938, Foreign currency in Turkey was controlled by draconian regulation as Turkey sought to obtain the exchange needed to purchase the means of defence and economic survival in an increasingly inimical economic environment.<sup>36</sup>

Obviously if Britain wanted to increase its political influence in Ankara, and if Ankara were to wean itself from economic and armaments dependence on Germany, some drastically different economic accommodation would have to be made. "It was clear", wrote Loraine in the Annual Report for 1936, "that unless Turkish exportations could be stimulated, and more Sterling exchange made available to the Turkish Government . . . Anglo-Turkish trade was doomed to stagnation, if not to actual strangulation".<sup>37</sup> Collapse of trade is hardly a sound basis for political realignment. The fact was, that Turkey badly needed loans and a more equitable exchange arrangement if it was to escape economic reliance on Germany and achieve the political independence

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<sup>34</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 13 Mar 1936. Loraine was reporting the opinion of M. Garrelli the Director General of the Ottoman Bank.

<sup>35</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E1917/425/44 Farrer to Baggallay 7 Apr; E2862 Vansittart Minute 26 May 1937.

<sup>36</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E248 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Department of Overseas Trade 31 Dec 1939.

<sup>37</sup> PRO FO 371/20866 E823/823/44 op. cit., para 56.

necessary to play an effective part in an alliance with Britain and France. The Turks themselves came to realize this in the context of their policy of directing weapons purchases away from Germany and towards the democracies -- a policy which remained largely without fruit until 1939 due to financial constraints. A second fact was that London was extremely unwilling to provide loans or credits of any kind for any purpose, and this unwillingness was reinforced by the fact that any credit to Turkey would be a political rather than a commercial gesture -- a political gesture the necessity of which HMG was extremely reluctant to admit; the desirability, even, of which, HMG was unwilling to concede unless the gesture could be limited to the Turkish case only and did not slide into being taken as normative for Britain's economic dealings with all the other unfortunate nations similarly placed in relation to Germany then clamouring for deliverance.

The reluctance of HMG notwithstanding, to many outside observers it appeared that some modification in the economic status quo was imperative if anything were to be salvaged of the British economic -- let alone the British political -- position in the Balkans. For example, it was the opinion of Mr. Gillespie, the American Commercial Secretary at the Ankara Embassy, that British commercial policy was absolutely disastrous in both its political and economic results. The end result, he concluded, was to finance German imports from Turkey and atrophy British trade in preference

for direct capital transfer.<sup>38</sup> The Treasury continued to assert, however, that those cures generally suggested, if placed in a larger perspective, would be worse than the disease.

**The Requirement for Credit:**

Britain's economic orthodoxy contrasted very poorly with the efforts of other countries. In January 1935, for example, the Turks obtained an eight million dollar loan for industrial goods from their Soviet friends.<sup>39</sup> On 2 August, İnönü, Aras and Bayer departed for the Soviet Union on a goodwill tour.<sup>40</sup> In December, all existing treaty relations were extended for ten years.<sup>41</sup>

In Germany, Dr. Schacht's unorthodox economic arrangements had resulted in an abnormal demand for Turkish goods and in prices far above world prices; in some cases, as much as twice the world price.<sup>42</sup> The end result was that the trade of other countries was crowded out, and German domination of Turkish markets cemented almost beyond correction. For British trade, Lorraine thought "the outlook for the future is not encouraging".<sup>43</sup> In truth, the Turks had little need of credits from Germany because they could obtain

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<sup>38</sup> PRO FO 371/20868 Considerations Affecting the Conclusion of a Trade Agreement Between Turkey and the United States Lorraine to Oliphant 18 Nov 1937.

<sup>39</sup> PRO FO 371/19036 E521/521/44 Lorraine to FO Jan; and, 114/3/35 Lorraine to FO 17 Jan 1935.

<sup>40</sup> PRO FO 371/19036 E4705/521/44 Chilston (Moscow) to FO 2 Aug 1935.

<sup>41</sup> PRO FO 371/19036 E6720/521/44 Lorraine to FO 14 Dec 1935.

<sup>42</sup> PRO FO 371/19037 E854/854/44 Annual Report For Turkey 1934.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

through normal exchange more Marks than they could spend. Credit from Germany was pushed by Berlin for political reasons rather than requested by the Turks. Not to be out-done by the Russians, in 1935, the Germans came forward with a credit package of their own. In November, Ludwig Bamberger, from Krupp, arrived in Ankara. Rumour was that he brought with him a proposal from a Krupp-led German consortium for a 500,000,000 RM armaments grant over twenty years in exchange for an alliance. Whether this was the case or not, he did bring with him a railway credit for 20,000,000 Lira, and 9,000,000 Lira with which to open a development account in the Sumer bank.

Perhaps the only thing preventing complete German domination, was that the Germans were having commercial problems of their own. Turco-German trade was threatened not by deficiency of Lira, but excess of Marks. The Germans simply were not exporting enough material to balance all the purchases they were making in Turkey. By 1937, German trade was faltering on this point. The German Clearing was 38,000,000 Lira in arrears. The Turks had instituted a trade embargo and denounced their Clearing agreement with Germany.<sup>44</sup> By September 1937, a new agreement had been negotiated which would limit German trade to two-thirds of its previous level (40:60,000,000 lira p.a).<sup>45</sup> Soon after this, Turkish banks, by a

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<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 371/20866 E2363 Loraine to Eden 29 Apr 1937.

<sup>45</sup> PRO FO 371/20866 E3829 Istanbul to FO 30 Jun; E5644/820/44 Morgan to FO 25 Sep; and, E5700/820/44 Morgan to FO 25 Nov 1937.

strange reversal, were financing essential trade with Germany.<sup>46</sup> Turkey was accepting German goods at a 12 1/2% premium just to keep the Clearing moving.<sup>47</sup> It was fortunate for the Turks that their trade with Germany was being limited by natural constraints because the Germans were beginning to become alive to the political possibilities presented by their dominant position in the economies of the Balkan nations. By 1937, Dr. Hans Funk, one of Hitler's economic Lieutenants, was advocating the formalization of Schacht's bilateral barter arrangements into a self-sufficient economic unit based on Germany and including the Balkans.<sup>48</sup>

By 1937, even the Dutch, for commercial reasons alone, were financing their exports with an Industrial Credit of 3,500,000 Pounds.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, it was not until June 1937 that France even had a Clearing agreement with the Turks,<sup>50</sup> and, as we have seen, the 1935 Clearing with Britain was breaking down under the strain of debt service, armaments purchases, and just plain British reluctance to buy Turkish products. By March 1937, Lorraine was pleading that HMG grant some kind of industrial/commercial credit

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<sup>46</sup> PRO FO 371/20866 E6665 Lorraine to Eden. An Ottoman-İş-Agricultural Bank consortium was financing exports from Germany up to 80% of their value to a global ceiling of 14,000,000 lira.

<sup>47</sup> PRO FO 371/20866 E7262/820/44 Lorraine to FO Dec 1937.

<sup>48</sup> Hitchens, p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E1650/315/44 Lorraine to FO. Note Baggallay 6 Apr 1937.

<sup>50</sup> Tongas, p. 89.

to revive Turkish trade.<sup>51</sup> The continued decline in commercial transaction between the two countries, he thought, was threatening to downgrade relations as a whole.<sup>52</sup> While Britain and France thought with their pocket-book, other nations were placing their pocket-books at the service of their thinking.

**The Question of Armaments -- Ozdes and İnönü in London:**

Turkey's financial position in 1937 was not an enviable one. The international environment dictated that Turkey purchase armaments; but economics decreed that there could be no armaments without insolvency -- indeed, that there might be insolvency without armaments. In order to stave off the one while obtaining the other, by 1937, Turkey was looking to its "ally" Great Britain to finance Turkish weapons purchases. The Turks, desperate to rearm their poorly equipped forces, were anxious not only to acquire weapons but also hoped that these might be obtained from a politically acceptable country. Arms purchases in Germany were possible, but carried a heavy political cost and tended to underscore Germany's growing economic domination. Turkey had always realized that its weapons acquisition program must parallel the general direction of its Foreign Policy; indeed, the history of the Ottoman Empire in its later stages could not but have given salutary evidence that weapons -- especially high technology weapons -- must be acquired from the nation whose Foreign Policy

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<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E1250/315/44 Loraine to FO 12 Mar; E5187/53/44 Loraine to FO Aug 1937

<sup>52</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E5187/53/44 op. cit.



line was least inimical to Turkey's own. If Turkey wished to follow an independent foreign policy, then it could not be dependent on Germany for its military necessities. Arms from Czechoslovakia, where Turkey had hitherto placed the bulk of its orders, were an option, but rapidly ceasing to be so. Arms from Russia, one suspects, given Russian displeasure following Montreaux, may have been either unavailable, or available, once again, with a heavy political price-tag. By 1937, therefore, Turkey's "ally" Britain seemed to be the best and most acceptable source of credit and arms. Britain, however, nobody's ally, was extremely reluctant to provide assistance, particularly as its own rearmament programs were just getting under way.

The problem for the Turks was that they simply could not finance arms purchases in the United Kingdom without assistance. They had been given a salutary demonstration of this fact soon after the commencement of their rapprochement with Britain when they attempted to rearm the Turkish Air Force with British aircraft. In the Spring of 1933, inquiries were made regarding the possibility of purchasing 100 aircraft in the United Kingdom.<sup>53</sup> Uncertain of Turkey's political position, the Air Ministry refused this request. "If", they thought:

the Turkish Air Force exceeds 100, the strength of our establishments in the Middle East may have to be increased which, with a total of 500 aircraft, could only be done at the expense of security in other parts of the Empire. It is therefore in our interest that the Turkish

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<sup>53</sup> PRO AIR 9/42 Turkish Claim for an Increased Allotment of Aircraft Note by D Plans May 1933.

figures should be kept at as low a level as possible.<sup>54</sup>

After 1934, however, there could be little question but that an increase in Turkish Air strength would benefit rather than endanger imperial security; but the bundle of deficiencies and inequalities which made up the Anglo-Turkish commercial relationship undermined any Turkish attempt to acquire arms in significant quantities from Britain until the extension of the first armaments credit in December 1938.

In December 1934, Turkey announced that it was accepting tenders for the prospective purchase of seventy Fighters, twenty-four Scouts, twelve Bombers and twenty-four Seaplanes. Hawker tendered to provide Furies. While considered the best bid, and the best aircraft, the contract was lost because no acceptable financial arrangement was possible.<sup>55</sup> Loraine wrote:

The Turks are anxious enough to buy British aircraft, and we for our part are very anxious that they should have them. The main difficulty has been and remains the financial one. The Turks expect us to help them to find the necessary foreign exchange and this is no easy matter. We cannot ask the Export Credit Guarantee Department to help in the case of an armaments order and at present are trying to work out some means of financing the deal under the Trade and Payments Agreement on terms which will be acceptable to the firms but will not overstrain the agreement.<sup>56</sup>

Short of a loan, Turkey would never be able to finance the purchase of any significant number of aircraft in Great British based on

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Folio IX.

<sup>55</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E188/18/94 White-Smith (Hawker) interview with Bagge (Dept of Overseas Trade) 2 Jan; and, 33482/8/3013 Ihsan Sabit Bey to White-Smith 8 Jan 1935.

<sup>56</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Loraine to Oliphant 19 Feb 1936.

actual or potential Turkish exports to Britain. The more Turkey tried to effect the purchase, the lower the price its produce would bring. The harder it tried to obtain Sterling, the more the value of the Lira would fall. The greater the volume Turkey exported, the smaller the return per unit it would obtain. As for a loan, "for the moment" wrote Oliphant:

we are only too happy not to be involved in the business (though we are naturally interested) and our general line is to take no action unless and until we must. That said, we agree with your view that a British loan cannot be a business proposition. A Government loan is out of the question.<sup>57</sup>

In 1935, the Turks tried again to purchase British aircraft. On 1 June, İnönü applauded the work of the Aviation League in the Grand National Assembly (GNA). Turkey, he said, needed aircraft and wished to buy 500 in the near future. In order to do this, he hoped that the League would be able to raise 30,000,000 Lira a year by public subscription.<sup>58</sup> A nationwide fund-raising drive followed. All Government employees "expressed the desire" to devote 2% of their salaries to this object. The employees of the principle banks demonstrated the same public-spirit.<sup>59</sup> A considerable amount of money -- in Turkish pounds -- was collected.

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<sup>57</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Oliphant to Lorraine 9 Jan 1936.

<sup>58</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E3583 Lorraine to Simon 1 Jun 1935.

<sup>59</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E4261 Morgan to FO 2 Jul 1935. In fact, the campaign was anything but voluntary. A British-owned enterprise in Izmir received a circulaire informing it that "our League, which derives strength from the interest displayed by the public in the defence of the nation and the approval of our great leaders, has decided to enrol among its members those employed in your establishment . . .". E4928 Greig to Lorraine 7 Aug 1935.

In December, the Turks announced that Lieutenant-Colonel Celal and five experts would travel to Yugoslavia to see the Hawker Furies recently bought by the Yugoslavs.<sup>60</sup> Initially, it was the Turkish intention to construct the aircraft under license in Turkey if they liked it. Later this idea was abandoned.<sup>61</sup> It looked very much as if a large number of aircraft would be built for the Turks in Britain if the Turkish delegation was sufficiently impressed by the trials in Yugoslavia.

London was not blind to the political implications of a large sale of aircraft to Turkey. The Air Ministry gloated that by providing the necessary pilot training, it would be getting a "foot in the door" at the genesis of the Turkish Air Force.<sup>62</sup> Vansittart minuted that he attached "great importance to this -- on high political grounds".<sup>63</sup>

On 10 December, the Turkish delegation saw the Furies flown in Yugoslavia and were impressed. The jubilant Hawker Director, Mr. H. Jones, wrote to the FO that the Turkish delegation would arrive in London on 12 December to discuss contracts.<sup>64</sup> In January, the Turks announced that they would purchase fifty Furies. The problem

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<sup>60</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E7070/188/44 Loraine to FO 5 Dec 1935.

<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E6931/188/44 Courtney (Air Min) to Rendel 26 Nov; and, E7070/188/44 op. cit., Scott-Fox Minute 5 Dec 1935.

<sup>62</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E6931/188/44 op. cit.; E7071/188/44 Courtney to FO 5 Dec; and, E7119/188/44 Loraine to FO 7 Dec 1935.

<sup>63</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E7070/188/44 op. cit., Vansittart Minute.

<sup>64</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E7176/188/44 Campbell to FO 10 Dec; E7249/188/44 Campbell to FO 12 Dec; and, H.J. Jones to Rendel 12 Dec 1935.

was payment. Hawker was unwilling to go through the Clearing because of the time delay involved. Aras advised London that, outside the Clearing, payment in Sterling was almost impossible. He suggested payment in Lira or a barter agreement. Hawker refused to consider anything but payment in cash in Sterling.<sup>65</sup> Aras began to hint that Italy was making strenuous efforts to obtain the contract. London continued to insist that the purchase would have to be a straight commercial transaction with Hawker. HMG, Eden said, would not get involved, provided that is, that the contract did not interfere with RAF building programs -- in which case it would interfere, though hardly in a manner the Turks would approve.<sup>66</sup> Eventually the Turks got their planes. Twelve of them. Each paid for in cash on the barrel as delivered.<sup>67</sup>

**İnönü and Ozdes in London in 1937:**

It was with armaments credits and economic relief in mind that İsmet İnönü came to London in May 1937 to attend the coronation of King George VI.<sup>68</sup> Immediate upon his arrival, he visited Vansittart and Baggallay at the Foreign Office and spoke of the Turkish desire to obtain British credit.<sup>69</sup> On 16 May, İnönü visited Vansittart at Denham and brought up the question of a loan

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E543/62/44 Eden to Loraine 30 Jan 1936.

<sup>67</sup> PRO FO 371/20866 E823/823/44 Annual Report for 1936.

<sup>68</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E2862 Vansittart Minute 26 May 1937.

<sup>69</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E2862 op. cit., Baggallay Minute 27 May 1937.

again. He was, wrote Vansittart, "very insistent and also very vague". İnönü was also, however, most emphatic that the proposed loan not be considered in any way a payment for good political behaviour in the future.<sup>70</sup>

Later, İnönü met with Baldwin, Chamberlain and Eden and again broached the subject of a possible loan.<sup>71</sup> İnönü, it seems, had raised the subject first with the FO officials to test their reaction and to ensure that he would not be "snubbed" if he approached the Cabinet Ministers.<sup>72</sup> When asked by London if İnönü's approach were genuine, Loraine responded that he felt "that İsmet's sincerity in this matter can be relied upon".<sup>73</sup> İnönü could not have been in greater earnest. In time, İnönü's initiative led to the 1938 Armaments and Industrial Credit Agreement.<sup>74</sup>

It was probable, such was Turkey's economic state, that no loan could have been floated in the City of London without a government guarantee.<sup>75</sup> The Turks themselves simply had no security unmortgaged; yet without credit, Turkey was unlikely to

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 Gibb to Loraine 2 Jun 1937.

<sup>72</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 Gibb to Loraine 2 Jun 1937. Alexander Gibb was told this by an official of the İş bank who had accompanied İnönü to London.

<sup>73</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E2464/425/44 Loraine to FO 28 May 1937.

<sup>74</sup> The Turks had been talking about a loan of 5 million pounds in April, but had made no formal approaches, and were not encouraged to do so by the Foreign Office. PRO FO 371/20862 E1917/425/44 7 Apr 1937.

<sup>75</sup> PRO FO 371/3283/435/44 Hopkins (Treasury) to FO 16 Jun 1937.

improve its economic position which alone would allow it to obtain further securities. As Ashton-Gwatkin, the economic advisor at the Foreign Office, summarized: "Turkey must have improvements. No security because no improvements. Would have metals to export if improvements. No improvements without loan -- no loan without security".<sup>76</sup> Ashton-Gwatkin was, however, at least in part, barking up the wrong developmental tree. İnönü could have summarized more concisely had he been so inclined: no guarantee, no credit; no credit, no weapons; no weapons, no security. By 1937, far more than they were interested in the success of the second five year plan, or with the amortization of the national debt, the Turks were concerned with the business of obtaining the means of national defence.

In December 1937, anticipating the satisfactory conclusion of credit arrangements, Captain Rifat Ozdes, the Turkish CNS, arrived in London to see what naval material might be available. Ozdes brought with him instructions from the General Staff as to the Turkish requirement, which, Lorraine hoped, HMG would see fit to consider sympathetically.<sup>77</sup> Ozdes was looking to buy ten Submarines, four Destroyers, four Escort Vessels, twelve Blenheims, and nine large guns for Dardanelles defence.<sup>78</sup> The Turk hoped to pay for the material through the Clearing with a 5% premium on

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<sup>76</sup> PRO FO 371/20862 E2284 Lorraine to Oliphant 24 Apr 1937. Ashton-Gwatkin Minute.

<sup>77</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 Lorraine to FO 18 Dec 1939.

<sup>78</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568 Lorraine to FO 18 Dec 1939.

orders held more than eighteen months for payment.<sup>79</sup> Elmhirst warned Loraine that Ozdes had told him that the Krupp representative in Ankara had offered to take the full order at a 20% reduction on the best British price, but the Marshal had insisted that the arms must be obtained from the UK.<sup>80</sup> Loraine himself cautioned London that:

Turkey is one of the few countries upon whose cooperation His Majesty's Government may be able to count with reasonable certainty in the event of a general deterioration in the international situation and it is important that His Majesty's Government should take such steps as are within their power to facilitate the placing of armaments orders in this country by the Turkish Government, both in the matter of granting permission to shipbuilders and other firms to undertake such orders and in the matter of making it possible for the Turkish Government to pay for such orders whether through the clearing or otherwise.<sup>81</sup>

London considered that, except for the large guns, the desired equipment would be available.<sup>82</sup> In February, the Admiralty informed the Foreign Office that they contemplated quick delivery of most of the ships desired by the Turks -- four Destroyers, four Submarines, and four Escorts -- but could not spare 15" guns;

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<sup>79</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 Loraine to FO 18 Dec 1939.

<sup>80</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 Loraine to Adm 4 Jan; also, FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 Attachment MAA to Loraine Feb 1938.

<sup>81</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 op. cit., repeat to Adm, Air Min and Treasury.

<sup>82</sup> Earlier, the Turks had made approaches directly to Vickers to buy 15" guns. The Admiralty instructed them to decline the contract. "It is too much" noted Colville, "to expect that the Admiralty should allow their own rearmament program to be sacrificed to Turkish desires". PRO FO 371/20865 E7124/528/44 M/C.P 38238/37 Phillips to FO 2 Dec 1939; and, Colville Minute 3 Dec 1937.



though if the Turks would accept 13.5" guns, then they could have them immediately.<sup>83</sup> Bowker minuted on 11 February: "The Admiralty are clearly doing what they can, and all depends on whether the Turks will be able to offer terms of payment which are acceptable".<sup>84</sup>

**The 1938 Credit:**

For the moment, the order hung on the question of payment. Colville, Ashton-Gwatkin, and Baggallay at the FO minuted their belief that under present conditions payment could not be made. The Clearing was backed up for eighteen months, and since no armaments manufacturer would wait this long for its money, payment by this means was "almost insuperably difficult".<sup>85</sup> Even if the Clearing were acceptable to producers, to stretch it for the finance of large armaments purchases would "unquestionably injure, and to a great extent finally extinguish, all ordinary United Kingdom exports to Turkey".<sup>86</sup> Thus, payment through the Clearing was "out of the question". The only possible solution would be purchase with Government approved credits, which, in December 1937, the FO judged

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<sup>83</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 op. cit., G.M Minute 19 Jan; and, FO 371/21930 E737/528/44 M.01050/38 Lawson (Adm) to FO 7 Feb. Bowker Minute 11 Feb 1938. 13.5" guns offered to Ozdes for immediate delivery by Admiralty 16 Feb 1938: FO 371/21930 Carter (Adm) to Ozdes 16 Feb 1938.

<sup>84</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E737/528/44 op. cit., Bowker Minute 11 Feb 1938.

<sup>85</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 op. cit., Baggallay Minute 31 Dec 1937.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

to be "most doubtful".<sup>87</sup> "It seems useless", Colville minuted on 9 February, "to consider the problem further until an adequate financial arrangement has been made".<sup>88</sup>

The Foreign Office was not alone in doubting that large purchases of arms could be made by Turkey in the UK without some change in the financial arrangement between the two countries. Farrar, at the Department of Overseas Trade, concurred with FO opinion that the Clearing, as it existed, would never stand the pressure if it were made to finance armaments.<sup>89</sup> The Board of Trade agreed. If the Ozdes order were payed through the Clearing, it would be useless for other purposes for at least three years.<sup>90</sup>

More importantly, the armaments companies themselves were sceptical of payment through the Clearing. In April, Vickers sent a representative to the Foreign Office. Turkey had made direct approaches, he said, about the purchase of Destroyers, Submarines and miscellaneous naval stores to a total value of five million Pounds. Vickers was willing to accept 10% down, 10% on completion, and the rest to follow, but would not accept payment through the

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<sup>87</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 op. cit., G.M Minute 19 Jan 1939.

<sup>88</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E737/528/44 op. cit., Colville Minute 9 Feb 1938.

<sup>89</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E818/188/144 C.162921/38 Farrar to Baggallay 10 Feb 1938.

<sup>90</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1117/188/44 C.R.T 6050/38 Forsyth to Baggallay 25 Feb 1938.

Clearing.<sup>91</sup> The Bristol Air Company also expressed its unwillingness to deal with the Turkish Government on a Clearing basis.<sup>92</sup> Faced with overwhelming confirmation of its own doubts, the Foreign Office concluded that:

unless the Turkish Government are given some assistance in the form of credits, the orders will probably fall through . . . such assistance would be the most convincing assurance which we could give Turkey of our strength and our goodwill.<sup>93</sup>

"Credits seems in fact" wrote Baggallay, "to be the only solution".<sup>94</sup>

By 23 February, Loraine was practically begging that the Ozdes contracts be financed by Government guaranteed credit. Aras had been to visit him and had complained that only the United States and the UK refused Turkey long-term credit. Turkey had, he said, purchased four Destroyers from Italy in 1931, and was still scrupulously making the payments. "It will therefore", Loraine concluded:

be entirely disappointing for them and politically most undesirable for us, if for any reason, financial or otherwise, we prove unable to meet their needs . . . There is so much to be gained by letting the Turks have British ships; there is so little to loose -- a relatively inconsiderable sum of money, barely the cost of one day's war -- and even that loss is by no means a

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<sup>91</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1857/188/44 Mounsey Minute 1 Apr 1938.

<sup>92</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E418/78/44 S.36970/S.G Air Min to FO 21 Jan 1938; also, E593/78/44 Bowker Minute 1 Feb 1938.

<sup>93</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 Loraine to Cadogan 23 Feb 1938. Bowker Minute 5 Mar 1938.

<sup>94</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 op. cit., Baggallay Minute 7 Mar 1938.

certain one.<sup>95</sup>

Despite the good reception accorded İnönü's idea in London, in March 1938, the Government was still denying in the House that it had any intentions of guaranteeing a loan to Turkey. In response to a question to this effect from a Mr. Thorne, Colville, the Financial Advisor to the Treasury, answered that it was his information that "there is no question of the Bank of England making any loan to the Turkish Government".<sup>96</sup> Colville's disclaimer, however, by the time he made it, represented more Treasury reluctance than Cabinet convictions.

By 19 April 1938, in anticipation of a credit agreement, twelve Blenheims ordered by Ozdes were on their way to Turkey on board the S.S. Polo Walrus and City of Lancaster -- escorted through the 'pirate' infested Mediterranean by H.M.S Aberdeen.<sup>97</sup> Also in April, real negotiations began to go forward with Vickers for the construction of four Destroyers, four Submarines, four Escorts, and in July, for the refurbishment of ten 13.5" guns to be supplied from Admiralty stores. Due to the nature of the weapons requested, and the delay while they were being constructed, the Blenheims were the only materials ordered under the 1938 Armaments

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<sup>95</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 Loraine to Cadogan 23 Feb 1938.

<sup>96</sup> Hansard Commons, Vol CCCXXXIII 28 May 1938.

<sup>97</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E418/78/44 S.36970/S.G Air Min to FO 21 Jan; and, E2264 C in C Med to Eden 19 Apr 1938. The Turks already had twelve Blenheims. The second twelve were diverted from the RAF expansion plan. Later in April, satisfied with this design, the Turks expressed interest in acquiring another six. The RAF agreed that they would get them in Feb 1939. E2508/78/44 Bowker Minute 30 Apr 1938.

Credit received prior to the outbreak of war.

In April-May the decision was made by London, in principle, to extend a six million Pound armaments credit to Turkey. On 11 May, the Cabinet discussed proposed credits to Turkey of six million Pounds for armaments, and ten million Pounds for industry.<sup>98</sup> Although Turkey had no security, said Halifax, he considered the credits essential from a political point of view. Chamberlain said that while he thought the matter a "grave departure from precedent", and disagreed with the use of money for political purposes, he was inclined to support the project. "Turkey was in a very special and exceptional position", he said: "She constituted a very real Bulwark against German expansion in the Near and Middle East". It "should never have been allowed to have allied with Germany in the Great War and, in present circumstances, we ought to avoid a repetition of that mistake".<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the industrial credit, Chamberlain said, would probably be repaid and "might prove renumeration".<sup>100</sup> The Treasury, the Exports Guarantee Department, and the Vice Chairman of Barclays, all considered repayment likely. As for the six million armaments credit, it was doubtful, Chamberlain thought, that this money would be seen again, but this loss, when gauged against Turkey's political value -- a "power whose intervention on the side of our opponents might well prove a decisive factor" -- was a little thing. As an ex-Chancellor,

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<sup>98</sup> PRO CAB 23/95 Cab 23(38) 11 May 1938.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Chamberlain said that he appreciated the enormity of the step that he was asking his colleagues to take, but in his opinion, the loans should be approved.<sup>101</sup>

The Ministers for India, Air, War and the First Sea Lord -- in other words, the military ministries broadly defined -- all expressed strong approval of the agreement. Said one: if Britain were going to depart from precedent, as the Prime Minister admitted, then it was important not to quibble about the amount. Why "risk spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar".<sup>102</sup>

It was from the Chancellor, Simon, and Runciman, of the Board of Trade, that opposition came. Simon hoped that "the cabinet would appreciate the financial enormity of the step which was contemplated and would realise that it was one which could not be repeated". The credits were, he considered, "a grave departure from financial rectitude and prudence".<sup>103</sup> The Turks, he said, were "addicted to bargaining", and would only be encouraged in this if they received the full amount at once. It was important he thought, to make them bargain hard for the money, if only as a matter of form.<sup>104</sup> Runciman agreed with Simon, and added a special objection of his own. "This should be at the expense of the general tax-payer and of the Anglo-Turkish clearing" he complained.<sup>105</sup> In

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

the end, with bad grace, both agreed to conform to the majority view, and the decision was made that the proposed credits should be extended to the Turks.

In July, the credit became law. A Government guarantee cut through the reluctance of armaments firms and Government departments to deal with the Turks. Tell the Turks, the FO advised Knatchbull-Hugesson, that Britain was "anxious to do what they can to help them".<sup>106</sup> On 13 July 1938, the Anglo-Turkish (Armaments Credit) Agreement Bill, went before the Lords.<sup>107</sup> Lord Templemore, speaking for the Treasury, reminded the House that Britain was doing the Turks no favour. The Credit was no more than a guaranteed loan, which was to be serviced at 1% above the Bank of England rate, or 3%, whichever was higher.<sup>108</sup> The Credit, he said, would be no precedent. It was "a special circumstance of a special case".<sup>109</sup> The Bill passed its third reading without debate on 25 July, and with the Government garnering considerable congratulations from all sides.<sup>110</sup>

#### **The German Reaction:**

German reaction was swift and effective. Goering, the Reich's

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<sup>106</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E2775/143/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson Apr 1939.

<sup>107</sup> PRO ADM 116/4394 Supplies to Allied Armaments and Naval Supplies for Turkey, Anglo-Turkish Trade and Clearing Agreement -- Armaments Agreement 18 June 1938.

<sup>108</sup> Hansard Lords, Vol CX col 896-897 13 Jul 1938.

<sup>109</sup> Hansard Lords, Vol CX col 902 13 Jul 1938.

<sup>110</sup> Hansard Lords, Vol CX col 1094 25 Jul 1938.

economic Czar of the moment, decreed that Balkan economic cooperation was essential to the success of the four year plan. In his eyes, and those of Germany's real economic experts, Britain's credits to Turkey and other Balkan nations, principally Rumania, amounted to sabotage -- to economic war waged during peace time.<sup>111</sup> In Funk's view, the 1938 Credit, was "part of the economic offensive against Germany, undertaken by Britain and France in South-East Europe and the Middle East",<sup>112</sup> and an incident in the British attempt to encircle the Reich with enemies.

While the London credit negotiations were entering their last phase, Germany and Turkey were considering the necessity of renegotiating their commercial arrangements to cover Austria now that it was an integral part of the Reich.<sup>113</sup> By June 1938 the Turks were, moreover, complaining once again that the Germans had too little for sale, and that what they had was too expensive and of inferior quality.<sup>114</sup> In July, Clodius, the head of the Department of Economic Policy at the German Foreign Ministry, received Numan Menemencioğlu in Berlin. Menemencioğlu, believed in Germany to be a leader of the pro-German party in the Turkish Government,<sup>115</sup> had come to Germany to negotiate a satisfactory

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<sup>111</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol I, p. 44-47.

<sup>112</sup> DGFP Series D, Vol V, No. 552, Funk to Schwerin von Krosigk 2 Sep 1938.

<sup>113</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol III, p. 442.

<sup>114</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IX no. 509 Corbin to Bonnet 2 Jun 1938.

<sup>115</sup> G. Weinberg, The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, (Chicago: Chicago) 1980, p. 241.



extension of the Clearing agreement and to settle the question of Austria's economic status. During Menemencioğlu's visit, Ribbentrop took the opportunity to press for much closer ties between Germany and Turkey. Would Turkey, Ribbentrop wondered, consider signing a bilateral Straits agreement with Germany? Menemencioğlu replied that such an agreement was not possible.<sup>116</sup> The best course for Germany, he said, would be to accede unilaterally to the Montreaux agreement.<sup>117</sup> Ribbentrop questioned Menemencioğlu regarding Turkey's territorial aspirations. Turkey was determined to preserve its neutrality, Menemencioğlu answered, and had no territorial desiderata. Ribbentrop asked if it would at least be possible for Germany and Turkey to conclude a Treaty of Neutrality. No, answered Menemencioğlu -- Turkey concluded such treaties only with its neighbours: let Turco-German friendship be a self-evident fact.<sup>118</sup> With this saccharine reassurance, Ribbentrop had no choice but to content himself. By 25 July, agreement was reached between Menemencioğlu and the German economic experts. The most that the Turks could be brought to concede was that the Clearing

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<sup>116</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 412, Ribbentrop Note 7 Jul 1938. See also, DGFP Vol V, No. 528.

<sup>117</sup> The Turks never faltered from their insistence that the only way for the Germans to normalize their position at the Straits would be by unilaterally acceding to the Montreaux Treaty. ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 419, Note by Ribbentrop 5 Jan 1939.

<sup>118</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 412 op. cit. See also, Deringil's account of this conversation as it is based upon Menemencioğlu's unpublished memoirs. Deringil, p. 54-55.

would be extended provisionally for another year.<sup>119</sup>

Not satisfied with this, in October, Goering dispatched his deputy, Funk, on a tour of the Balkan capitals. On 6 October, Funk arrived in Ankara full of promises and Reichmarks. Quickly and painlessly a credit for RM 150,000,000 was extended to the cash-strapped Turks; sixty million of which, Funk promised, would be available for arms purchases.<sup>120</sup> Germany undertook, further, to guarantee the level of its exports so that the Clearing would not become blocked as it had previously and to permit the Turks to service the loan at British rates of interest -- 5 1/2% -- when the German Government itself was borrowing at 6%.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, the Germans promised, all material was to be delivered before the end of 1941.<sup>122</sup> The Germans considered the Funk agreement to be a triumph for German diplomacy. By it, Clodius exulted, Germany would attain a dominant position in the provision of aircraft to the Turkish Air Force.<sup>123</sup> Russia, Funk rejoiced from Ankara, had been defeated, and Britain given a signal that Turkey had other friends.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 411, Report of Clodius Meeting with Menemencioğlu 5 Jul 1938.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 47; and, Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol III, p. 444.

<sup>121</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 415, Clodius to Ankara 15 Sep; No. 416 Clodius to Ankara 23 Sep; No. 417 Clodius to Ankara 4 Oct; and No. 418 Ankara to Ribbentrop 11 Oct 1938.

<sup>122</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 10 (20 May 1939), p. 45.

<sup>123</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 417 op. cit.

<sup>124</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 418 op. cit.

Throughout all of this, the Turks continued with their complex and dangerous manoeuvres aimed at getting enough Western currency to continue to meet their many commitments. By March 1939, the Turks were defaulting on the service of certain loans -- notably, once again, on the 1909 City of Constantinople Loan. Also in March, SOFINA company, through its Turkish agent, purchased the Adana-Ankara Electric Ankara Gas company from its owner, Berlin Handelschaft Bank.<sup>125</sup> SOFINA contracted to pay for the Company with Marks obtained from an undisclosed source for one-tenth of their internal value.<sup>126</sup> Before SOFINA could soil its corporate hands with forbidden Reichmarks, Adana-Ankara Electric-Ankara Gas was expropriated by the Turkish Government and SOFINA compensated with Government bonds. Soon after this, the Turks paid the coupon due on the City of Constantinople loan.<sup>127</sup> Thus, by a simple process of book-keeping, SOFINA made a tidy profit, Berlin Handelschaft Bank reduced the Reichmark block freezing the Clearing with Turkey, and Turkey acquired a public utility. The only question remaining is the source of SOFINA's cheap Marks. It does not take much imagination to see the Eti bank as the likely source, and in this whole byzantine, or more properly, ottoman transaction an effort to exchange frozen Marks for free Sterling. In the

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<sup>125</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E1738/140/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Baggallay Mar 1939.

<sup>126</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E1994 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Baggallay 10 Mar 1939.

<sup>127</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E129/140/44 Waley (Treasury) to Baggallay Mar 1939.

process, however, both Turkish long term debt and dependence on Germany increased.

#### Halifax, Commerce and Economic War:

By 1938, Halifax, beginning to bridle at Treasury restraints, was arguing that financial orthodoxy was hobbling Britain's Near Eastern policy. In a vast area extending East and South from Germany to the Taurus mountains and the Russian frontier, he warned, the Germans were constructing a hinterland in which German was the *lingua franca* and Germany exercised unquestioned cultural, economic and financial hegemony.<sup>128</sup> If Britain were to gain diplomatic ground in this area, then it would perforce have to combat the Germans with economic, cultural and financial weapons, and moreover, these were the weapons with which Britain thought itself able to fight to the greatest advantage.<sup>129</sup> But British policy was paralysed by the "Treasury, Board of Trade, Exports Credits Guarantee Department, and Department of Overseas Trade" which saw every question as "wholly economic and commercial".<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> PRO CAB 24/277 CP 127(38) British Influence in Central and South-Eastern Europe Halifax 24 May 1938.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., also, PRO CAB 27/623 1 Jun 1938. Halifax complained in the Foreign Policy Committee, that, "While the Foreign Office tend to regard economics and finance as a means to a political end, the other Departments are naturally bound to judge these from a different point of view. A deadlock is apt to be reached by a political 'desideratum' being brought to nothing by a technical 'non possums'. This may often be right. Nevertheless, we are constantly told that our most powerful weapon in the international sphere resides in economics and finance. In the present critical state of Europe it seems more than ever necessary that effective use should be made of this weapon, particularly in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Yet no special machinery exists whereby the

What was essential, Halifax thought, was a longer term view, and "an economic General Staff" to coordinate British efforts.<sup>131</sup>

When Germany began to convert its economic hinterland into a political dependency, Halifax argued, Britain would have to shift its focus to "power politics i.e. alliances, military, conventions, close understandings etc. etc.".<sup>132</sup> He recognized that, given pre-existent German economic dominance, such relationships must involve "armaments credits and [economic] agreements". Turkey, if no other, he wrote, must be detached from Germany, and could be detached, he considered, with economic tools no more painful than trade manipulation, limited financial assistance, and "judicious encouragement of trade, industry and capital investment". It would be foolish, he suggested, to fail to make use of Britain's "financial and economic power and of our consuming capacity".<sup>133</sup> In his analysis, as we shall see, Halifax was not just correct, but in considerable advance of his Cabinet colleagues, who, conditioned by the economic orthodoxy of a previous age, could not conceive of Power to Consume or Power to Spend as weapons in the economic armoury.

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political and economic aspects of the policy of His Majesty's Government in the countries under review can be properly co-ordinated, with a view to ensuring that the maximum political advantage be extracted from the economic weapon". PRO CAB 24/277 CP 127(38) 24 May 1938.

<sup>131</sup> PRO CAB 24/277 CP 127(38) British Influence in Central and South-Eastern Europe Halifax 24 May 1938.

<sup>132</sup> PRO CAB 24/288 Economic and Financial Assistance to Turkey Halifax Jul 1939.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

Sir John Simon was more typical of Cabinet opinion. As late as August 1939 he complained, in reference to the Turkish credit then being considered, that "the new war would end with debts from allies which would never be paid, and history would repeat itself only this time, this was to happen before (and perhaps without) a war". "Moreover" he noted, "every future borrower would be encouraged to demand the same favours".<sup>134</sup> Against Halifax's chosen weapon, "Power to Consume" he opposed his own, "Economic Stability":

If we are to emerge victorious from such a war it is essential that we should win it with sufficient economic resources to enable us to make the fullest use of resources overseas, and to withstand the strain . . . Seen in its truest perspective the maintenance of economic stability would more accurately be described as an essential element in our defensive strength; one which can properly be regarded as a fourth arm of defence, alongside the other three defence services, without which military effort would be of no avail.<sup>135</sup>

As war approached, whatever their economic views, British Ministers were forced to confront the fact that Germany had established a position in the Turkish economy crucial to its operation. The Turks, Halifax wrote, would be:

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<sup>134</sup> PRO F160/972 F16014/3 Halifax to Simon 18 Aug 1939. Simon marginal comments.

<sup>135</sup> PRO CAB 24/273 CP316(37) Dec 1937. In all fairness to Simon, for all his talk about the "British way of war" it seems probable that he failed to understand exactly what this involved so clearly as he thought. Lord Strabolgi was clearer in his conception. "In the past" he told the House of Lords, "our ancestors in your Lordships' House who controlled foreign policy were faced with difficulties such as face us today and tried to find friends and allies. How did they do it? They did it through diplomacy; they did it by subsidies; they did it in various ways, and usually very expensive ways". Hansard Lords, Vol CIX 18 May 1938.

unable to face, without grave misgivings, the cessation of trade with her most important market and supplier -- Germany. Although her sympathy with the allied cause may be marked, nevertheless there are limits to the extent of the sacrifices which she can permit herself to make without causing hardship to her people not only by foregoing the profitable trade with a belligerent, but by foregoing her normal external requirements.<sup>136</sup>

The only solution, Halifax judged, would be for Britain to replace Germany as Turkey's chief trading partner. In order to do so, it would have to absorb L 10,000,000 worth of Turkish exports -- chiefly foodstuffs.<sup>137</sup> The UK being a food importing nation, Halifax did not see that this would present an insurmountable problem. In addition, Halifax thought, Britain would have to replace Germany in the provision of technical and industrial assistance. Again, he did not judge that this would be a problem. The maintenance of some level of Turkish production, in any case, would relieve Britain from the necessity of making up for the lost product from its own factories and mines. All in all, concluded Halifax, the only likely problem would be the availability of weapons for direct export in the first year of war. Halifax's analysis was corroborated by that of those sections of the Board of Trade involved directly in planning to wage economic warfare, and later by the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) -- the "Economic General Staff" which Halifax had proposed earlier.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 885 Alliance With Turkey -- Report Annex III Halifax 15 Mar 1939.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> PRO CAB 24/288 Economic and Financial Assistance to Turkey Halifax Jul; and CAB 47/10 ATB 163 CID Advisory Committee on Trade Questions in Time of War . . . In Regard to a Ministry of Blockade

In planning for economic war, most of Turkey's chief exports -- Chromium, furs, leathers, vegetable oil, cotton, wool, jute, silk, veralum etc. -- stood high on the list of unconditional contraband.<sup>139</sup> In one sense, this was excellent good news, because it meant that Turkey was in a position to strike Germany a heavy blow. In another, it meant that if Turkey were to reduce its exports to Germany, then Turkey would need to be compensated, and its exports absorbed.<sup>140</sup> No one knew this better than Knatchbull-Hugesson. Before becoming Ambassador to Turkey he had been the FO representative on the Subcommittee on Economic Pressure on Germany as an Assistant Secretary of State.<sup>141</sup> One means of accomplishing this was with an industrial credit which would allow Turkey to make necessary purchases in the UK regardless of its trade position.<sup>142</sup> Another way would be, it was thought, to use Turkish produce displaced from German markets to solve the nagging problem of a secure source of food supply for the Levant in the event of

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19 Jan 1938.

<sup>139</sup> PRO CAB 47/9 ATB (CL 14) Contraband List and Confidential Supplement CID Contraband Subcommittee 16 Sep 1938.

<sup>140</sup> PRO CAB 47/14 op. cit. ATB (EPG)25 Diplomatic Action to Reduce Supplies to Germany 20 Jun 1938; and, FO 371/20865 ICF/738 (E669/669/44) General Survey of Material Resources and Industry of Turkey in Their Bearing Upon National War Potential Industrial Intelligence Centre.

<sup>141</sup> PRO CAB 47/12 Composition, Advisory Committee -- Subcommittee on Economic Pressure on Germany.

<sup>142</sup> PRO CAB 47/14 op. cit., ATB (EPG)25 Diplomatic Action to Reduce Supplies to Germany 20 Jun 1938.



trade disruption.<sup>143</sup> This second solution would have the added benefit of allowing the Turks to earn by export the Sterling they would require to service credits extended. Whatever solution was adopted, solution there must be. In June 1939 Knatchbull-Hugesson warned the Foreign Office that it must prepare itself to give "full weight . . . to the immense effect here of loss of Germany trade".<sup>144</sup>

While Cabinet Ministers argued, Berlin began to crack the whip. To anticipate slightly, by August 1939, it was threatening complete cession of trade if Turkey would not follow an acceptable policy.<sup>145</sup> German firms would, Berlin warned, if the Turks proved recalcitrant, cancel their Turkish contracts regardless of indemnities or penalties.<sup>146</sup> Indemnities and penalties need not have worried the Germans over-much. The fact was that they owed the Turks more than they were owed, and the Turks were awaiting delivery of a large amount of material which had been pre-paid through the blocked Clearing. Much of this material was dearly

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<sup>143</sup> PRO CAB 47/15 ETP(EPG)35 Plan for Economic Warfare Against Germany 18 Jul 1938; and, ATB(EPB)61 Plans for Economic Warfare Against Germany and Italy 1 Sep 1939. In the event, this is largely what happened. Palestine, for instance, imported Turkish foodstuffs and exported to Turkey locally produced military materials.

<sup>144</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 82 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 18 Jun 1939. The Turks were denying that there would be any connection between their foreign policy and their economic position. Neither Halifax or Knatchbull-Hugesson could see how this would be possible.

<sup>145</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 310 Massigli to Bonnet 23 Aug; and, DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 536 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 17 May 1939.

<sup>146</sup> PRO CAB 23/100 Cab 42(39) 24 Aug 1939.

needed in Turkey. At the end of the month, the Turco-German trade treaty expired and further trade was placed on a compensation basis only. Commerce dried up with the figures very much in Germany's favour.<sup>147</sup> One wonders what Simon would have thought of Germany's use of indebtedness as a weapon.<sup>148</sup>

Germany was not only speaking with the voice of command in Ankara but in all the Balkan capitals. It had no need to attack: the cowed nations of the Balkan peninsula would provide whatever Germany required at prices set in Berlin.<sup>149</sup> By November 1939, for instance, the Mark was being accepted at three times its floating exchange rate in Belgrade.<sup>150</sup> By City of London orthodoxy this was nonsense because the Germans had nothing to trade, and this alone should have driven the value of the Mark down. But for the Balkan States, the razor of economic rationality

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<sup>147</sup> Medlicott, p. 271.

<sup>148</sup> In the system constructed by Dr. Schacht, trade imbalances and national indebtedness were weapons in the economic war. If trade was balanced, it tended to rise. If a Balkan nation could not pay for its imports, Berlin gained a political lever by its indebtedness. If the German clearing, conversely, fell into arrears, the creditor nation found itself with a stake in Germany's continued economic health. However the books balanced, Schacht's system led to increased economic and political dependence on Germany. Hitchens, p. 7-8.

<sup>149</sup> At Nuremburg, Ribbentrop was insistent that it was never the German intention to invade the Balkans because there was nothing to be gained by doing so. US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, (US Government Printing Office: Washington) 1946. Supp B, p. 1183-4.

<sup>150</sup> CC GLLD 20/5 Belgrade Papers Lloyd Memorandum 15 Dec 1939.

slashed in an altogether different direction.<sup>151</sup> It was cheaper, they considered to give the Germans what they wanted than have them take it, and more profitable to be vassals than slaves. French economic planners at the Ministry of Blockade noted sadly:

Leaving aside the insufficiency of the means employed by France and Great Britain to replace Germany in neutral markets, it is worthy of careful notice that, in their fear of the Reich, the states that are neighbours of Germany are unwilling, in spite of their sympathy for the allied cause, to enter into contracts that, in affecting their normal trade with one of the belligerents, would expose them to the reproach of deliberately breaking their neutrality.<sup>152</sup>

The final truth was that Hitler's economics proved in the end to be more powerful than those of either Dr. Schacht or Sir John Simon.

What was the political moral of the economic story? It was as Halifax had said in 1938. Without some shift made to displace

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<sup>151</sup> The Germans dominated the trade of the Balkan nations proper even more than they did Turkey's; and thus, those arguments against a Turkish break with Berlin existed with even greater force in Bucharest, Belgrade, Sofia, and Athens. While in the Balkans, in November 1939, Lord Lloyd was begged by each of the Kinglets in turn that Britain should increase its purchases of their products in order to weaken the chains of German economic domination. The following table illustrates the difference in Balkan trade between Britain and Germany in 1937:

Country	Imports from (B/G)	Exports to (B/G)	amount
Yugoslavia	404/2,232	465/2,209	million dinar
Hungary	25/210	43/241	million pengoes
Rumania	1,178/7,175	2,795/8,409	million Lei
Bulgaria	232/2,865	695/2,365	million Leva
Greece	1,668/4,516	922/3,125	million drachma

Table from: Hansard Lords, Vol CX col 898 13 Jul 1938. Speech of Lord Strabogli. See also, CC GLLD 20/4, 20/5, 20/6, 20/8, 20/12 op. cit.

<sup>152</sup> PRO CAB 63/100 Note from the Blockade Ministry in Paris 13 Nov 1939. See also, Medlicott, p. 38.

Germany from its position of economic dominance, it was unlikely that any alliance could be made operable against Germany because total severance of relations between Germany and Turkey would lead in fairly short order to Turkey's economic prostration. How could Germany be displaced? Again, it was as Halifax saw in 1938. If any alliance were to function, then it would require a financial and economic dimension which would give the Turks access to credits for essential weaponry coupled to measures designed to permit the Turks to pay for weapons received with articles they were capable of producing. Without the establishment of such a system, the chain of causation was inexorable. Lack of a payment formula, meant lack of credits, which in turn resulted in no arms and the continuance of German dominance. While this situation endured effective operation of an alliance was unlikely.

Amid all of this, stood the 1938 Credit as the sole attempt made by London prior to the outbreak of war to put Halifax's ideas into practice. It did not bode well for Anglo-Turkish alignment, six months from becoming an incipient alliance, that while the Turks viewed the 1938 Credit as the beginning of a special relationship the British insisted that it was "a special circumstance of a special case". Nor did it augur well that the armaments credit -- six million pounds -- remained almost entirely an abstract due to British inability to deliver the goods. It was, after all, not an account at the Bank of England that the Turks desired, but Destroyers, Corvettes, Submarines, Blenheim bombers, and large guns. British inability to provide these within

acceptable time limits might have caused more pause than it did and muted the congratulations of the House.

## Chapter VI -- The Joint Guarantee

Until Spring 1939, Anglo-Turkish relations remained the story of a Turkish attempt to bring the British to some more formal relationship, and of a British effort to so arrange their greater politics that such a relationship would be unnecessary. While fully apprised of Turkey's importance to the British position in the Middle East, and in war planning against Italy, HMG remained reluctant to commit itself to anything which might antagonize Italy. Turkey was an important consideration -- but a consideration in a case which HMG preferred not to consider. The replacement of a general policy of drift by one of vigorous appeasement, when Chamberlain succeeded Baldwin, and the resignation of Anthony Eden after a foreign policy disagreement with the new Premier, increased the basic British reluctance to do anything remotely confrontational in the Mediterranean, which included, in London's doctrine, making any kind of combination with Turkey. Movement forward ceased; such progress as had been made was rolled back.

British reluctance to make a commitment was one reason for the continued failure of the Turkish policy of parallel Mediterranean and Black Sea detentes. There were, in addition, other factors which ensured that Turkey's policy would be unsuccessful. Firstly, Balkan Union was a prerequisite of Turkey's policy, but the Balkan states continued to be unable to come to any effective accommodation with each other or with Russia. In part, this resulted from the massive increase, after 1938, of the German threat which exercised a strong disintegrating effect on Balkan

solidarity. Secondly, important changes in Turkey's leadership -- the assumption of the Presidency by İnönü after Atatürk's death, and the replacement of Dr. Aras by Saraçoğlu at the Foreign Ministry -- affected the style rather than the substance of Turkish foreign policy but did so to an extent which made the change one of kind rather than degree. The new leaders in Turkey wished no adventures, were temperamentally less inclined than Atatürk to take the initiative, and viewed all questions of policy with the sceptical eyes of practised survivors. Lastly, the Hatay question ensured that no effective combination with France was possible prior to June 1939.

By the Spring of 1939, however, in an increasingly volatile international environment, certain of the factors which had stalled the development of Anglo-Turkish relations came to seem less important, and in May, Britain was finally brought to enter a reciprocal relationship with Turkey. Unfortunately, by the Spring, this did not represent the consummation of anybody's policy. It was instead, a joint reaction to a series of foreign policy blows which drove two frightened nations together at a time when political-military reality seemed to indicate that no appeasement of Italy was possible. For Britain, the unthinkable case suddenly became the most likely case: Turkey ceased to seem an unwelcome commitment and appeared more an important potential ally. Thus, for Britain, the Joint Guarantee was no victory but the stigmata of a failed policy -- the appeasement of Italy. For the Turks, the long desired Anglo-Turkish combination proved a disappointment and a danger. It was not a preventive association, but a reaction to an immediate

Italian threat. In the context of the Spring, it appeared as likely to involve Ankara in undesirable and unlooked for confrontations as to deter any potential aggressor or to serve as a useful basis for common action. Thus, it is possible to say that the formal Anglo-Turkish relationship when finally achieved fully satisfied neither party and was the result of the policy of neither nation. It was a badge of common failure rather than of either partner's policy success.

**The Turkish policy of Local Alliances:**

Abyssinia and the failure of sanctions put an end to Dr. Aras' attempt to create a great Mediterranean pact including all the nations bordering the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins. Instead, Dr. Aras began to work for two smaller, more easily harmonized systems: a local Mediterranean Pact including the Western Powers, and a Black Sea Pact encompassing Rumania and Russia. Aras often described this policy as being based on two alliances: one with England in the Mediterranean, and the other with Russia in the Black Sea. "In the Mediterranean" he told Loraine, "we would not be against England and are most likely to be found alongside of England; just as in the Black Sea we can never be against Russia; and are likely to be found on the side of Russia".<sup>1</sup>

On 1 March 1937, Dr Aras told Loraine that in his recent conversations with Titulescu, the subject of a Black Sea Pact to include Russia had been broached. Rumania, he said, was for it. Russia too was ready to participate. Turkey, he said, might be

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<sup>1</sup> PRO FO 1011/61 Loraine to Hoare 25 Nov 1934.



persuaded to take part if the agreement were limited to nonaggression and consultation without going so far as guarantees for mutual assistance.<sup>2</sup> Loraine could see nothing wrong with such an agreement; nor could the Foreign Office, which advised Loraine that:

Provided that the proposed pact really is limited to nonaggression and consultation, and provided also that it is made subordinate to the duties of the parties under the covenant, it seems to be innocuous.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviets did indeed welcome such an agreement. It would, they thought, be useful to consolidate the Little Powers against the Fascist states, and would ensure that Turkey, in a division, would be on the right side. Litvinov used to say: "Oh, the Turks will do what we wish"; but as Lord Chilston, Ambassador to Moscow, observed, the time when he could say that with confidence had passed.<sup>4</sup> In July, Dr. Aras and Sükrü Kaya were in Moscow. Aras made several speeches stressing the friendship between the two nations. In speaking to Lord Chilston, the British Ambassador in Moscow, he was careful to underscore the point that nonaggression was not enough. A Black Sea pact, he said, must be sufficiently strong and cohesive to maintain the status quo among the Black Sea nations and against outside aggression.<sup>5</sup>

It was Rumania that killed Aras' initiative. Titulescu was

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<sup>2</sup> PRO FO 371/20868 E1592 Loraine to FO 1 Mar 1937; also, FO 424/282 E1592/141/44 Loraine to Eden 18 Mar 1939.

<sup>3</sup> PRO FO 371/20868 E1592/1592/44 FO to Loraine 6 Apr 1937.

<sup>4</sup> PRO FO 371/20868 E2242 Chilston to FO 17 Apr 1937.

<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E4431/386/44 Chilston to Eden 26 Jul 1937.

horrified when he was told that the scheme was being linking with his name. He had indeed spoken to Aras of the possibility of such a Pact -- spoken of it as a lost cause. Titulescu had told Dr. Aras that he could sound the Soviets if he wished, but the most Rumania would accept would be a nonaggression pact.<sup>6</sup> Sofia too vowed that it would never sign such an agreement, especially with Russia, and more especially not before the matter of the South Dobrudja were settled.<sup>7</sup>

Balkan turbulence remained a rock upon which the best built policy might founder. If the Balkans could not ally themselves, then it was unlikely that they could participate as a group in arrangements with outside powers. It is a fact that the sudden intrusion of the German factor into Balkan calculations after 1937 acted as a powerful solvent on the Eastern alliances as members not immediately threatened hastened, on the one hand, to reinsure themselves with other powers, and on the other, to distance themselves from obligations to allies more exposed to German pressure.<sup>8</sup> In this, the Balkan Pact was no exception. In 1934,

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<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 371/20868 E1922/1592/44 R. Hoare (Bucharest) to FO 7 Apr 1937.

<sup>7</sup> PRO FO 371/20868 E1806 Parkinson (Sofia) to FO 25 Mar 1937. Only the Russians were impressed by Aras' conception. In February 1939, in Moscow, Litvinov returned to this idea in conversations with the Turkish Ambassador, Haidar Aktai and his Rumanian counterpart. As in 1937, the Rumanians would not consider adherence to such an alliance. The matter was raised by the Turks at a meeting of the Balkan Entente shortly thereafter and rejected. DGFP Series D, Vol V, no. 560; and, DDF Series II, Vol XIV, no. 144 Thierry to Bonnet 20 Feb 39.

<sup>8</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 502-503.

against Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria, there had been equality of risk; by 1937, against Germany, this was no longer the case. Greece, in particular, continually attempted to limit its obligations towards the northern partners, which in turn, sought to limit their obligations to Greece and to each other.<sup>9</sup> In 1936, Metaxas announced that the best Greece could promise if either of its Northern allies were attacked was armed neutrality unless British and French aid were guaranteed.<sup>10</sup> Turkey, for its part, had always insisted that it could not guarantee Rumania against the Soviet Union because this would be in violation of its pre-existing undertakings with Moscow.<sup>11</sup> The simple facts were that Rumania had no quarrel with Italy, Yugoslavia with Russia, Greece with Germany or Russia, or Turkey with Russia. Each ally was afraid of its own enemies and not anxious for the pact to work unless in its support. The greatest partisans of the Entente were the Rumanians. It was no coincidence that they were also more threatened than any of the others.<sup>12</sup>

In May 1937, Prince Paul concluded an alliance with Italy without having notified any of his allies of his intentions. In response, Atatürk and İnönü journeyed to Athens to consult the

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<sup>9</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 392 de Dampierre (Belgrade) to Laval 16 May 1935.

<sup>10</sup> DDF Series II, Vol II no. 166 De Dampierre to Flandin 6 May 1936.

<sup>11</sup> M. Macartrey, Italy's Foreign Policy and Colonial Policy 1914-1937, (Oxford: London) 1938. p. 212.

<sup>12</sup> DDF Series II, Vol X no. 437 Spitzmuller (Bucharest) to Bonnet 22 Aug 1938.

Greeks and, from Athens, to publicly warn the Yugoslavs that a unilateral rapprochement with Bulgaria and Italy would be much resented by Yugoslavia's Balkan allies.<sup>13</sup> Actions such as Paul's clarified the basic reality that the Balkan Pact did not replace existing Balkan tensions, but was superimposed upon them. Stoyadinovich, the Yugoslavian Premier, told Eden that Britain "should misunderstand the position if we thought it was dictated by anything but fear".<sup>14</sup> Fear, distrust, and dislike were hardly sufficient bases for a general settlement.

It is a fact too that Bulgaria remained an especially disruptive factor.<sup>15</sup> For the Turks, this was a most annoying problem because Turkey itself had quite cordial relations with Bulgaria. Until 1939, the Bulgarian frontier was unfortified on either side. There was no secret why this was so. According to Colonel Courson, the French Military Attaché in Ankara, the frontier was unfortified because neither Bulgaria or Turkey saw

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<sup>13</sup> Documents in International Relations, 1937, p. 420. As Medlicott points out, similar Yugoslav actions in 1933, had led to the Graeco-Turkish Treaty of Mutual Guarantee of 14 Sep 1933 and, to some extent, to the Balkan Pact itself.

<sup>14</sup> Speaking in reference to the Greek position in particular. PRO Air 9/5 Eden to Campbell (Belgrade) 14 Oct 1937.

<sup>15</sup> Bulgarian councils were deep, even by Balkans standards. For example, in March 1935, Prince Paul told Neville Henderson that the Bulgarian Military Attache had suggested to the Yugoslavian General Staff the possibility that the Venizelos revolt be used as an opportunity to strip Greece of Salonika and Greek Thrace. While Bulgaria usually conformed to Balkan Pact policy, it was always willing to stir up differences for its own advantages. PRO FO 1011/36 Cliphant to Loraine 25 Nov 1936.

advantage in fortifying it.<sup>16</sup> The problem, however, was that Bulgaria was still smarting from its losses earlier in the century. Its relations with Rumania were strained over the South Dobrudja, with Greece, over Salonika and Greek Thrace, and with Yugoslavia, Bulgaria remained mired in the ancient and bitter quarrel over Macedonia. Bulgaria, unreconciled to its neighbours, in itself, by its uncompromising attitude, made complete Balkan accord impossible and ensured that no Balkan combination could ever look outward with complete confidence knowing that Bulgaria remained aloof in the centre of the peninsula. All of this notwithstanding, Bulgaria's decision to follow a policy parallel to that of its neighbours during the Abyssinian crisis, and a noticeable thaw in its relations with Yugoslavia in 1937, seemed to indicate that a policy of greater accommodation with the other Balkan nations was not unthinkable.<sup>17</sup> It was less that Bulgaria was irreconcilable, than that its neighbours balked at the price of reconciliation.

All of these disputes were complicated by the hostility of the Kings toward each other, and of all towards King Boris of Bulgaria. Prince Paul of Yugoslavia and King Carole of Roumania were both convinced that Boris was not to be trusted. "The Serbs", Prince Paul told the British Ambassador in Belgrade, "knew the Bulgarians well, for they had twice been betrayed by them, they had always

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<sup>16</sup> DDF Series II, Vol III no. 203 Col Courson to Daladier 25 Aug 1936.

<sup>17</sup> DDF Series II, Vol VII no. 183 Poncet to Delbos 3 Nov 1937.

been, and would always remain a treacherous people".<sup>18</sup> King Boris, according to Prince Paul, "is foxy as his father, only with more depth" and was "all things to all men".<sup>19</sup> Boris was equally certain that neither of his royal cousins were trustworthy. To the disinterested observer, it appears that all had excellent reasons for their reservations. Dr. Aras seems to have been influenced in his own opinions by Prince Paul. Bulgaria, Aras told Loraine, was not yet ready for a greater part in Balkan politics. The greatest obstacle to its becoming so, in Aras' judgement, was the character of its King. Boris, Aras said, was "well educated, affable, and not lacking in charm, but devious, suspicious, preferring the by-lanes to the high roads of policy, and too many sided".<sup>20</sup>

**Hatay:**

Another factor making Dr. Aras' policy difficult to realize was the continued controversy regarding the status of Hatay. French participation in a Mediterranean pact was important for the Turks and would be vital if the idea were to be sold to the Northern Balkan nations; but the continual decay of the situation in Hatay hardly argued for Franco-Turkish rapprochement.

On 5 December 1936, Ponsot, the French Ambassador in Ankara, talked to Atatürk. Atatürk said that he considered it crucial that the Hatay problem be solved. Turkey, he said, did not seek territorial revision, but friendship. Disorder in Hatay jeopardized

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<sup>18</sup> PRO FO 800/309 Belgrade to Halifax 4 Nov 1938.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 3 Dec 1936.

this. The next day Aras gave Ponsot Atatürk's proposals: condominium rule, demilitarization, and an open door for trade.<sup>21</sup> The terms were not accepted and the situation in the Sanjak continued to deteriorate. On 11 December 1936, Ponsot saw Atatürk again. Atatürk spoke of the urgent requirement that order in the Sanjak be maintained.<sup>22</sup> Somewhat later, Aras, angry at what he thought to be French foot-dragging, told M. Antonescu in Geneva that only two powers counted in the Mediterranean -- Britain and Italy -- and since France did not seem disposed to be cooperative, he was on his way to talk to Ciano. "The Alexandretta business" Eden wrote, was "likely to prove extremely tiresome".<sup>23</sup>

There were several factors arguing against a simple compromise of the type desired by Atatürk. France claimed that it had only limited ability to make decisions regarding the future of the Sanjak because it was a mandate and not a French possession. As Blum told Aras, if the argument continued on a judicial basis, Turkey had no case and risked tying France's hands. The Sanjak had been given up unconditionally to the League, which had given it to France.<sup>24</sup> The real problem, however, was that any kind of compromise went against the grain in Paris and the "Syriens" in the Chamber were swift to point to any concession as dishonourable

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<sup>21</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IV no. 112 Ponsot to Delbos 8 Dec 1936.

<sup>22</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IV no. 131 Ponsot to Delbos 11 Dec 1936.

<sup>23</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 21 Jan 1936. See also, Survey of International Affairs, 1936, p. 767-782.

<sup>24</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 21 Jan 1937.

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<sup>24</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 21 Jan 1937.



surrender. About this time too, Britain became uncomfortably aware that a "Turkish" settlement would only set a precedent for Danzig upon which the Nazis would be certain to seize.<sup>25</sup> Finally, there was the fact that the population of Hatay, the largest portion of which was Turkish, was unwilling to accept a compromise.<sup>26</sup> By the end of the year, there was widespread rioting in the Sanjak contained only by police gunfire.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the concentration of forces on the border, Aras assured Loraine on 7 January, that talk of a Turco-French war was nonsense. The Turkish Army, he assured Loraine, had always understood that the maximum Turkish reaction would be bad relations.<sup>28</sup> By "bad relations" it seems probable, however, that

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<sup>25</sup> PRO FO 1011/38 Oliphant to Loraine 10 Dec 1936.

<sup>26</sup> In March 1938, the population of the Sanjak was 48% Turkish with the remainder being a mixture of Arabs and Armenians -- neither of these later groups having any interest in becoming citizens of the Turkish Republic. The Turkish minority, however, controlled twenty-two of forty seats in the Assembly. The Turkish block was able to freeze the action of government, thereby furthering their aims by increasing the political instability of the Sanjak. G. Bonnet, De Munich à la Guerre, (Plon: Paris) 1976. p. 68-69. See also, S. Logrigg, Syria and Lebanon Under French Mandate, (Oxford: London) 1958.

<sup>27</sup> BIA, Vol XIV, No. 11 (27 Nov 1937), p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E171/3/89 Loraine to Eden 7 Jan 1937. The early Kemalists accepted totally Hinsley's dictum that "there can be no change and settlement, not even peacefully, so long as struggle is avoided. You may count on the fingers of one hand the occasions on which agreements have been made and changes of sovereignty or transfers of territory have occurred in the modern world without the assistance of the possibility of a resort to force, if not of force itself. It is the possibility that force will be used, when it is not actual force, that alone makes agreements and changes possible -- and that alone can stop them". F. Hinsley, Power and the Pursuit of Peace, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1963. p. 318. The Turkish build-up in Cilicia closely paralleled

Aras did not exclude the use of Turkish influence in the Balkans to cripple French diplomacy. Turkish obstruction, for instance, seems to have played some part in the decision by the Balkan Entente to reject an alliance proposed by France in January 1937.<sup>29</sup>

On 21 January, Aras spoke to Eden about Hatay. Turkey, he said, was angered by parallels drawn in the French press between Turkey's position on Hatay and German actions in the Rhineland. Eden reassured him that "Turkey had hitherto given an admirable example to Europe by the legality and correctness of her policy. It would be a great mistake if she were to adopt another line". Britain, he told Aras, attached great importance to a satisfactory settlement, and added that he felt able to "speak frankly to him [Aras] on this point because there no country with whom our relations were better".<sup>30</sup> Blum, he promised, would come through. He, Eden, had spoken to him in Paris. Aras suggested that Britain should arbitrate the issue. Eden answered that he was certain that compromise would be reached, and would help, insofar as possible, to reach it.<sup>31</sup> Eden was as good as his word. Throughout the Hatay negotiations 1936-1937, both sides were advised and assisted by Britain, the Government of India, and the Russian Foreign Ministry -- each of these parties, for its own reasons, anxious to prevent

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that in Eastern Anatolia at the time of the Mosul crisis and indicated policy resolution rather than an aggressive policy.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 424/282 R208/43/67 Lorraine to Eden 8 Jan 1937.

<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 21 Jan 1937.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

a Franco-Turkish split.<sup>32</sup> On 26 January 1937, Eden informed the Foreign Office that agreement had been reached.

[The] Turkish Foreign Minister, who had been in the depth of depression earlier in the day, is correspondingly elated this evening. He explained to me how failure this morning would have been the end of him, and throughout these negotiations the formidable figure of his master has been clearly visible to us all in a by no means distant background.<sup>33</sup>

As with Montreaux, the decisive factor seems to have been a discovery, this time by Paris, that it did not have the strength to oppose the Turks. If the Turks were driven to settle the argument by force they would quickly overrun Syria. The best that could be arranged would be a shift at defence in the Lebanese mountains.<sup>34</sup> Mindful that there can be no argument when only one nation can have a voice, and frightened by the concentration of Turkish troops on the Syrian border, France conceded something like Atatürk's proposed settlement in June 1937.<sup>35</sup> Atatürk welcomed the agreement

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<sup>32</sup> PRO CAB 23/88 Cab 23(37) 2 Jan 1937. On 29 Jan, Inonu thanked Litvinov and Eden in the Grand National Assembly for their assistance in finding a satisfactory formula. Eden in particular, he said, had from the first day of negotiations demonstrated his concern for the interests of the Republic. Inonu, p. 301-302. See also, G. Bonnet, De Munich a la Guerre, (Plon: Paris) 1967. p. 270-271.

<sup>33</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Eden to FO 26 Jan 1937.

<sup>34</sup> PRO CAB 29(160) AFC(J)26 Near East French Delegation 3 Apr 1939. It is improbable that the Turks were contemplating actual war against the French, but that the concentration of forces on the frontiers was intended to give them political leverage -- as at the time of the Mosul crisis.

<sup>35</sup> See DDF Series II, Vol VI no. 135 Ponsot to Delbos 28 Jun 1937; Treaty Guaranteeing the The Territorial Integrity of the Sandjak of Alexandretta, Resmi Gazete, 25 June 1937, No. 3640; Treaty Ensuring Turkish-Syrian Border and Joint Declaration and Protocol Annexed to the Declaration, Resmi Gazete, 25 June 1937,

as a further step in Turkey's policy of reconciliation with all nations.<sup>36</sup> Paris, anxious to avoid further humiliation, attempted to present the agreement as a diplomatic victory. Menemencioğlu, more caustic and less conciliatory than his master, told the German Charge, that the French should not speak of victory after having been brought to make concessions only after two years of bitter opposition.<sup>37</sup>

The agreement proved to be only a respite and conditions in the Sanjak continued to deteriorate. On 23 June 1938, the Turkish Ambassador told Ciano that Turkish troops would enter the Sanjak the following week. If Paris reacted, he said, the troops would still enter. "Whatever situation may arise, it will resolve itself into a grave crisis for France, and even into a grave loss of [French] prestige through the Middle East. Such, at least," Ciano concluded, "is the opinion in Ankara".<sup>38</sup> The Turks did not have to invade. By June 1938, the French had come to the conclusion that some minor disruption in the Chamber of Deputies and the loss of a little face in the Middle East were a small price to pay for good relations with Turkey -- particularly if relations could be

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No. 3640; and, Joint Declaration Between France and Turkey Regarding Collaboration in Case of an Aggression which would lead to War in the Mediterranean Sea, 23 Jun 1939.

<sup>36</sup> Atatürk's speech to the Grand National Assembly 1 Nov 1937, Documents of International Affairs, 1937, p. 414.

<sup>37</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, no. 414, Ankara to Ribbentrop 22 Aug 1938.

<sup>38</sup> G. Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, (Odhams Press: London), 1948, p. 219. Entry for 23 Jun 1938.

cemented in some sort of treaty relationship.<sup>39</sup> On 4 July, a treaty of Amity was signed by Dr. Aras and Ponsot, the French Ambassador.<sup>40</sup> On 14 July, Turkish troops did enter the Sanjak -- to help the French restore order.<sup>41</sup>

Britain's helpful attitude during the crisis of July 1938 convinced the Turks that the Hatay negotiations might provide a good opening for another attempt to obtain a British alliance. Turkey, Aras told Ponsot, would gladly enter into a tripartite agreement if England were willing.<sup>42</sup> Paris offered a bilateral arrangement. Ankara insisted that any treaty must be tripartite. On 8 October, Bonnet proposed a treaty -- Anglo-French-Turkish -- providing for: benevolent neutrality in war, cooperation to remedy the situation if any signatory were attacked by a third party, engagement to consult in accordance with higher interests if the attack continued, and a promise to deny the use of territory to any aggressor.<sup>43</sup> London had not consistently closed the front door to a Turkish alliance to have France let it in the back, nor was it so certain that it wanted a binding alliance with France in this part

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<sup>39</sup> DDF Series I, Vol X no. 31 Bonnet to Ankara, Beirut 15 June 1938.

<sup>40</sup> The Treaty provided for: Nonaggression in the event of an attack by a third part; that neither would provide aid to a power attacking the other; and, that both powers would cooperate in defence of the Sanjak. DDF Series II, Vol X no. 142.

<sup>41</sup> Politique Etrangere, Vol III, No 5 (Oct 1938), p. 499. See also, Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol I, p. 481-92.

<sup>42</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XI no. 342 Ponsot to Paris 24 Sep 1938.

<sup>43</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XII no. 54 Bonnet to Ponsot 8 Oct 1938.

of the world. As Cadogan noted, "Such an agreement might involve a French commitment for His Majesty's Government and that it might therefore present a point of considerable difficulty".<sup>44</sup> Loraine wrote on 17 November in support of the proposed alliance.<sup>45</sup> Colville minuted that Fethi Okyar had not even mentioned this proposal. He doubted that he would.<sup>46</sup> By 18 November, losing patience and desiring an answer of some sort, the French were trying to stampede Aras with talk about the German threat. Aras wasn't buying it. He did not fear Germany, he told Kammerer, so long as France existed. "If France wanted Turkey's friendship she must act through London".<sup>47</sup> On 22 November, the British Cabinet met to consider this question. While it appreciated the utility of such an alliance as a tool against German influence and expansion in the Balkans, it decided to decline the proposed alliance and informed the French Government:

we could not put such a scheme into effect unless Greece was included; and, further, that an alliance compromising Great Britain, Turkey and Greece would be certain to arouse suspicion in the mind of Italy.<sup>48</sup>

Therefore, HMS concluded, Britain could not join unless Italy joined; and since an alliance including Italy would be pointless,

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<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 371/21929 E6532/91/44 Telecon Cadogan/Phipps 4 Nov 1938.

<sup>45</sup> PRO FO 371/21929 E7045/91/44 Loraine to FO 17 Nov 1938.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Colville Minute 22 Nov 1938.

<sup>47</sup> PRO FO 371/21929 E7082/91/44 Loraine to FO 18 Nov 1938.

<sup>48</sup> PRO CAB 23/96 Cab 56(38) 22 Nov; and, DDF Series II, Vol XII no. 338 London to Paris 20 Nov 1938.

"we had reached the conclusion that the best plan was to be content with the existing position, and not to proceed with the proposed alliance".<sup>49</sup> It was the old dilemma once again. At the end of the month Loraine received his instructions from London. He told Saraçoğlu that London could not, at present, consider participating in such an alliance. Saraçoğlu, he thought, had not been offended.<sup>50</sup> Offended or not, Balkan Embassies began to report rumours that Turkey was wavering in its determination to have nothing to do with the Axis.<sup>51</sup> The most that could be salvaged were Franco-Turkish talks aiming at the joint defence of Hatay.<sup>52</sup>

The 1938 detente also provided no permanent solution. By January 1939, the situation in Hatay was deteriorating again, and it was becoming quite obvious that neither Turkey nor the newly constituted Republic of Hatay would be satisfied with anything but full annexation.<sup>53</sup> Bonnet deplored Ankara's new stridency and

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> PRO FO 371/21929 E7225/91/44 Loraine to FO 1 Dec 1938.

<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 371/21929 E135/135/44 Waterlow (Athens) to FO 8 Jan 1939.

<sup>52</sup> DDF Series II, Vol X Proces Verbal Supreme Council of National Defence 24 Aug 1938. In rather the same way, the Turco-Greek Treaty of June 1930, had been based on the dynamics of the population exchange and compensation agreements of the previous decade. See, E. Vere-Hodge, Turkish Foreign Policy 1918-1948, (Geneva: Geneva), 1950. p. 57.

<sup>53</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIII no. 404 Ankara to Paris 13 Jan 1939. As early as December 1939, it had been apparent that the settlement could not endure. On 7 December, in response to what it termed "anti-Turkish propaganda" carried about by French officials, Turkey denounced its Treaty of Friendship with Syria. BIA, Vol XIV, No. 13 (25 Dec 1937), p. 32.

insisted that on the question of final sovereignty there could be no negotiation because Hatay was part of the Syrian mandate, and as such, was not solely a matter to be settled bilaterally.<sup>54</sup> By February, the situation had deteriorated to the point where Massigli, the new French Ambassador in Ankara, was writing that if the question were not settled finally, nothing would be possible in Franco-Turkish relations.<sup>55</sup> From Moscow, M. Naggiar advised Paris that the Turkish Ambassador was saying that Turkey feared that France might be forced to cede all or part of Syria to Italy, and that Ankara doubted the ability of Paris to withstand German and Italian pressure.<sup>56</sup> From Beirut, M. Puaux was advising that France should ignore Turkish warnings. It was not conceivable, he thought, that Turkey would ever be Germany's Near Eastern Jackal; it was also hard to imagine what more Turkey could do for France than stay neutral in the event of European war. Do nothing, he advised, and get England to use its influence in Ankara.<sup>57</sup> Massigli advised that in his opinion such a course would be fatal. Turkey, he

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<sup>54</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIII no. 437 Bonnet Circulaire 27 Jan 1939.

<sup>55</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIV no. 23 Massigli to Paris 22 Feb 1939. Massigli was exiled to Ankara from Paris during Bonnet's purge of hawks in October 1938. Massigli was well known for his pro-British and anti-German views. See, R. Massigli, La Turquie Devant la Guerre. Mission a Ankara 1939-1940, (Paris) 1964; and, D. Watt, How War Came, (Mandarin: London) 1990, p. 73

<sup>56</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIV no. 114 Naggiar to Bonnet 14 Feb 1939. This would explain an otherwise rather cryptical declaration of Atatürk's that interference of third parties in Franco-Turkish dealings would not be permitted. Vol XIII no. 362.

<sup>57</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIV no. 140 Puaux to Bonnet 18 Feb 1938.



thought, would pursue the matter to its conclusion. What would Paris do, he wondered, if Hatay simply declared its union with Turkey? Passivity, Massigli advised, would not be the best, but the worst possible policy.<sup>58</sup> Massigli was right about one thing. The Turks did intend to pursue the matter to its conclusion, and Hatay remained a disruptive factor in Turkey's search for an accommodation with the West until June 1939.

#### **Changing the Guard:**

Meanwhile, changes in the leadership of both Britain and Turkey had made movement toward a bilateral combination much less likely. On 28 May 1937 Neville Chamberlain replaced Stanley Baldwin as Prime Minister of Great Britain. On 20 February 1938 Anthony Eden resigned as Foreign Minister and was replaced by Lord Halifax. On 10 November Kemal Atatürk died and was followed as President by İsmet İnönü. İnönü moved quickly to replace Dr. Aras with Şükri Saraçoğlu at the Turkish Foreign Ministry. With the succession at the British Embassy of Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugesson, on 22 February 1939, the change from the old guard was complete.<sup>59</sup> In London, the change of personnel marked a change in policy. In Ankara, the new men produced a change in diplomatic style tantamount to a shift in policy. In each case, the movement produced was away from the closeness of the Nyon period.

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<sup>58</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIV no. 154 Massigli to Bonnet 20 Feb; and no. 250 Massigli to Bonnet 2 Mar 1939.

<sup>59</sup> CC KNAT 1/13. Knatchbull-Hugesson took over from Loraine on 22 February, and presented his letter of credence to İnönü on 28 February 1939.

**Baldwin, Chamberlain, and Eden:**

In Britain, the Premiership of Neville Chamberlain produced a significant change in Britain's foreign policy as uncertainty and drift gave way to the policy of appeasement vigorously pursued. Stanley Baldwin was bored by Foreign Policy. None of his biographers have ever been bold enough to suggest otherwise. Neville Chamberlain also was little interested in foreign policy, but while Baldwin's disinterest led to neglect, Chamberlain's led to an energetic attempt -- since labelled appeasement -- to settle international disputes at their source. Chamberlain hoped, in this way, to quiet the vexatious international situation sufficient to allow HMG to turn again to domestic issues. Baldwin had left foreign policy to the Foreign Minister. Chamberlain did not. Chamberlain's interest, however, was confined primarily to the great questions -- Germany, Italy and Japan -- but it was inevitable that his activities here would have an impact on associated questions.

A question strongly influenced by Chamberlain's great policies was the developing Anglo-Turkish relationship. For Chamberlain, the question of Turkey was entirely associated and subordinate to those of Germany and Italy, and the question of Italy, ancillary to that of Germany. He did not think deeply about Turkey but accepted the judgement of the professionals as a lawyer does his brief. The Foreign Office convinced him that Anglo-Turkish relations were important; but the COS persuaded him to an even greater extent that the Italians would resent anything too formal or too close and

insisted that the threat from Germany would not permit Britain to divert any resources to account for possible Italian hostility. For Chamberlain, no benefit to be gained from Turkey would off-set Italian hostility. He could support no initiative likely to hamper the appeasement of Italy and was convinced that an alliance with Turkey would constitute such an initiative.

It was precisely in his Mediterranean policy that Chamberlain clashed with Eden. Eden had never accepted the view of the Service Chiefs that Italy was a crucial factor; nor did he accept their contention that the appeasement of Italy and alliance with Turkey were incompatible. For the COS, Italy was one of three threats -- Germany, Japan, Italy -- each of which would require the full power of the Empire to deal with adequately, and because Italy was most apt to act in tandem with one of the others at some grave time of crisis, the COS feared it as much as, or even more than, either of the other two. While Eden recognized the Italian danger, he did not believe that Mussolini was sincere in either amity or enmity. He was also convinced that to rule out entirely any thought of conflict with Italy would be to hamstring British foreign policy to such an extent that conflict became more rather than less likely. Thus, for Eden, Italy was more a complication to be dealt with than a danger to be appeased. Appeasement of Italy, he constantly warned, "might be taken for flabbiness" and increased the danger from Italy by rewarding, rather than punishing, Italian

impudence.<sup>60</sup>

Had Eden continued to direct Britain's regional policy, the implications for Anglo-Turkish relations were obvious. If Britain accepted the risk of conflict with Italy it would have to develop its political relations in the Mediterranean accordingly. Potential allies, as followed from British war planning for the Mediterranean, would become important. Turkey was Britain's most important potential regional ally. In effect, through the acceptance of possible confrontation with Italy, Eden's policy pointed toward alignment with Turkey, and through sanctions, Montreaux and Nyon, reluctantly, and with many second thoughts, this was the path Britain had followed. The Turks were zealous supporters of this movement. In most respects their analysis of the Mediterranean situation was identical with Eden's.

In the Baldwin years, Eden had been given considerable latitude. First at Geneva and then at the Foreign Office, he had followed his own policy with reference to the Cabinet only in great matters. If sometimes the resultant policy seemed contradictory -- Cabinet in form: Eden in detail -- Baldwin was not a man to insist on absolute consistency. After Chamberlain took over, however, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister continually clashed regarding

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<sup>60</sup> PRO CAB 23/86 Cab 63(36) 4 Nov. See also for the differences between Eden and Chamberlain, V.G. Lennox, "Anthony Eden", Foreign Affairs, Vol 16 (Jul 1938), p. 691-703; Avon, Facing the Dictators, (Cassell: London) 1962; A. Peters, A. Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office 1931-1938, (St. Martin's: New York) 1986; R. Rhodes, Anthony Eden. A Biography. (McGraw Hill: New York) 1987; and, Survey of International Affairs, Vol I, 1938, p. 129-137.

Britain's Mediterranean policy.<sup>61</sup>

At the last cabinet meeting before his resignation Eden warned that if there was another "surrender to the dictators. The only result would be panic among our friends and a rush to make a composition with Italy and Germany. There would be an impression of scuttle in England, and an alienation of public opinion".<sup>62</sup> Nothing, he warned, should be done for Italy until it had demonstrated its goodwill. Chamberlain answered that, while Eden's view might normally be the most rational course, Italy was hardly a rational state. It "resembled a hysterical woman", and it was therefore necessary to "make some effort to alleviate the situation".<sup>63</sup>

At the next Cabinet meeting, on 20 February, it was decided that the Italian Ambassador, Grandi, should be informed that "HMG are enthusiastically in favour of conversations". Eden announced his resignation. Chamberlain agreed that the differences were no longer of degree, as the other Cabinet members had hoped, but of "deeper outlook".<sup>64</sup> Soon thereafter, on 16 April, HMG announced

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<sup>61</sup> A clash was probable from Dec 1937 when Eden circularized his memorandum De Jure Recognition as a Bargaining Counter 29 Dec 1937. An exchange of letters followed which clearly demonstrated the divergence in the policies of the two men. PRO FO 954/6 Eden Memo 29 Dec 1937; Neville Chamberlain to Eden 31 Dec 1937; Eden to Chamberlain 9 Jan 1938; and, Chamberlain to Eden 13 Jan 1938.

<sup>62</sup> PRO CAB 23/92 Cab 6(38) 19 Feb 1938.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> PRO CAB 23/92 Cab 7(38) 20 Feb 1938.

another ill-fated Anglo-Italian understanding in the Mediterranean.<sup>65</sup>

Eden's Near Eastern policy, which tended toward closer relations with the Turks, was side tracked by his resignation. Thereafter, it was not that Anglo-Turkish relations became less friendly, but that they ceased moving towards the greater and more formal friendship which had seemed inevitable. They were not caught by contrary winds, but stranded by doldrums.

Eden's departure from the Foreign Office caused Ankara considerable disquiet. There had long been rumours in the Balkan capitals that all was not well in London. By February, the talk was that Eden was finished. Dr. Aras spoke to Loraine on 17 February 1938 and asked him to clarify the situation. Loraine told Aras: "I had no shadow of evidence that they [the rumours] had any foundation whatsoever in fact and that I for my part disbelieved them".<sup>66</sup> Three days later, Eden announced his resignation to the Cabinet.<sup>67</sup> On 23 February he announced it to the House of Commons.

In Turkey Eden had always been perceived as an ally, and most leading Turks very much preferred his policy to Chamberlain's. Dr. Aras, had worked closely with Eden in Geneva and counted him a personal friend. In Ankara, there were many who saw in Eden's resignation a sign that the policy of HMG was "to try to placate

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<sup>65</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol I, p. 137-143.

<sup>66</sup> PRO FO 954/28 Loraine to Eden 17 Feb 1938.

<sup>67</sup> PRO CAB 23/92 Cab 7(38) 20 Feb 1938.

its enemies by abandoning its friends";<sup>68</sup> a turning from the League to Rome; worse, an indication that HMG was taking instruction from Rome. Eden's fall gave substance to the Turks' worst fear -- that Britain was seeking an exclusive accommodation with the Italians. Loraine wrote on 23 February, that Ankara was considerably shaken by Eden's fall -- Dr. Aras and Atatürk particularly so. Eden had been, they thought, Turkey's advocate in London. In Government circles, Loraine detected an "intense current of sympathy", a profound sense of loss, and considerable anxiety for the future.<sup>69</sup>

**Atatürk and Aras, İnönü and Saracoğlu:**

Had Atatürk remained alive, it is possible that the lead lacking from London might have come from him. İsmet İnönü was not the force his master had been. Where Atatürk had always been a commander, İnönü had typically been a Chief of Staff. While Atatürk had started and led the revolution, İnönü had come from Constantinople only after it was well begun. Atatürk had founded Kemalism and could not, by definition, be bound by it: İnönü, as often as not, was led by the doctrine that was his master's principle legacy. Atatürk had commanded the CHP. İnönü often was required to propitiate it. It was no mistake that Dr. Aydemir entitled his biography of Atatürk Tek Adam (The Man Alone) and that of İnönü İkinci Adam (The Second Man). Where Atatürk had led, İnönü

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<sup>68</sup> Hansard, Lords Vol CIV col 886-944, speech by Addison 23 Feb 1938.

<sup>69</sup> PRO FO 1011/65 Eden to Halifax 23 Feb 19.

was often pushed. Where Atatürk had commanded, İnönü could not but be attentive to many voices.

The difference between the two is well illustrated by the rumours concerning the reasons for İnönü's resignation from the Turkish Premiership in October 1937. It was first rumoured that İnönü had been told to resign by Atatürk because of the failure of Dr. Aras to be re-elected to the League Council. For Atatürk, it was said, this was a "needless humiliation".<sup>70</sup> A second rumour was that Atatürk and İnönü had clashed over Turkey's Russian policy at the time of Nyon -- İnönü worried about Russian disapproval, Atatürk anxious to go ahead.<sup>71</sup> Others said that İnönü had complained because Atatürk was giving directions directly to Aras at Nyon without going through the Cabinet. As a variation of these last, some said that İnönü had objected to Nyon as against the spirit of Turkey's undertakings with the Soviet Union. İnönü, still others said, had refused to discuss matters of state at drinking parties at Atatürk's estate at Florya. Atatürk, another rumour

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<sup>70</sup> PRO FO 371/20864 E5753 Morgan to FO 1 Oct 1937. Rendell agreed that this seemed likely. "It was probably fortunate" he wrote, "that M. Aras was not in Turkey at the time". E5754/466/44 Rendell Minute.

<sup>71</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E5612/466/44 Morgan to Eden 23 Sep 1937. Atatürk was at this time extremely annoyed at the Soviets. Ambassador Karakhan, a personal friend, had just been recalled and executed. Three weeks later his successor was also summoned to Moscow; and shortly thereafter, the Soviet Military Attaché. Dining with M. Tartesco (Roumania), Samiy Bey, Loraine, Ponsot, Gakmak, Celâl Bayar and Dr. Aras on the fourteenth anniversary of the Republic, he complained bitterly of the fate of Soviet Generals and Marshals "*hier amis, aujourd'hui disparus*". DDF Series II, Vol VII no. 173 Ponsot to Delbos 1 Nov 1937; and, Vol IX no. 67 Courson to Daladier 28 Mar 1938.



went, was angry because he had been commanded back from a visit to the Syrian frontier by İnönü in January 1937.<sup>72</sup> The official reason, as told by Dr. Aras, was that İnönü was worn out and needed a rest. He had tried to resign four years previously, Aras said, and had finally convinced the President to let him go.<sup>73</sup> Whatever the true reason for İnönü's resignation, the most interesting thing is the common themes running through these rumours arising among and believed by influential Turks. Each reported an attempt by İnönü to assert himself against Atatürk; nearly all have İnönü attempting to moderate some initiative of Atatürk and locate this disagreement within Turkey's Mediterranean policy. Even if the official explanation were true, the rumours speak volumes about the perceived difference in character and style between Atatürk and his successor. Whatever the actual reason, the burden of the rumours seems to indicate that İnönü was pushed out because he was trying to change not the direction, but the velocity of Turkish foreign policy.

Lorraine was inclined to believe the official reason for İnönü's resignation. He thought that after thirteen years in office it was probable that İnönü was indeed beginning to feel the

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<sup>72</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Lorraine to Eden 31 Oct 1937.

<sup>73</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E5612/466/44 op.cit. If the official reason was true, one need feel very sorry for İnönü. On 15 November 1965 he was still in harness and writing Knatchbull-Hugesson: "All the friends that I have worked with including yourself, have departed leaving me by myself. I am still not relieved, and I have no other wish than to be relieved". CC KNAT 2/137.

strain.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, he also considered it possible that the official reason was only a "mot d'ordre" intended to avoid diminishing the reputation of either Atatürk or İnönü.<sup>75</sup> Whatever the case, Loraine doubted that there would be a redirection in Foreign Policy since, as Dr. Aras hastened to assure him, Foreign Policy was the province of the President and Foreign Minister and neither Atatürk or Dr. Aras felt in need of a rest.<sup>76</sup>

In fact, for some time after the announcement of İnönü's retirement it was expected that Dr. Aras would follow shortly. It was not finally clear that Aras would be retained until 27 October. Aras's continued hold on the Foreign Ministry does not necessarily mean that his failure to be re-elected to the League Council was not remembered and resented. His retention in order to quiet rumours of dissension within the Turkish ruling circle would be entirely in keeping with contemporary Turkish practice. Aras would be retained because he had failed, in order to draw attention from how much that failure had hurt.<sup>77</sup> In any case, rumours that Dr. Aras would be replaced in the coming year persisted.<sup>78</sup>

Loraine was correct about one thing. There was no change in Turkish foreign policy. On 8 November 1937, Celâl Bayer, the in-

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<sup>74</sup> PRO FO 371/20864 E6453 Loraine to FO 2 Nov 1937.

<sup>75</sup> PRO FO 371/20864 E6670 Loraine to FO 17 Nov 1937.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> PRO FO 371/20864 E6295 Loraine to FO 27 Oct; also, E5859 Morgan to FO 7 Oct 1937.

<sup>78</sup> PRO FO 371/20864 E7644/466/44 Loraine to FO 31 Dec 1937.

coming Premier, announced in the Grand National Assembly that under his administration Turkey's foreign policy would not change. Bayar also was correct, because he would have as little control over foreign policy as had İnönü.<sup>79</sup> While Atatürk lived, he continued to exercise a dominating influence on the formulation of Turkey's foreign policy.

In November 1938, Atatürk died. In London there was uneasiness and some worry for the future. Atatürk had long been considered by the Foreign Office "one of the people whose disappearance no-one in his senses would want at the present time".<sup>80</sup> He had been a rare thing in the 1930s: a friend of Britain not unduly frightened by the dictators. Atatürk was also a strong leader and it is probable that had he continued to guide Turkish policy it would have been less passive than it subsequently became. He was also a leader whose opinions were accorded much weight in Balkan capitals. İnönü, in comparison, was a less decisive man and one among equals in his relations with other Balkan leaders. "The sad sequence of events" Loraine wrote, "has shown that Atatürk's vision was clear, his

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<sup>79</sup> PRO FO 371/20864 E6770 op cit. Bayer's speech from Anadolu Ajansi Dunya Haberleri (attached).

<sup>80</sup> PRO FO 1011/36 Oliphant to Loraine 21 Feb 1935. The British representative at Atatürk's funeral was his old antagonist Field-Marshal Birdwood accompanied by Dudley Pound, then C in C Med. Because he was too feeble to make up part of the procession behind the coffin, Birdwood stood at a position of vantage while the cortege went by. The Turkish soldiers marching in the procession saluted him. He raised his baton in return. Many of the dignitaries of other nations thought that he was being payed some singular and unprecedented honour. PRO FO 1011/93 Hardinge to Loraine 12 Dec 1938; and, Birdwood, Khaki and Gown, (Ward Lock: London) 1941, p. 432.

judgement discerning and that he did not make mistakes . . . There was something almost uncanny about his insight".<sup>81</sup> Hitler's assessment was more succinct. "Since Kemal's death", he said, "Turkey has been ruled by small minds, unsteady, weak men".<sup>82</sup>

In Ankara, Atatürk's death brought Inonu back into the Government as President. Dr. Aras was the first to go. It was said that he was tired and needed a rest.<sup>83</sup> The customary declaration was made that the change did not indicate a shift in policy.<sup>84</sup> His replacement by Şükri Saraçoğlu, a career bureaucrat, gave İnönü complete and effortless control over the Foreign Office because Saraçoğlu was a man forged in İnönü's own mold. Dr. Aras, as Foreign Minister, was often derided as being only Atatürk's "mouthpiece"<sup>85</sup> -- as being "his master's voice".<sup>86</sup> Saraçoğlu too, was the President's man, but in this case the President was İnönü rather than Atatürk. There was no substantive change in policy nor did London expect any. With İnönü as President, Celâl Bayar as Prime Minister, and Saraçoğlu as Foreign Minister, Lorraine wrote, "it was impossible for Turkish policy to change".<sup>87</sup> The

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<sup>81</sup> PRO FO 1011/65 Lorraine to Halifax 25 Nov 1938.

<sup>82</sup> C. Weisband, Turkish Foreign Policy 1943-1945, (Princeton: Princeton) 1973. p. 57.

<sup>83</sup> PRO FO 1011/65 Lorraine to Halifax 17 Nov 1938.

<sup>84</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XII no. 320 Ankara to Paris 12 Nov 1938.

<sup>85</sup> PRO CAB 371/20864 E5660/466/44 Morgan to Eden.

<sup>86</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Lorraine to Eden 29 Nov 1937.

<sup>87</sup> PRO FO 1011/65 Lorraine to Halifax 17 Nov 1938

change, as has been suggested, was not of kind but of character and should be evident to historians if not to contemporaries. Ankara had always been dominated by realists, but in the Atatürk years there had been a leavening of idealism. When Atatürk and Aras were superseded by İnönü and Saraçoğlu this largely passed away.

The 1937-1938 changes then, brought to power in Ankara men much less likely to take the initiative than those they replaced, and in London men particularly disinclined to take the initiative in the Mediterranean. If the development of Anglo-Turkish relations seems to have stalled after Nyon, changes in the leadership of both countries was one of the reasons this was so.

**Dr. Aras and the Search for a British Alliance 1937-1938:**

Turkey, meanwhile, continued to pursue an alliance with Britain as a matter of fixed policy and this remained the case before, during and after the changes in personnel indicated above. The question was never whether Turkey desired a relationship with Britain, but what the nature of such a connection would be.

By the Autumn of 1937, Dr. Aras had fallen quite into the habit of making unilateral guarantees to Britain. Between September and December, Dr. Aras said several times that Turkey would march with Britain if war came. He was, let it be noted, saying this to a wider audience than Britain alone. In January 1938, for instance, Dr. Aras passed an afternoon with the Italian Ambassador on the congenial subject of possible Turkish deployments should war come to the Mediterranean. One of the scenarios discussed, the worried Ambassador rushed to cable Ciano, involved the deployment of

Turkish forces to assist in the defence of the Suez Canal.<sup>88</sup>

On 17 February 1938, Dr. Aras passed a more pleasant afternoon with Loraine. The Turkish General Staff, Aras said, was confident of its ability to defend the Republic and had no worries regarding the future provided that its rearmament program was completed. He raised the question of Staff conversations. Loraine thought that these could be dispensed with for the time being. It was possible that other countries might take offence. Perhaps a visit of Turkish military officials to London, Aras wondered? Not a very good idea Loraine thought. Aras said that he agreed. If things got worse, however, he stressed that the British and Turks must meet to coordinate a common response. "Do you mean as between potential allies?" asked Loraine. "No" answered Aras, "as between certain allies".<sup>89</sup>

One week later, on 23 February, the Turkish approaches received a stamp of approval from the Council of the Balkan Pact then meeting in Ankara. Cooperation in the maintenance of Mediterranean peace, it was decided, would be one of the guiding principles of the foreign policies of pact members.<sup>90</sup> Reacting to Chamberlain's recent courting of Italy,<sup>91</sup> at the same meeting, it

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<sup>88</sup> G. Ciano, Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938, (C.P. Dutton: NY) 1953. p. 66. Entry for 26 Jan 1938.

<sup>89</sup> PRO FO 1011/65 Loraine to Eden 17 Feb 1938.

<sup>90</sup> Albert Mousset, "L'Italie et les Balkans", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 6 (Dec 1939), p. 557.

<sup>91</sup> Eden had resigned the previous week, and Britain was well embarked on the road to the Anglo-Italian understanding of April 1938. See, Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol I, p. 137-

was decided that Greece and Turkey, as the first movement toward reconciliation with Italy, would recognize the Italian conquest of Abyssinia.<sup>92</sup> As was by now usual, the Balkan nations followed a Western attempt to reach accommodation with Italy excluding them by unilaterally associating themselves with the western initiative.

On 12 March 1938, Aras talked again with Loraine and returned to the theme of a possible Anglo-Turkish alliance. Turkey would, Aras said, be Britain's "certain ally" in the next war.<sup>93</sup> Did Aras expect a counter declaration? Loraine thought not. "My sense", he wrote, "is that the Turks have got it wedged into their heads that His Majesty's Government are not going to accept specific commitments".<sup>94</sup> Were these declarations binding? Loraine thought that they were: "Yes", he informed London, "I definitely do [think they are]; and the more so because it is unsolicited, spontaneous, unconditional and unwritten".<sup>95</sup>

Loraine, at this point, seems to have been considerably confused by Dr. Aras's continued assurances of unconditional alignment. By April 1938 Loraine was advising the Foreign Office both that Turkey did not require written assurances and that a more formal engagement was both desired and an excellent idea. The present arrangement, he wrote, was "entirely welcome to the Turkish

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<sup>92</sup> Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol III, p. 442.

<sup>93</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 12 Mar 1937.

<sup>94</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 28 Feb 1937.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

Government".<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, he also wrote that while Turkey would certainly be an ally against either Germany or Italy, it desired a Mediterranean Pact which it regarded as being "of fundamental importance".<sup>97</sup> If not alliance, at least some encouragement, he hoped, might be given the Turks.

Every sign of British interest in Turkey, every British appreciation of the staunchness of Turkish friendship, and of the realities of Turkey's will to peace, will be highly valued in this country; themoreso if it is accompanied by a recognition of the tremendous personal influence in these matters which the President of the Republic had wielded with such conspicuous sagacity and restless energy.<sup>98</sup>

Whitehall was not so confused and was quick to connect Dr. Aras's approaches with his earlier soundings regarding the possibility of a Mediterranean pact. Bowker noted on 20 April that the idea of a Mediterranean Pact "has been declared impractical at the present moment".<sup>99</sup> Baggallay minuted that such a Mediterranean agreement, like a bilateral agreement, would inevitably include "consultation" as one of its provisions and that consultation "would inevitably mean a new British commitment in the Mediterranean".<sup>100</sup> A wider scheme, it was feared, would not free Britain to deal with Germany, but bind Britain to a Mediterranean burden which would negate the benefits of appeasement with commitment. In London, in 1938, the

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<sup>96</sup> PRO FO 1011/76 Loraine to the King 24 Apr 1938.

<sup>97</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E2170/135/44 Loraine to Halifax 9 Apr 1938.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.



idea was anathemata.

The Germans were not so afraid of commitment. Earlier in the month, Ribbentrop had suggested to Menemencioğlu that Turkey consider joining the Anti-Comintern. On 9 April 1938, Dr. Aras responded in unequivocal terms.

Turkey enjoys very friendly relations with Russia and can never forget the support and assistance which Russia gave her in the early days of the Kemalist Republic. Turkey also enjoys the friendliest possible relations with the United Kingdom, which besides being devoted to peace and security is giving her assistance in her development which goes beyond Turkey's expectations. It would therefore be utterly impossible for Turkey to belong to any combination or make any engagement which could conceivably be harmful either to the United Kingdom or to Russia.<sup>101</sup>

To underscore their very definite refusal, the Turks issued a joint declaration with the new Russian Ambassador, Terentief, to the effect that relations between the two nations continued in unimpaired amity.<sup>102</sup>

Since the Turks had to be disappointed in the matter of the desired treaty relationship, Loraine returned to his plea that some bone ought to be thrown them -- perhaps the visit of a Cabinet Minister. The last person of any significance to come to Ankara had been King Edward VIII, but he had come informally, and, though Loraine was too polite to say it, had little real power.<sup>103</sup> Dr.

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<sup>101</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E2170/135/44 Loraine to Halifax 9 Apr 1938.

<sup>102</sup> Pierre Rondot, "La Turquie et les Problemes Mediterraneens", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 5 (Oct 1939), p. 541.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Aras and İnönü, in comparison, had been to London several times. The Foreign Office thought perhaps the C in C Med might be convinced to pay a visit,<sup>104</sup> but after the 1938 Credit Agreement, decided that even this would be too much. Colville wrote:

The adoption of some method of gratifying the Turks, and of bolstering up our own prestige, has now lost its immediate importance as we have been able to shew our appreciation on a cash basis. We can therefore consider the matter in a more leisurely way.<sup>105</sup>

Orme Sargent added on 22 June, "I sincerely trust that no further *doceurs* will be doled out to Turkey until something has been done for Greece and possibly other members of the Balkan Entente".<sup>106</sup>

The following month, Loraine informed London that Celâl Bayer, the Prime Minister, and Dr. Aras desired to come to London.<sup>107</sup>

Halifax replied:

I feel that it would be unwise to pay this further attention to Turkey until his Majesty's Government are able to offer some evidence of friendship to Greece, as that country, since [the] conclusion of [the] Anglo-Turkish credit agreements, has felt strong sense of grievance at being left out in the cold.<sup>108</sup>

On 5 October, perhaps driven by the logic of the Czechoslovakian crisis, Dr. Aras made his bluntest approach to

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<sup>104</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E2170/135/44 Baxter to Loraine 20 May 1938.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., Colville Minute. "Cash basis" referred to the Anglo-Turkish credit agreement of 1938, see above.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. Sargent Minute 22 Jun 1938.

<sup>107</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E4930/135/44 Loraine to Oliphant 1 Aug 1938.

<sup>108</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E5809/135/44 Halifax to Loraine 20 Oct 1938.

date. After requesting information on Metaxas, and promising that the Turks were determined to fulfil all their obligations to the allies, he told Loraine that Turkey would "be very willing to discuss engagements to be gone into with the United Kingdom of any substance and in any form which His Majesty's Government wish to propose as acceptable to themselves".<sup>109</sup> London did not respond. Anxious to stress the utility of the Turkish connection, later in the month, Dr. Aras went so far as to offer to underwrite Britain's regional commitments. On 28 October 1938 he told Loraine that he had been talking to the Egyptian and Iraqi delegates to the League. They had expressed their fears concerning the coming war and declared that they expected that their countries would attempt to remain neutral. Dr. Aras said that he had told them that if either of these countries were directly attacked it could expect Turkish aid, and even more, that Turkey might be able to get the Balkan nations to help too. Loraine warned Aras that Turkish participation might entail the use of Izmir [Smyrna] or other ports as bases. Under the conditions postulated, Dr. Aras thought that this might be possible.<sup>110</sup> HMG did not even nibble at this bait. The only conclusion drawn from Aras's approach was that it might be possible for the RN to use Izmir as a base in the event of war in the Mediterranean.<sup>111</sup> In January, the Turks renewed their invitation

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<sup>109</sup> PRO FO 424/282 R8016/7671/67 Loraine to Halifax 5 Oct 1938.

<sup>110</sup> PRO FO 1011/65 Loraine to Eden 17 Feb 1938.

<sup>111</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E6800/135/44 Loraine to Halifax 28 Oct 1938. CID conclusion No. 157 (Secret) 28 Mar 1936 (attached).

to Ciano to visit Ankara.<sup>112</sup>

Munich, to judge by the official record, does not seem to have unduly alarmed the Turks, rather, they expressed themselves as supportive of Chamberlain's initiative. Loraine wrote to Halifax that Dr. Aras, İnönü, Celâl Bayer and Atatürk had all been impressed by Chamberlain's actions.<sup>113</sup> They looked to it to provide two or three years of peace. France and Germany, they judged, had been kept from disaster, and Mussolini had emerged in the entirely unexpected role of peace-maker.<sup>114</sup> On 6 March 1939, Knatchbull-Hugesson noted in his diary, that Saraçoğlu was "most cheerful about everything, the solidarity of the Balkan Entente and even the general situation in Europe which he thought greatly improved with last month -- a tribute to British diplomacy".<sup>115</sup> Whether Saraçoğlu was sincere or simply trying to conform to British policy once more is difficult to say. Celâl Bayer, the Turkish Prime Minister, on the other hand, was anything but cheered by the international situation and combined relief that war had

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<sup>112</sup> Ciano decided not to go. He confided to his diary that there would be no point. G. Ciano, Ciano Diaries 1939-1943. Entry for 31 Jan 1939; and, Ciano Diaries 1937-1938. Entries for 9 Sep, 6 Oct, and 5 Nov 1938.

<sup>113</sup> PRO FO 424/282 C11504/5302/18 Loraine to Halifax 3 Oct 1938; also, CAB 53/47 COS 878(JP) Alliance with Turkey 15 Apr 1939. FO to COS 11 Apr 1939 (enclosed). See also, P. Ireland, "The Turkish Foreign Policy After Munich", The Political Quarterly, Vol X (1939), No 2. p. 185-201.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 6 Mar 1939.

been avoided with a healthy dose of anxiety for the future.<sup>116</sup> Whatever the thinking of individual Turkish statesmen, what is certain is that every Balkan nation including Turkey sought to reinsure itself with Germany after Munich, and that German prestige had been given an enormous fillip by its diplomatic victory coming so hard upon Funk's Balkan tour.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, Turkish *sang froid* is difficult to reconcile with the disappearance of Turkey's largest armaments supplier and the most effective shield of the Balkan peninsula against attack from the European north. It is probable that from this juncture we must date the gradual reassessment of Turkish foreign policy in the face of the enormous increase in the seriousness of the German menace.

Early in March 1939, Dr. Aras tried again.<sup>118</sup> The Turks, he told Loraine, were satisfied with their existing treaty relationships and would uphold them. The only troubling point, he said, was whether Britain would be with Turkey if it were attacked in the Mediterranean. Turkey would go all the way, he said, but only if Great Britain were with her. Loraine warned him that such a policy might involve Turkey in war against a nonBalkan power. Aras said that he understood this, and that Turkey accepted the risk provided that it was assured of British cooperation and

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<sup>116</sup> "IX uncu Arttırma ve Yerli Mali Haftasını, Başbakan Celâl Bayar'ın Açış Söylevi", *Bayer, op. cit.*, p. 247-248.

<sup>117</sup> G. Kirk and V. Toynbee, "The Balkan States in 1938", *Survey of International Affairs*, 1938, Vol III, p. 416-448.

<sup>118</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 COS 878(JP) *op. cit.*, FO to COS 11 Apr 1939 (attached).

British understanding that Turkish cooperation would be "confined to that particular part of Europe where she could cooperate".<sup>119</sup> London's response to this approach would have been the same as to Aras's other initiatives if March 1939 did not also mark the sudden shift in Britain from a policy of appeasement of dissatisfied powers to one of containment of aggressors.

**The Development of an Aggressive Naval Strategy in the Mediterranean:**

One of the more important reasons for the shift in British policy was the gradual development of an aggressive naval policy in the Mediterranean. Hitherto, the Admiralty had been a consistent supporter of Mediterranean appeasement. By the Spring, however, this support had considerably abated and an aggressive naval policy initiated. This new strategy undercut certain of the dilemmas which had always hampered movement toward a more formal arrangement with Turkey. The May Guarantee is almost inconceivable without this development. During the crucial months in the Spring of 1939 when the Guarantee was negotiated two things were assumed by the Services and by HMG which had previously been rejected. The first, was that Britain was in a position to contemplate and to benefit from early action against Italy. This assumption derived largely from an on-going debate on war strategy within the Admiralty and will be dealt with further below. The second, resulting from British perception of Italian actions, was that the appeasement of Italy was a lost cause -- Italy having revealed itself to be

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

unappeasable by its invasion of Albania. Thus, political combinations previously inconsistent with British policy became possible. Earlier proposals for an Anglo-Turkish combination fell to Service and Government insistence that nothing be done to damage relations with Italy. There was no such insistence in the Spring. A later initiative would have proved fruitless when the old strategic dilemmas returned with added force following Italy's decision to remain neutral following the outbreak of war. Therefore, the Anglo-Turkish guarantee and subsequent alliance were the children of a distinct period in British strategic thinking -- that period marked on the one side by the adoption of an offensive Mediterranean policy in the Spring of 1939 and on the other by the outbreak of war in September 1939.<sup>120</sup>

#### **Drax and Backhouse versus Chatfield:**

The shift in Mediterranean strategy resulted as much from a change in personnel at the Admiralty as from altered international conditions. In 1938 Chatfield left the Admiralty to become Minister for the Coordination of Defence. At the Admiralty, he had always exercised a restraining hand; as the leader of the COS, he had constantly advised caution in planning against Italy. By 1938, Chatfield's careful policy was leading to something like a revolt of senior Admirals. The centre of the revolt was Admiral Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax (Drax).

The initial broadside was fired by Drax in 1937, in the form of a series of letters critical of Chatfield's plan sent to his

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<sup>120</sup> Pratt, p. 171-194.

brother Admirals and senior officials at the Admiralty. In September 1937, Drax complained to the Secretary of the Navy in reference to Chatfield's plans for war in the Mediterranean, that:

there is little hope that they will actively help us to win the next war unless they are altered to embody a sustained and early offensive on a scale vastly greater than is here contemplated. In this plan we attribute to the enemy the power to do us immense injury, by taking the offensive vigorously, and then devote most of our huge resources to defending oneself from his attacks against our trade and territory . . . A slow war, encircling with enemies, strangle them as in 1918, would mean economic and financial ruin for us as well.<sup>121</sup>

Drax's correspondence is full of such letters, and the replies he received. Admiral Cork and Orrey complained in 1937, "There is no offensive action proposed. Sit tight and wait to be hit. The sweep of the North Sea caught my notice. It is a very tame document. No fight in it."<sup>122</sup> Cork and Orrey also warned Drax that he should watch his step. It was his belief that Chatfield himself had been responsible for these plans. Chatfield had been. Drax's answer was to step up the tempo and lower the tone of his criticism.

Drax began to write papers critical of Chatfield's strategy and circulate them widely within the Admiralty. In his view, at the beginning of war -- preferably at dawn on Z +1 -- the British should aim to annihilate the Italian Fleet, and proceed afterwards to bombard to rubble the Italian naval infrastructure.<sup>123</sup> In

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<sup>121</sup> CC DRAX 2/10 Drax to Sect of Navy 3 Sep 1937.

<sup>122</sup> CC DRAX 2/8 Cork and Orrey to Plunkett 1937. Henderson, Backhouse, and old Admiral Richmond all wrote to the same effect. DRAX 2/8, 2/10.

<sup>123</sup> CC DRAX 2/11 Mediterranean and East Indies Forces 12 Mar 1939.



order to do this, he considered, all naval forces should be concentrated in the Mediterranean in order to take advantage of the two or three week breathing period before Japan was in a position to declare war. Most especially, Drax objected to the cautious approach of Chatfield's European Appreciation.<sup>124</sup>

The initial defensive strategy in all theatres advocated in this appreciation, will seriously effect our prestige throughout the world when neutrals see our enemies taking the offensive where and when they please. Our forces are inferior to the enemy everywhere expect at sea. It is therefore the Navy . . . that should aim to execute a major offensive at the outbreak of war. The effect throughout the world of any appreciable success would be of immense value. . . . The ideal solution is to find a means whereby we can attack in harbour, preferably within the first week of war, the enemy warships and submarines and merchantmen fitting out as armed raiders. . . . It is therefore of supreme importance to strike a succession of blows with the Fleet before it dispersed. Adequate success in the first few weeks might well bring Greece and Turkey to our side and keep Japan out of the war. . . . Is it expected that, even with Empire aid, we should ever enable the French armies to take the offensive against those of Germany and Italy? If so, perhaps the appreciation can tell us when? If not, by what means are we to win the war?<sup>125</sup>

In November 1938, Drax circulated Rear Admiral B. Fraser's paper Major Strategy.<sup>126</sup> Fraser too was critical of British naval planning. Drax underlined Fraser's criticism in the covering memorandum which he attached to Fraser's paper. Drax wondered:

1. During the period, perhaps one or two years, before we are considered strong enough for a major offensive, is the Navy to content itself with the

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<sup>124</sup> PRO CAB 53/44 COS 831(JP) European Appreciation 1939-1940 26 Jan 1939.

<sup>125</sup> CC DRAX 2/11 Draft European Situation.

<sup>126</sup> CC DRAX 2/11 Major Strategy Frazer 1 Nov 1938. Frazer considered that the first principle of naval strategy should be the blockade; the second, the quick defeat of Italy; and the third, the retention of Singapore.

economic blockade and nothing more?

2. If not, what serious blows are we to aim at the enemy naval forces, or attack targets that our ships can reach.<sup>127</sup>

Chatfield rejected criticism of his war plan and, in 1937, upbraided Drax for his letter-writing campaign. The Naval War Plan, Chatfield wrote, was only for guidance, and Drax's criticism showed ignorance of how it had been made. "Our main object has always been and always will be to attack the enemy whenever and wherever he appears and to defeat him . . . You have made the assumption that in a war with Germany we should have overwhelming strength. I am unable to envisage that in any war we should have overwhelming strength".<sup>128</sup> Britain would not be "knocking-out" anybody, but fighting for its life against odds. Drax's criticism, Chatfield implied, was unjust and disloyal.<sup>129</sup>

By the time Chatfield wrote this, however, his time as First Lord was running out. His replacement by Backhouse, a more aggressive but less masterful man, marked the first turning towards

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., Plunkett covering Memorandum 2 Jul 1939.

<sup>128</sup> GR CHT 4/1 Chatfield to Drax 5 Nov 1937. In the Pound papers at Churchill College there is a document eloquent of British naval weakness. It is a note, prepared by Pound, for a meeting on 31 Aug 1939 in the lower war room at the Admiralty. The document charts projected Italian and Japanese strength in major surface units against British modernized capital ships for each year until 1943. By 1942, Britain would barely be able to retain parity against these two powers; by 1943, it would have been lost against Japan alone. CC DUPO 5/2.

<sup>129</sup> Chatfield was intensely sensitive to criticism that under his administration "safety first" had crept into the RN. See his exchange with Richmond in the Times in March 1934; also Chatfield to Lawrence 24 May 1937. GR CHT 3/1.

a more aggressive strategy in the Mediterranean, both because Backhouse was temperamentally more inclined to pursue such a policy, and because he was less able to restrain local commanders.<sup>130</sup> His reaction to the Drax revolt is interesting, and illustrative both of the man and the way naval strategy was made post-Chatfield:

Let me say . . . that I consider that the ready answer to your criticism is that there is nothing in the plan to prevent the Commander-in-Chief, or Commanders-in-Chief, doing whatever they think right and that it is for him, or them, to initiate the offensive moves with the forces provided . . . I agree with you most emphatically that we have got to aim at striking heavy blows as soon as possible, and shew our readiness and ability to do so. How to do that is the main question to be decided. In other words what is to be the main line of our plans.<sup>131</sup>

Backhouse wrote that he was working only then on the Mediterranean plan, and promised to give the defeat of the enemy greater priority than protection of trade.<sup>132</sup> Until such time as the plans were completed, however, whatever Pound or Cunningham decided constituted naval policy had far more relevance than anything coming from Admiralty House. Pound and Cunningham were planning to

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<sup>130</sup> Backhouse was inclined, it was said, to try to do too much for himself; consequently not enough got done. CC DUFC Summary of the Senior Admirals Keyes [?] undated. Duff-Cooper found the Summary on his desk upon taking office. One would suspect that Chatfield had been the author, except that we know that Chatfield submitted a formal assessment (GR CHT 3/1 Chatfield to Hoare 24 May 1937) strongly recommending Backhouse to succeed him. The Summary's author considered Backhouse's appointment likely to be "most unfortunate". The most probable author is Sir Roger Keyes, who had retired in 1935 and entered politics.

<sup>131</sup> CC DRAX 2/8 Backhouse to Plunkett 27 Aug 1937.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

smash the Italian Fleet.<sup>133</sup> In any case, in October 1938, Backhouse invited Drax to come to London as Admiral of the Nore with a small planning staff.<sup>134</sup> Drax accepted.<sup>135</sup> With Drax and Backhouse at the Admiralty, it was certain, that all things being equal, Mediterranean strategy would become much more active.<sup>136</sup>

There was another reason that the Mediterranean began to assume added prominence in Imperial Strategy. In April 1939, from sheer incapacity to do so, the Admiralty admitted that it could not possibly send the Fleet to the Far East should war with Japan occur concurrently with war in Europe.<sup>137</sup> Thus, it could henceforward be assumed that the Fleet would be available for action in the Mediterranean, if only because it was not strong enough to send to fight the Japanese. As well, the need to retain the ability to send the Fleet East was less pressing in 1938 than in 1937. Once the Japanese had definitely come to grips with the Chinese their power

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<sup>133</sup> See Chapter IV above.

<sup>134</sup> CC DRAX 2/10 Backhouse to Plunkett 15 Oct 1938.

<sup>135</sup> CC DRAX 2/11 Plunkett to Backhouse 24 Nov 1938.

<sup>136</sup> Chatfield was accompanied in his translation to the Cabinet by Hankey. In 1939 Hankey took Office as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Hankey has been accused of enforcing a regime at the CID in which consensus came to mean the dictatorship of the most feeble of the three Services in any particular question.

<sup>137</sup> PRO CAB 16/183A DP(P)46 Despatch of a Fleet to the Far East in the Event of a War With Japan Chatfield 19 Apr 1939; and, DP(P)55 Despatch of a Fleet to the Far East in the Event of a War with Japan DCAS 2 Jun 1939. With only ten capital ships fit to fight Britain simply had no ships to send. Six were required in peace time in home waters, and four in the Mediterranean. In war, five would be needed in the North Sea, two in the Channel (Portsmouth/Gibraltar), and three in Alexandria. Queen Elizabeth, Valiant, Renown, Hood and Revenge were all being refitted.

to cause trouble for Britain temporarily abated. Hankey, much relieved, felt able to write in August 1938, "I don't believe that the Japs, after their exhausting effort in China and with so much on their hands -- the Soviet menace for an example -- will be anxious to take on anyone else for some time to come; unless, of course, the inducement is overwhelming".<sup>138</sup>

The Admiralty had always been confident that it could beat Italy, the crux of its opposition to a confrontational policy in the Mediterranean was that it doubted that the acceptance of possible conflict with Italy was in Britain's best interest. The Army, for its part, had not been so certain of rapid victory. In the Spring of 1939, however, Army confidence had been buttressed by the alliance with France and Land commanders contemplated possible war with Italy with much greater assurance than hitherto. With the formation of a "colonial" Division in Egypt, and the promise of "Heron" force from India, the Italian threat from Libya appeared much less imposing.<sup>139</sup> This was particularly the case as Gamelin had committed the French to an all out offensive with their fourteen Divisions in Tunisia by Z +25 days "irrespective of the situation in Morocco".<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> CC DUFC Hankey to Duff-Cooper 2 Aug 1938.

<sup>139</sup> PRO CAB 44/87 op. cit.

<sup>140</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 895 Plan of Operations (India) 1938 27 Apr; CAB 29/160 AFC(J)5 Anglo-French Committee 5th Mtg 31 Mar; AFC(J)15 Mediterranean and Middle East; and, CAB 44/87. The Italians had in Libya at this time, two Motorized Corps (XX and XXI), one Militia Division, and one Libyan Corps (14 Divisions: 5 in Cyrenaica, 9 in Tripolitania total), for a aggregate strength of about 100,000. WO 208/1969 M.13/5695/2 op. cit.; and CAB 44/87 The

But even had all of the above not been so, by 1939, it was beginning to seem that the Western powers would find themselves at war in the Mediterranean whatever their efforts to avoid it. They feared war with Italy less than in 1937; but even more, it appeared less likely that it could be escaped -- especially after the invasion of Albania in April and the declaration of the Pact of Steel in May 1939.<sup>141</sup>

Churchill's appointment as First Sea Lord in September 1939 did not commence but cap a movement towards a more aggressive policy in the Mediterranean on-going from early 1938. For Churchill, the Mediterranean was in 1939, as it had always been, "England's first battlefield":<sup>142</sup> the rest of the Admiralty had been brought to agree with this premise even prior to his return.

#### **Planning Against Italy in Spring 1939:**

Change in personnel and strategic perception at Admiralty House resulted in a much more aggressive plan for war with Italy. In their European Appreciation 1939-1940, the JPC judged that the best policy in such an eventuality would be to take ruthless and immediate action against Italy's position in the

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Situation in Egypt June 1940 p. 2-16.

<sup>141</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 COS 873(JP) op. cit. Covering Memo.

<sup>142</sup> PRO PREM 1/345 Memorandum on Sea Power Churchill 25 Mar 1939; and, CC HOBE 5/55. "England's first battlefield is the Mediterranean. All hopes for sealing up the ends must be avoided in favour of decisive victory there". This memorandum had very restricted circulation. Only Hoare-Belisha, Chamberlain, and Halifax received copies.

Mediterranean.<sup>143</sup> This conclusion was confirmed in March 1939, when the JPC considered the case of a possible war with Italy at their 243rd meeting. It was decided that whatever circumstances surrounded the outbreak of such a war, the best policy remained to direct a knock out blow against Italy at the outset while remaining on the defensive against Germany.<sup>144</sup> The best course, it was thought, was to apply "maximum pressure on the weakest part of our enemies front, and that, in so far as we can judge in peace, that part seems likely to be Italy".<sup>145</sup> Only Chatfield continued to think that it might not be the best idea to plan a strike at Italy right away, but to wait upon the development of the situation in the Far East.<sup>146</sup>

Mediterranean naval dispositions were made accordingly with the bulk of the Fleet being concentrated at Alexandria in order to "catapult" the Italian Fleet immediately following upon the outbreak of war.<sup>147</sup> The French thought this an excellent strategy

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<sup>143</sup> PRO CAB 53/44 COS 831(JP) European Appreciation 1939-1940 26 Jan 1939.

<sup>144</sup> CAB 55/3 JPC 243rd Mtg 20 Mar 1939 (Composition: Danckwerts, Kennedy, Slessor).

<sup>145</sup> PRO CAB 53/46 COS 863(JP) Allied Plans Against Italy 27 Mar 1939 (Composition: Slessor, Kennedy, Danckwerts).

<sup>146</sup> PRO CAB 53/51 COS 940 Plans Against Italy Chatfield 10 Jul 1939.

<sup>147</sup> PRO ADM 1/9922 Med 064/0712/7 Initial Dispositions of Mediterranean Fleet for War with Germany and Italy Pound to Adm from HMS Warspite Alexandria 19 Jan 1939. Gibraltar: 2 X 8" Cruisers, 1/2 Destroyer Flotilla, 1/2 Destroyer Flotilla (old type). Malta: 1/2 Destroyer Flotilla, 1 Submarine Flotilla, all MTBs. Alexandria: 3 Battleships, Glorious, 2 X 8" Cruisers, 2 X 6" Cruisers, 2 1/2 Destroyer Flotillas, 1 Destroyer Flotilla (old

and agreed to the division of the Mediterranean into an Eastern and Western zone for purposes of Naval control<sup>148</sup> and to the dispatch of a squadron to Alexandria to cooperate with the British in offensive operations.<sup>149</sup>

By the Spring of 1939, French strategy as well was becoming increasingly oriented toward the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean. The French delegation to the Anglo-French Committee explained that this was because Hatay had demonstrated that France must necessarily be so. If their vigilance flagged, then they would loose Syria, in which, by 1939, their position had come to depend entirely "on the attitude of Turkey and the internal situation".<sup>150</sup> If Turkey were hostile, or even indifferent, France would be without the power to hold more than the Lebanon, the Alouites, and the Lebanon-AntiLebanon passes.<sup>151</sup> In any case, a build-up against Italy in the Middle East was well within the bounds of French strategy. In the French conception, whatever the German strategy -- to attack France directly, to strike at England, or to go for the Mediterranean -- the best Allied counter-strategy

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type), 1 Submarine Flotilla, auxiliary vessels.

<sup>148</sup> PRO ADM 1/9930 Policy in the Mediterranean in the Event of War D plans to C in C Med 11 Apr 1939. The line dividing the British and French zones ran from Port Empedocle in Sicily to Ras Elmsel in Libya.

<sup>149</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)41 Joint Operations in the Mediterranean and MidEast Area 24 Apr 1939.

<sup>150</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)26 Near East French Delegation 3 Apr 1939.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.



would be to keep Italy thinking with a build-up in Syria and Tunisia, stand on the defensive until the situation had clarified itself, eliminate Italy, and then turn against Germany.<sup>152</sup>

In April 1939, the JPC considered the impact of war with Italy on a potential Turkish alliance.<sup>153</sup> If the war involved Italy alone, the planners were confident of a quick decision, although the Air situation would be worrying in the short term.<sup>154</sup> Britain would have little available Land or Air force to send to the assistance of the Turks, but judged that naval and economic force would be enough to defeat the Italians before these weaknesses became dangerous.<sup>155</sup> Against both Germany and Italy, while there would be greater anxiety in the Balkans, the planners judged that

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<sup>152</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)27, AFC(J)28 Strategical Problem Considered as a Whole For the Conduct of the War 3 Apr 1939.

<sup>153</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 COS 878(JP) Alliance with Turkey 15 Apr 1939.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. p. 5; also, PRO CAB 53/51 COS 923 Air Situation in the Mediterranean July 1939; PRO CAB 16/182 DP(P) The Italian Air Force Swinton 21 Jul 1937; and, WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 Italian Army 1 Aug 1939:

Italy:      183 planes (102 bombers) -- Libya  
               150 planes (130 bombers) -- East Africa  
               97 planes (52 bombers) -- Dodecanese  
     could be raised to:  
               350 planes (200 bombers) -- Libya  
               200 planes (120 bombers) -- East Africa  
     global total: 1,600 first line aircraft

Britain:    159 planes (72 bombers, 63 fighters; 12 AC, 12  
                  Transports) -- Middle East  
               44 planes (36 bombers, 8 fighters) -- Red Sea  
               12 planes (bombers) -- Malta  
     could be raised by: 3 squadrons of bombers from India. If  
     planned increases were approved, would raise total by 404  
     aircraft to 716 all told.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

the Turks could hold almost "indefinitely" on the Bosphorus-Dardanelles line without assistance. In this case, Land forces were unlikely to be available until Z +10 to Z +12 months.<sup>156</sup> Again, it was thought probable that victory over Italy would come relatively quickly through the action of naval and economic forces.

The planners concluded, therefore, that:

1. The Allied naval superiority in the Mediterranean would give direct protection to the Turkish coast harbours and seaborne trade.
2. At the outset, the British and French Land and Air forces would give indirect assistance to Turkey by containing German and Italian Forces in other theatres.
3. The primary task of Turkey as an ally against Italy would be the closing of the Dardanelles. In due course, the Dodecanese would be recaptured on Turkey's behalf.
4. Economically, Turkey would be unable to face without grave misgivings the loss of its most important market and supplier -- Germany. The allies must, therefore, be prepared to replace Germany both as customer and supplier.<sup>157</sup>

Turkey's most attractive features as an ally were: its utility as an ally against Italy, the harbour of Smyrna for operations against the Dodecanese, its key position in the Balkan Entente and Sa'adabad Pacts, and its propaganda value in the Arab world.<sup>158</sup> Most importantly, an argument constantly repeated, "She [could] interrupt completely Italian trade with the Black Sea" by closing

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

the Straits.<sup>159</sup>

Not only political reality, but economic planning also, seemed to argue that Italian hostility be accepted from the first days of the war, and in this regard, was less a modification than an intensification of earlier planning. Indeed, after 1938, the only thing really new about planning against Italy was the evolution of operational planning for a joint Anglo-Turkish assault on the Dodecanese Islands. Aside from this, the guiding premises of planning against Italy remained identical with those at the time of Nyon. Once the Mediterranean was secure, and Allied possessions safe, the next order of business was to undermine Italy by "combined economic pressure".<sup>160</sup> In June of 1939, it was decided that planning for economic warfare would be based upon an alignment of Britain, France, Poland, and Turkey against the Axis; with Russia, Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia friendly; Egypt and Iraq, breaking off economic relations with the Axis; Hungary pro-Axis; and the United States, friendly but neutral.<sup>161</sup>

The planners had not forgotten the lessons in economic geography they had taught themselves earlier. Italy, it was noted, imported much of its food, coal, rubber, textiles, timber, copper, fuel, and war stores. In peacetime, 80% of Italy's twenty-two

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<sup>159</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 COS 873 op. cit. p. 5

<sup>160</sup> PRO CAB 53/46 COS 863(JP) op. cit.

<sup>161</sup> PRO CAB 29/161 AFC(EW) Economic Pressure Committee (EPC) 1st, 2nd, 3rd Mtgs 1-3 Jun; AFC(N) EPC Naval Conversations 1st Mtg 30-31 May 39.

million tons of imports came by sea.<sup>162</sup> If Italy was to be destroyed, it was first necessary to annihilate the Italian Fleet. Once this had been accomplished, systematic pressure would be applied to the economic basis of Italy's war-making capability. The easiest way to destroy Italy's ability to wage war, was to dislocate its economy. The most vulnerable sector of its economy was its dependence on imports. The most elegant way to act against Italian imports was to close the exits of the Mediterranean to Italian shipping. Suez and Gibraltar the planners could answer for. The Dardanelles, they could not. 10% of Italian trade and 23% of Italian oil passed through the Dardanelles.<sup>163</sup> Land transportation, it was thought, would not be able to offset the loss of Sea communications; particularly if Germany too were at war.<sup>164</sup>

Even more optimistic was the judgement of the Air Targets Subcommittee of the Subcommittee on Industrial Intelligence in Foreign Countries which concluded that even in the absence of effective blockade, Italy would be unable to import enough oil to sustain a war effort by existing means.<sup>165</sup> The closing of the

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<sup>162</sup> PRO CAB 53/44 COS 831(JP) European Appreciation 1939-1940 26 Jan 1939. Part V Appendix II "Economic Situation in Germany, Italy, and Japan on 1 April 1939".

<sup>163</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 Alliance With Turkey 15 Apr 1939.

<sup>164</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 881(JP) Military Implications of the New Situation in Europe.

<sup>165</sup> PRO CAB 48/10 FCI(AT)18 Draft Report Italy 21 Jun 1938.

Dardanelles would complete the "economic stranglehold" on Italy.<sup>166</sup> The situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, the planners thought, would be:

entirely changed if Turkey became an ally. The Italian Black Sea trade would be stopped by her and the Italian possessions in the Dodecanese would become Italian commitments for defence as opposed to vantage points for attack, and we might make use of Smyrna for naval purposes and air bases in Turkey. For these reasons it is difficult to over-emphasize the influence which Turkish intervention on our side would have on the position in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean.<sup>167</sup>

Pound and Backhouse, at the Admiralty, doubted that, properly speaking, naval force could "knock-out" anything. Only massive defeats in the air and on the ground "knocked-out" a nation. They were no less sanguine, however, regarding the possibility of economic warfare against Italy. "With Turkey on our side", they judged, "it should be possible to prevent any seaborne supplies [of oil] reaching Italy and it is believed that the stocks in the country will only allow a major war being conducted for a period of four or five months".<sup>168</sup>

The Turks, meanwhile, were expressing considerable interest in the possibilities of economic warfare. In June 1939, the Turkish General Staff requested complete proposals for the establishment of

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> PRO CAB 53/44 COS 831(JP) op. cit.; also, CAB 53/48 COS 881(JP) op. cit. The French did not dissent from this judgement. CAB 29/160 AFC(J)15 Mediterranean and the Middle East 30 Mar 1939.

<sup>168</sup> PRO CAB 53/52 COS 946 Plans Against Italy First Sea Lord and CNS 18 Jul 1939.

a contraband control organization in the Dardanelles.<sup>169</sup> On 7 August, J. W Nicholls, from the Foreign Office, travelled to Ankara to brief a party of twenty Turkish officials on plans for the waging of economic war. Nicholls judged that the Turks "showed every disposition to follow our lead".<sup>170</sup>

Unfortunately, from the Admiralty's point of view, it was not certain that Turkey could be brought in against Italy. Indeed there were certain cases, it was recognized, in which it would be politically undesirable for Turkey to take an active part in the war. In such a case, it was acknowledged, effective contraband control would have to be established in the Eastern Mediterranean by some other means.<sup>171</sup> But without Turkey, the C in C Med considered that contraband control without infringing upon the sovereignty of any other Mediterranean nation would be nearly impossible. Most especially, if the Straits were not closed, effective control of traffic from the Black Sea without infringing Greek sovereignty would be hopeless due to the problem presented by the Aegean Islands and the Corinth canal.

By April 1939, Cunningham was giving serious thought to sinking a ship in the canal in the event of war in order to force coasting ships into international waters.<sup>172</sup> He inquired of the

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<sup>169</sup> Medlicott, p. 271.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> PRO CAB 47/13 ATB (ETG)16 Brief Synopsis of General Naval Plan for Trade Control Purposes 25 May 1938.

<sup>172</sup> PRO ADM 1/9930 Med 0384/0708/50 Question of Policy and Conduct of war in the Mediterranean C in C Med to Adm 19 Apr 1939.

## Admiralty:

If the attitude of Greece seems likely to remain one of strict neutrality throughout the war, with no consequent prospects of our obtaining the use of Greek harbours etc., it is for consideration whether more would not be gained by a policy from the outset of treating Greek territorial waters somewhat lightly and even of sinking a suitable merchant ship, or by other means stopping traffic, in the canal. . .<sup>173</sup>

## The Admiralty returned:

The underlying assumption of territorial waters being sovereign is that the territorial sovereign will prevent his waters from being abused . . . Greece certainly cannot control her waters to this extent and I think we could always find legal justification for action inside her waters which becomes necessary . . . in any case the reasons for this are presumably much less important now that Turkey is our ally.<sup>174</sup>

Whatever the politics of blockade, the British did not have to worry unduly about preemption of Turkish exports to Italy. Long before September 1939, Turco-Italian trade was languishing. Italy, for some time, had nothing to sell and the Clearing remained completely blocked.<sup>175</sup>

Thus, in the Spring of 1939, strategic reality seemed to leave the way open to a more closely defined relationship with Turkey where before it had seemed to preclude this possibility.

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid. Enclosure III.

<sup>174</sup> PRO ADM 1/9930 Adm to C in C Med 27 Jun 1939.

<sup>175</sup> PRO FO 837/1018 Turkey Economic Situation General Monthly Reports on economic conditions. Even after the outbreak of war, the Turks were quite cooperative in the detection of contraband. While they were not able to give the waiting Royal Navy cargo manifests of vessels passing through the Straits, they did provide details of the ship's registration, particulars, tonnage, destination, owner, nationality and the nature of its cargo. PRO FO 371/23292 E6362/139/44 Colville Minute 6 Sep 1939.

Furthermore, as war with Italy came to seem more likely, the old insistence that Turkey was an important ally if war with Italy could not be avoided came into its own as the counter-argument, that no alliance with Turkey would off-set the resulting Italian hostility, receded as a result of Italy's Mediterranean depredations. In addition, Italy's growing economic vulnerability suggested that a telling blow could be struck with minimal military risk, and no greater political cost than a Turkish alliance -- valuable, in any case, against the German enemy.

#### **The Joint Guarantee:**

Events in the Spring of 1939 provided the political context in which Britain's altered strategic perception could operate. On 15 March, Germany occupied the Czecho-Slovakian rump. In Britain, the popular reaction was immediate and violently unfavourable to the German demarche.<sup>176</sup> On 17 March, the Rumanian Ambassador, Virgil Tilea, came to see Halifax with news of a German ultimatum to his country. The Germans, he said, were demanding a monopoly on Rumanian exports, and the contraction of its industries so that Rumania would become purely agricultural.<sup>177</sup> The Rumanian Military Attaché appeared that same day at the door of the War

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<sup>176</sup> S. Aster, 1939, The Making of the Second World War, (Andre Deutsch: London) 1973. p. 19-37.

<sup>177</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV no. 395 and 399 Hoare to Halifax 18 Mar; A. Cadogan, The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, (Cassel: London) 1971. p. 159. Entry for 17 Mar; A. Read and D. Fisher, The Deadly Embrace, (Norton: New York) 1988. p. 63-64; J. Charmely, Chamberlain and the Lost Peace, (Hodder and Stoughton) 1989; Survey of International Affairs, "The Eve of the War", p. 68-72; and, Aster, p. 61-78.



Minister, Leslie Hore-Belisha. He repeated and embellished Tilea's warning. Not only was Germany demanding economic dominance, but territorial concession. Hungary would give Germany Burgenland and would receive compensation in Rumania, which, confronted by an "immediate loss of independence", was "determined to fight". Rumania, the Attache concluded, looked to Britain for military assistance and political support.<sup>178</sup> The Rumanian disclosures came on the same day as Chamberlain's Birmingham speech denouncing Germany's recent occupation of Czecho-Slovakia.

If official London had not already determined to resist further German expansion in the aftermath of the occupation of Czecho-Slovakia, then Rumania, in any case, was a nation the disappearance of which into the Reich could be viewed by London with much less equanimity than Czechoslovakia. Rumania, finally, was a question as painful as dodged as faced. If the Germans invaded Rumania, not only would they gain its oil, which the COS warned would make an effective blockade impossible,<sup>179</sup> but a quick occupation might so intimidate the other Balkan states that the Germans would advance to the Mediterranean without opposition.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> CC HOBE 5/54 Hore Belisha to Halifax 17 Mar; also DDF Series II, Vol XIV no. 8 Coulondre (Berlin) to Paris 1 Feb; and no. 200 Circulaire 24 Feb 1939. See also, D. Lungu, Rumania and the Great Powers, (Duke: London) 1989.

<sup>179</sup> Cadogan, p. 160. Entry for 18 Mar 1939.

<sup>180</sup> PRO CAB 53/10 COS 282 Mtg 18 Mar 1939 (Composition: Chatfield, Newall, Gort, Cunningham). Halifax also was aware of this aspect of the problem. If Germany were allowed to over-run Rumania, it "would be in a much stronger position than she is at present successfully to over-run Poland. Poland herself would be wellnigh encircled and the moral effect on [the] smaller states,

In this case, the German threat to imperial security would increase enormously.<sup>181</sup> But if Britain guaranteed Rumania and advised it to reject the ultimatum, then Britain might have to fight "and possibly to fight alone".<sup>182</sup> Given British weakness and imperial vulnerability, this seemed tantamount to saying that Britain must loose. The COS advised the Government to recommend that Rumania reject the German ultimatum and seek what allies it could find in the East and South-East. Finally, they insisted adamantly that Britain not be called upon to fight for Rumania alone.

Later in the month, Tilea suggested that Rumanian security be assured by a bloc including Poland, Rumania, Greece, Turkey, Britain and France.<sup>183</sup> Before London could ascertain that Tilea had considerably over-stated the extent of the German demands,<sup>184</sup> Chamberlain had already made the decision to circularize the powers indicated by Tilea, and remedied the obvious omission from Tilea's list by including the Soviet Union.<sup>185</sup>

HMG, not seeing a clear way out, had decided to follow the COS advice to seek allies. Half-hearted, and uncertain, Chamberlain and Halifax had turned a policy corner. The policy of appeasement was

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like Greece and Bulgaria, in South-Eastern Europe, would be far reaching". PRO CAB 27/624 FPC Mtes 27 Mar 1939.

<sup>181</sup> PRO CAB 53/10 COS 283rd Mtg 18 Mar 1939.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 390

<sup>184</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 443 Hoare to Halifax 19 Mar 1939; and, Aster, p. 70-73.

<sup>185</sup> Cadogan, p. 160. Entry for 18 Mar 1939.

dead and was replaced by containment and deterrence. If the Germans would not chose peace, then they would be made to fear war -- nothing being done, of course, likely to make a return to appeasement impossible if conditions changed.

Unfortunately for London, only the French unequivocally promised to act with Britain in defence of Rumania.<sup>186</sup> Greece,<sup>187</sup> Turkey,<sup>188</sup> Russia,<sup>189</sup> and Yugoslavia,<sup>190</sup> all insisted that it was for Britain and France to make clear first what action they intended to take before requesting assistance. Saraçoğlu, in addition, was reluctant to promise adherence to any Eastern combination not including the USSR for the simple reason that he could not conceive how it could work. He insisted, however, that Britain itself could count on Turkish support in all cases except where Britain was attacked in the West but not in the

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<sup>186</sup> Alexis Leger, the French Secretary General, summarized French policy on the Rumanian question as follows: "we now found ourselves on the basis of the preservation of the balance of power, and it was incumbent upon us to concern ourselves in the first place with matters which definitely affected that balance and, therefore, our vital interests . . . It was because Roumania could supply Germany with the means of carrying on . . . a war (means that she at present lacked), that it was necessary to protect that country". DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 493, Campbell to Halifax 22 Mar 1939.

<sup>187</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 400.

<sup>188</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 423 and 424.

<sup>189</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 403 and 421.

<sup>190</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 420 and 426. See also, G. Bonnet, De Munich a la Guerre, (Plon: Paris), 1967. p. 41-400.

Mediterranean.<sup>191</sup> The JPC concluded from this: "This means, in effect, that we can be sure of Turkey's help in a war with Italy".<sup>192</sup> Turkey's attitude toward the German problem, however, remained problematical and contingent upon the Russian position. The only promise London could extract from Ankara was that if Bulgaria attacked Rumania, Turkey would attack Bulgaria. Failing strong British guarantees, the most that Turkey would promise against Germany was consultation.<sup>193</sup>

On 18 March, the Russians made a proposal of their own in response to the British note. They suggested that Britain, the Soviet Union, France, Turkey, Poland and Rumania, consult together concerning joint action to stop Hitler. The Soviet plan was welcomed by Halifax but rejected by the Cabinet.<sup>194</sup> The Russian proposal, the Cabinet thought, was "premature" and "dangerous".<sup>195</sup> In London, Dr. Aras strongly seconded the Russian initiative but received no better response.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XV no. 429 Massigli to Paris 17 Apr 1939.

<sup>192</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 881(JP) Military Implications of the New Situation in Europe Apr 1939.

<sup>193</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XV no. 66, Massigli to Bonnet 19 Mar; and, no. 85 Massigli to Bonnet 20 Mar 1939.

<sup>194</sup> Birkenhead, Halifax, (Hamish Hamilton: London) 1965, p. 435.

<sup>195</sup> Read, p. 65-66. See also, M. George, The Warped Vision, (Pittsburg: Pittsburg) 1965. p. 198-203 for an interesting, if less serious, account of Anglo-Polish-Soviet dickering.

<sup>196</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV no. 590. By February 1939, the Turks were giving the Germans distinct signs that they were moving towards the Russians. The Russian Ambassador, Kroll informed

Halifax next proposed that Britain, France, the USSR and Poland issue a joint declaration that they would consult together in the event of a threat to the independence of any European State. Litvinov judged the proposal "inadequate" but signalled Soviet acquiescence. France too agreed. Poland, on the other hand, refused to be a member of any agreement including the Soviet Union unless it were kept secret. Since a secret agreement could not, by definition, deter anybody, London's suggestion foundered on Poland's Russophobia. There was nothing London could do except to grope for some formula capable of encompassing the Soviets and their neighbours. Moscow, meanwhile, was left to repeat, through April, its proposal for a straight alliance excluding Poland if it were unwilling to join.<sup>197</sup>

The vagaries of British policy left the Turks worried and uncertain. Aras, in London, continued to try to peg the British to some firm position. On 21 March, he announced that it was Turkey's "fixed policy" to follow Britain, and this being the case, he wished to know what it was HMG's intention to do.<sup>198</sup> On 31 March,

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Berlin, was back from Moscow full of talk about big projects for cooperation with Turkey and the West. Germany, he advised, needed a big personality for its Ambassador in Ankara to counteract Western influence, and Menemencioğlu, then in Berlin, should be made to realize the seriousness with which Berlin viewed the Turkish actions. ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 420 Kroll to Ribbentrop 1 Feb 1939. Menemencioğlu, hauled onto the carpet by Ribbentrop, admitted that there was much talk about a Black Sea Pact, but stressed that nothing official had been done yet. ASW Vol V, Book I, No. 421, Ribbentrop Note, 10 Feb 1939.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 72-73.

<sup>198</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 472.

undercutting this straight-forward assurance slightly, he informed London that while anxious to move into a larger accommodation, Turkey might be prevented by its existing commitments to Russia from doing so, if the Soviets were excluded.<sup>199</sup>

In Ankara, on 26 March, Knatchbull-Hugesson interviewed Saraçoğlu regarding the Rumanian question. This was the first time in many days that he had seen Saraçoğlu. Knatchbull-Hugesson had been hiding because he feared that he would be questioned on British policy and didn't know how to answer.<sup>200</sup> Luckily for him, Saraçoğlu's mind had been on other matters.

No nation, Saraçoğlu told him, would have accepted the conditions Rumania had without having received an ultimatum. He could not see, however, any way to help. "Rumania had made no appeal for help and had of their own accord accepted German terms. It was impossible to help a country which neither helped itself nor asked its friends to do so".<sup>201</sup> In any case, he considered the Rumanian crisis, correctly, to be a "canard".<sup>202</sup> Saraçoğlu ended the interview with the complaint that the Western Powers were always moving too slow to keep up with events and expecting the Turks to help them when there was nothing to be done.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 590.

<sup>200</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E2467/297/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Oliphant 24 Mar 1939.

<sup>201</sup> PRO FO 424/283 C4141/3356/18 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 26 Mar 1939.

<sup>202</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op.cit., 19 Mar 1939.

<sup>203</sup> PRO FO 424/283 C4141/3356/18 op. cit.

The Turkish message was fairly clear. Given a satisfactory political agreement, sufficient aid, and Staff talks, Turkey would partner Britain in the Eastern Mediterranean -- at least against Italy. Against Germany, some accommodation with Russia was a near prerequisite, and the Turkish attitude less than straight-forward in the absence of one. Rumania the Turks could not promise to help because none of these preconditions had been met. The Turkish assurances, half-hearted as they were, were good news in a London quickly coming to the conclusion that the Russians could not be reconciled with the nations of Eastern Europe. The next step was obvious. HMG would seek to proceed without the Russians -- perhaps bringing them in at some later date. This was the logic of the unilateral guarantee of Poland extended on 31 March.<sup>204</sup> "The present", Halifax assured a troubled Daladier, "was only an interim arrangement" to which Russia would be added sometime in the future.<sup>205</sup> On 7 April, not entirely happy with HMG's policy, yet unable to construct a better, Gafencu and Saraçoğlu, meeting in Istanbul, decided to follow a common line with the Western Powers aimed at containing German aggression.<sup>206</sup>

Sympathize as we might with French doubts, there was

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<sup>204</sup> H. Jacobsen, and A. Smith, World War II. Policy and Strategy. Selected Documents with Commentary, (Clio: Santa Barbara) 1979. p. 16.

<sup>205</sup> PRO CAB 23/98 Cab 17(39) 31 Mar 1939.

<sup>206</sup> G. Gafencu, Dernier Jours de l'Europe. Une Voyage Diplomatique en 1939, (Egloff: Paris) 1947. p. 67; and, DBFP Series III, Vol V, no. 278. Proces Verbal of a conversation of Halifax with Gafencu.

considerable merit in Halifax's continued defence that no proposal which aimed to secure the liberty of Rumania and Poland could include Russia since neither of these nations would consider alliance with Moscow.<sup>207</sup> Halifax wrote in retrospect:

The acceptance of Russian protection seemed only too likely to supply the excuse for Soviet penetration. Their fear of the Soviet was at least as great, and probably greater, than their fear of Germany<sup>208</sup>. . . . An intelligent rabbit could hardly be expected to welcome the protection of an animal ten times its own size whom it credited with the habits of a boa constrictor.<sup>209</sup>

Moreover, Halifax himself did not trust the Russians. In London, it was thought that Russian declarations were often in considerable discord with Soviet actions; that it was hard to reconcile the nation so vigilant for the rights of Man and of little nations with the Russia of purges and intervention in Spain.<sup>210</sup> Halifax was convinced that the Russians were seeking to push Britain into conflict with the Germans for their own advantage. "Russian policy" he wrote:

then as now, was entirely inspired by Stalin, or whoever decided Soviet Policy, judged to be in Russia's interest, and that the largest element in the mind of the Kremlin was the imperative necessity of buying time.<sup>211</sup>

Chamberlain's attitude to the Russians was similar to that of

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<sup>207</sup> CC Halifax Papers Reel II 410.12.1 Foreign Policy 1938-1939 unpublished note.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Halifax, The Fullness of Days, (Collins: London) 1957, p. 206.

<sup>210</sup> F. Ashton-Gwatkin, "The USSR", Survey of International Affairs, 1938, Vol III, p. 402-413.

<sup>211</sup> CC Halifax Papers Reel II 410.12.1 op. cit.



Halifax. He confessed to being deeply "suspicious of Soviet aims" and harboured "profound doubts to their military capacity even if they honestly desired or intended to help".<sup>212</sup> He said he was "so sceptical of the value of Russian help" that he would "not feel that our position was greatly worsened if we had to do without them".<sup>213</sup> He considered that Britain's:

chief trouble is with Russia. I confess to being deeply suspicious of her. I cannot believe that she has the same aims and objects that we have or any sympathy with democracy as such. She is afraid of Germany and Japan and would be delighted to see other people fight them. But she is probably very anxious of her own military weakness and does not want to get into a conflict if she can help it. Her efforts are therefor directed to egging on others but herself promising only vague assistance.<sup>214</sup>

**Albania:**

On 7 April 1939, as Saraçoğlu and Gafencu met in Istanbul, Italy invaded Albania. In Knatchbull-Hugesson's judgement, the invasion was "one of the most brutal and cynical actions in the world's history".<sup>215</sup> For the first time since Nyon, Italy appeared unequivocally among Britain's possible enemies. Albania "proved Musso a gangster", Cadogan judged, "as Czecho proved

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<sup>212</sup> BR NC 18/1/1101 Neville to Hilda Chamberlain 28 May 1939.

<sup>213</sup> BR CC NC 18/1/1107 Neville to Hilda Chamberlain 2 Jul 1939.

<sup>214</sup> BR NC 18/1/1096 Neville to Ida Chamberlain 29 Apr 1939. It was the opinion of the ubiquitous Chips Channon that it was Chamberlain and Halifax's firm resolve to avoid a real alliance with the Soviets, and that they were only driven so far toward Moscow as they went by parliamentary pressure. R. James (edt), The Diary of Chips Channon (Penguin: London) 1972. Entries for 15, 17, 24 May, and 22 Aug 1939, p. 209-257.

<sup>215</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit., 8 Apr 1939.

Hitler, and we must set up a barrier with Greece and Turkey".<sup>216</sup> Upon hearing the news, Halifax saw the Italian Ambassador and told him that "the situation was likely to raise in acute form the whole question of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, which seemed, in our opinion, so important an element in the Anglo-Italian Agreement of April 16th last year".<sup>217</sup> In Germany, Mussolini's unexpected invasion caused intense excitement, and led directly to the appointment of Von Papen as Ambassador to Turkey that same day.<sup>218</sup> In Turkey, the invasion marked the return of Italy to first place in Turkey's demonology. In Turkey, as in Italy and France, it was axiomatic that an Italian invasion of Albania would be only the spearhead of a general Balkan advance.<sup>219</sup> In Britain, it was thought that a grab for Corfu was more likely to be Mussolini's next crime. "If Musso does it", Cadogan wrote that evening in his diary, "we go to war, that's all".<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> D. Dilks, The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945, 1971. p. 170.

<sup>217</sup> Hansard, Lords, Vol CXII col 605 13 Apr 1939.

<sup>218</sup> F. Von Papen, Memoires, (Andre Deutsch: London) 1952. p. 443-444.

<sup>219</sup> Kinross, p. 545; D. Smith, Mussolini's Roman Empire, (Penguin: New York) 1976. p. 150-154; M. Knox, Mussolini Unleashed, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1982. p. 40-41; A. Adamthwaite, France and the Coming of the Second World War, (Frank Cass: London) 1977, p. 309; and, Von Papen, p. 444.

<sup>220</sup> Cadogan, p. 171. Entry for 9 Apr 1939. The origin of British fears regarding Corfu was Metaxas himself, who, the day after the invasion, informed the British that Greek intelligence indicated that the Italians intended to attack the island sometime between 10 and 12 April. DBFP Series III, Vol V, no. 97. The Italian Chargé in London, of course, denied the rumours (no. 95).

That same day, the Cabinet met with Simon in the chair. It decided to send messages to Ankara, Belgrade, and Athens to see what the Balkan nations proposed to do. Belgrade answered "nothing".<sup>221</sup> Athens said "wait". Turkey replied that if the action were confined to Albania then it would do nothing. For the Turks this was a significant change in policy. Albania, however it defined itself, had always been considered a Balkan nation and under the protection of the Balkan Entente.<sup>222</sup> Despite the discouraging response, the Albanian mission in Ankara continued to function and the Turks harboured the fugitive King Zog between his expulsion from Greece on 2 May and his voyage to Britain in June.<sup>223</sup>

What seems most probable, was that the Turks were again looking for a British lead and, not seeing one, were reluctant to provide it themselves. Saraçoğlu was much dissatisfied with what he

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<sup>221</sup> Not a surprising reaction since Ciano appears to have obtained Yugoslav approval for the invasion during a trip to Belgrade in January 1939. While not admitting that an invasion would take place, Ciano underscored the benefits to be gained by the Yugoslavs by the disappearance of Albania -- an alliance with Italy, a demilitarized frontier, and the disappearance of agitation in Kossovo. G. Ciano, Les Archives Secretes de Comte Ciano 1936-1942, (Librairie Plon: Paris). p. 265-267. Entry for period 18-23 Jan 1939.

<sup>222</sup> DDF Series II, Vol II no. 166 De Dampierre to Flandin 6 May 1936. In Turkish eyes especially, the Albanians, fellow moslems, were a kindred people. In 1934, they had been invited to join the Balkan Pact by the Turks through their Ambassador in Tirane, M. Ruşen Esref. B. J. Fischer, King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania, (East European Monographs: Columbia) 1984. p. 222.

<sup>223</sup> Fischer, p. 287-292.

considered the insufficient British reaction to the Italian invasion. While Britain circularized the powers to see what they would do, Britain itself, he thought, seemed less interested in protecting its position in the Mediterranean than in discovering ways in which Italy's newest aggression could be reconciled with its undertakings to respect the Mediterranean status quo.<sup>224</sup> The French, for their part, favoured a guarantee of Greece and Rumania, and expressed themselves as almost certain that war was about to break out.<sup>225</sup> They promised to assist the British in the defence of Greece, and to this effect, on 9 April, issued orders to their Atlantic Fleet to move to Mediterranean stations.<sup>226</sup> That night, Churchill warned Chamberlain:

What is now at stake is nothing less than the choice of the Balkan peninsula. If those states remain exposed to German and Italian pressure while we appear, as they deem it incapable of action, they will be forced to make the best terms possible with Berlin and Rome.<sup>227</sup>

On 10 April 1939 the Cabinet met again with the Prime Minister back in the chair. "It is necessary . . . that we should take steps", he said, "to reach agreement with Greece and Turkey which

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<sup>224</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V, no. 101, 119, 121.

<sup>225</sup> Adamthwaite, p. 309. The FO was not certain that a guarantee was an absolute requirement at this point, but confronted by French insistence that they would grant one with or without the British, decided that it would be best to go along with Paris in order to preserve Anglo-French solidarity. Ibid., p. 309-310.

<sup>226</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 100, 152 and 103. In addition, in the following days, Air units were deployed to dispersion bases in accordance with the plan for war against Italy and additional French troops ordered to Tunisia and Somaliland.

<sup>227</sup> PRO FO 800/318 Churchill to Chamberlain 9 Apr 1939.

would make it clear that we should not tolerate any interference with those two countries".<sup>228</sup> The guarantee of Greece in April and the joint guarantee with Turkey derived from this conclusion. Previously, HMG had been reluctant to guarantee Turkey because, by doing so, it considered that the prospects of rapprochement with Italy would be harmed. The invasion of Albania, by placing Italy more forthrightly among Britain's enemies, cut through this reluctance. Without the Italian invasion, it is extremely unlikely that the Foreign Policy Committee would have come to the decision it did -- to guarantee Turkey even if the price of a Turkish guarantee was an equivalent guarantee to Greece.<sup>229</sup>

In Ankara, Knatchbull-Hugesson rushed to see Saraçoğlu to question him about Turkey's action in the event of a threat to Greece. Saraçoğlu was unconcerned.<sup>230</sup> In fact, for the Turks, Greece was only a minor problem. Far more serious was the vital necessity of defining the nature of their relationship with the great powers. There were those who were strongly in favour of an alliance with the Western Democracies, those who thought it indispensable that the Russians be included in such an alliance,

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<sup>228</sup> PRO CAB 23/98 Cab 19(39) 10 Apr 1939. Foreign Office opinion was similar and similarly uncertain what concrete steps to take. "Awful rambling discussion, but general sense that we must do something about Greece and Turkey" was how Cadogan summed up British policy in the immediate aftermath of the invasion of Albania. Cadogan, p. 171. Entry for 10 Apr 1939. See also, Aster, p. 133-134.

<sup>229</sup> PRO CAB 55/15 COS 383 op. cit.; and, L. Pratt, East of Malta, West of Suez, (Cambridge: London) 1975. p. 156-159.

<sup>230</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit., 11 Apr 1939.

and those who, sensible of Turkish economic dependency on Germany, favoured neutrality.<sup>231</sup> If one were bold enough to put names at the head of each tendency -- 'bold' because leading Turks were themselves pulled in each direction -- the first tendency would be typified by Dr. Aras, the second by Saraçoğlu and the third by Numan Menemencioğlu.

The next day, and for the four following days, Knatchbull-Hugesson attended a series of meetings with Massigli, the Balkan Ministers and Saraçoğlu to search for a common Balkan response. "I admire the Turks," he wrote in his diary that day, "They are gentlemen, straight and frank and we know where one is with them".<sup>232</sup> The upshot of the Easter meetings was a bilateral agreement between Rumania and Turkey. The two powers agreed to reinforce, and enforce, a common front in the Balkans, while pursuing a "prudent policy and avoid[ing] all unnecessary provocation". If events forced a choice, the two powers agreed to choose in common and insist that the rest of the Balkan Entente follow their lead. If Rumania were engaged by Bulgaria while coming to the aid of Poland, or if Turkey were attacked by Bulgaria for any reason, the other would attack Bulgaria. If Rumania had to fight any other third power, Turkey would be at least benevolent and friendly. The two powers agreed to exchange information regarding their various negotiations with the Great Powers, and

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<sup>231</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XV no. 385 Massigli to Bonnet 14 Apr; no. 368 Massigli to Paris 13 Apr; no. 378 Paris to Ankara 13 Apr; and, no. 394 Massigli to Bonnet 14 Apr 1939.

<sup>232</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit., 12/14/15/17 Apr 1939.

lastly, in any conversations with the Great Powers to seek to obtain the greatest possible assistance.<sup>233</sup>

Turkey's policy toward Britain in the interim since the invasion had also began to clarify. Saraçoğlu informed London that the Turks would not "commit themselves to a public statement as desired without the consent of the Chamber and without some new definite guarantee of their own security".<sup>234</sup> They desired also, he later confirmed, a definite idea of the assistance available and immediate Staff Conversations.<sup>235</sup> All of this notwithstanding, when Von Papen, the new German Ambassador to Ankara, arrived at the end of April, his initial interview with Saraçoğlu was much less than cordial and he came away visibly shaken.<sup>236</sup>

In the days following the Turco-Rumanian agreement, Turkey began to move more decisively toward the West: the West, meantime, was groping for Turkey. On 14 April, Halifax offered to second Saraçoğlu in his efforts to consolidate the Balkans and wrote: "I look to him, however to indicate the "precise" lines and timings of

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<sup>233</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol V no. 278 Conv Halifax/Gafencu 24 Apr 1939.

<sup>234</sup> PRO CAB 23/98 Cab 20(39) 13 Apr 1939.

<sup>235</sup> PRO CAB 23/98 Cab 21(39) 19 Apr 1939.

<sup>236</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XV no. 511, Massigli to Bonet 28 Apr; PRO FO 424/283 E2737/9/44 13 Apr and E3450/9/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 28 Apr; CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit. Entry for 9 May; DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 302 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 28 Apr 1939; and, H. Knatchbull-Hugesson, Diplomat in Peace and War, (John Murray: London), p. 146. Von Papen's interview with İnönü, on the other hand, seems to have been altogether more civilized. See, Von Papen, Memoires, (Andre Deutsch: London), 1952, p. 447; and, F. Weber, The Evasive Neutral, (Missouri: St. Louis) 1979, p. 30.

any advise I might usefully give, as well as the quarters in which he thinks it should be given".<sup>237</sup> He was also directing Knatchbull-Hugesson to tell Saraçoğlu of Britain's recent advances to the Soviets.<sup>238</sup>

On 16 April, Saraçoğlu, relieved by indications of vigour in British policy, told Knatchbull-Hugesson that Britain could be certain of support in the event of war in the Mediterranean, in the Balkans or in a general war. He noted however, that it would be necessary to coordinate war plans and make preparations for cooperation first.<sup>239</sup> Later that same day, he clarified the Turkish position further. Turkey he said, would stay neutral only in the case that Britain and France were attacked solely by Germany in the West, but "He added that the probability of such a limited attack could in practice be almost entirely ruled out".<sup>240</sup>

In London, Dr. Aras was taking rather a more forward line. Halifax told Aras that as soon as agreement with Paris and Moscow was reached, the next step would be to consolidate the smaller nations. Aras replied that Turkey, for its part, "would in all cases observe her Balkan engagements".<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol V no. 162 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 14 Apr 1939.

<sup>238</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol V no. 171 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 14 Apr; and no. 170 12 Apr 1939.

<sup>239</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol V no. 190 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 16 Apr 1939.

<sup>240</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol V no. 191 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 16 Apr 1939.

<sup>241</sup> PRO FO 800/311 Conv Halifax/Aras 21 Mar 1939.



Lord Halifax had put to the Turkish Ambassador the question whether, if Poland, for example, were attacked, and if France and Great Britain went to her assistance, Turkey would be ready to join them. The Turkish Ambassador's reply had been that if Great Britain were prepared to act with Turkey in the Mediterranean, Turkey would be ready to go as far as Great Britain in her own geographical area. The Turkish Ambassador said that he spoke with the full knowledge of the mind of the Turkish Government.<sup>242</sup>

On 17 April, Saraçoğlu presented Knatchbull-Hugesson with an aide-memoire showing exactly what Britain could expect from Turkish policy in response to the British circulaire of the previous week. The dominance of the Axis nations, Saraçoğlu wrote, was dangerous for the smaller nations, whether they attacked or only menaced was immaterial. Italy, in the Mediterranean, was especially dangerous, and Turkey looked to a common interest with Great Britain in containing this danger to ensure its security. If Turkey declared itself now, however, he said, the result would be world war. In any case, he continued, before Turkey could do anything, it would have to know what aid was available. This was an "*element indispensable*".<sup>243</sup> Turkey also needed to know what the Soviet position was. Unfortunately, Saraçoğlu noted, Turkey had no forces to go to Rumania unless Bulgaria were aligned with the Balkan Entente. Turkey, therefore, would limit itself to combatting Axis influence in the Balkans. It would stay neutral and try to keep Germany out of the Balkans. In conclusion, Saraçoğlu stressed again

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<sup>242</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 C3694/3346/18 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 21 Mar 1939.

<sup>243</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol V no. 199 Enclosure II Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 17 Apr 1939.

Turkey's wishes: it needed to know what aid, especially for Straits defence, it could obtain from Britain; it needed to be assured of collaboration with the Soviet Union; it needed information regarding the British attitude to Bulgaria and Rumania; finally, it desired total secrecy in all conversations.<sup>244</sup>

In Paris, there was consternation at the lack of definition in the Turkish reply.<sup>245</sup> In London, Halifax was more concerned about the stipulation that all conversations must be confidential. HMG did not require private assurances; it desired that they should be as public as possible.<sup>246</sup> Secret consultations, after all, by their nature cannot deter anything.

On 20 April, Knatchbull-Hugesson saw Saraçoğlu. Turkey, he was told, had been talking to Russia. Apparently the talks had reassured the Turks. Saraçoğlu said that Turkey was now ready to agree to all and any coordination but placed great importance on Staff conversations and the provision of material for Straits defence. These, he said, were essential.<sup>247</sup> Paris, impressed by the rapid development of Anglo-Turkish relations, instructed Massigli to follow Knatchbull-Hugesson's lead.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> DBFP Series II, Vol V no. 203 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 18 Apr 1939.

<sup>246</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 219 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 19 Apr 1939.

<sup>247</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 239 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 21 Apr 1939.

<sup>248</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 257 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 22 Apr 1939.

Two days later, however, Saraçoğlu returned to the disquieting questioning which suggested Turkish uncertainty and vacillation more than resolution. Exactly what, he wanted to know, was the British policy regarding the Soviet Union? Did HMG have any information regarding Yugoslavian wavering?<sup>249</sup> Did London know "when the Axis powers intend to start a war and if so when and where"?<sup>250</sup> Britain's Russian policy, Halifax replied, was waiting on the attitude of Poland. Its Rumanian policy hung on the same peg. Yugoslavia's position was anybody's guess. About the intentions of the Axis powers, he had "no definite information".<sup>251</sup> Halifax's equivocal answers must have caused Saraçoğlu as much disquiet as Saraçoğlu's vague questioning had Halifax.

On 25 April, Knatchbull-Hugesson saw Saraçoğlu again. Saraçoğlu said that Turkey was likely to fight any aggressor which disturbed Balkan peace, but also said made it clear that Turkey desired that any Turco-British agreement be paralleled by similar

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<sup>249</sup> Prince Paul was on his way to visit London, while his Foreign Minister was touring Venice and Berlin. By May Paul was playing a diplomatic game worthy of King Boris. He was pushing the French to send troops to Salonika, coquetting with Hitler, and suggesting to the Italians that they sponsor a South Slav bloc against Turkey. G. Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Diary 1939-1943, (Heinemann: London) 1947, p. 89. Entries for 8 and 10 May 1939.

<sup>250</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 276 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 23 Apr 1939.

<sup>251</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 276 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 24 Apr 1939. About the attitude of Yugoslavia, at least, Halifax should have had some definite information. Prince Paul was a very close personal friend and was visiting London primarily to see Halifax.

Russo-British and Turco-Russian agreements.<sup>252</sup> The Agreement with the Soviets would be limited to the Black Sea and Balkans and not extend to Poland or the Baltic.<sup>253</sup> Saraçoğlu warned that Turkish participation in a major war would be costly, and would have to be subsidized by its Great Power allies; therefore, in addition to military conversations, economic and financial talks would be necessary.<sup>254</sup> The agreement with Britain, he said, would have to contain two separate clauses -- one covering the Mediterranean, and the other concerning the Balkans. In the Mediterranean, Turkey was "absolutely committed to material assistance", but in the Balkans it could not promise this quite so unconditionally because the Russians would be an important consideration, and the Turks did not wish to be bound to them so strongly as to HMG. In the Black Sea, the Turks would accord to the Soviets the same guarantee as to HMG in the Mediterranean, but, once again, the Balkans were a different matter.<sup>255</sup> Essentially, Saraçoğlu was returning to Aras' conception of Mediterranean and Black Sea pacts, based on alliances to Britain and Russia.

At the end of April, Saraçoğlu stressed once more the condition that all conversations must be secret. The continual

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<sup>252</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 286 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 26 Apr 1939.

<sup>253</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 287 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 26 Apr 1939.

<sup>254</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 286 op. cit.

<sup>255</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 291 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 26 Apr 1939.

importance of secrecy to the Turks puzzled and disturbed Halifax. That it did so, was a sign of fundamental divergence of views between Ankara and London. For the Turks, the guarantee was the prelude to possible military action; and therefore they were concerned that it not be bruited widely. The actual political agreement was, for the Turks, less important than its operative parts: the military convention, the staff conversations, and provision of material, economic and financial assistance. In London, conversely, it was hoped that the guarantee would vitiate the necessity for action. Guarantees were not intended to be militarily effective; rather they were intended to avoid what the Cabinet believed to have been the mistake of its predecessor in 1914 -- failure to make sufficiently clear actions by a proposed enemy which would result in war. Poland and Rumania were guaranteed against Germany, and Greece and Turkey against Italy, less to provide for their security than to give Rome and Berlin food for thought. Halifax wrote later that a policy of guarantees was looked upon as the "best chance, and indeed the only chance" of warning Britain's enemies from courses certain to lead to war.<sup>256</sup> Ankara viewed the joint guarantee as being what it subsequently became -- the overture to a military alliance: London looked upon it as an element in its policy of deterrence. In addition, it is difficult to resist the belief that the Turks were anxious not to burn their bridges behind them and to ensure that whatever agreement was reached in secret with Britain, did not preclude possible

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<sup>256</sup> CC Halifax Papers, Reel II, 410.12.1 op. cit.

rapprochement with the Axis powers.

The French too wished that the guarantee system could be widened to include Russia; in truth, if they could have had a real Russian alliance, it seems probable that they would have avoided guarantees altogether.<sup>257</sup> On 24 April, they asked London directly if it were willing to enter a tripartite agreement with the Soviets.<sup>258</sup> On 29 April, Halifax gave his answer to Paris and Ankara. There would be no mutual relationship with the Soviets. There could not be. Poland and Rumania would not have it.<sup>259</sup> The only solution was for Russia to unilaterally underwrite the Anglo-French guarantees.

The Turks continued to be puzzled and frightened by London's ambiguous attitude to the Soviet Union. They could see no possibility that Moscow would give unilateral assurances.<sup>260</sup> Saraçoğlu, Menemencioğlu, and İnönü all stressed to Knatchbull-Hugesson that they considered that general war excluding Russia would be disastrous. Either the West would lose, or all would be exhausted and Russia would become the master of Europe.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol 5 no. 277 Phipps to Halifax 24 Apr 1939.

<sup>258</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol 5 no. 280 Phipps to Halifax 24 Apr 1939.

<sup>259</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 310 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 29 Apr 1939.

<sup>260</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 332 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 2 May 1939.

<sup>261</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 343 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 3 May 1939.

This was not Saraçoğlu's only disappointment. All through the Spring he had been hammering at Bulgaria to join the Balkan Entente to make a common Balkan response possible.<sup>262</sup> At the beginning of May, Rumania scuppered these efforts. Saraçoğlu was bluntly informed that Rumania would not give up the Dobrudja. Neither Ankara or London could see any other way of pacifying Bulgaria.<sup>263</sup>

Even worse, it began to look in April as if the guarantee would not include France. In April, it became apparent that there would be no tripartite agreement unless the Hatay question were settled first.<sup>264</sup> In Paris, Phipps "urged upon M. Bonnet the great desirability, in view of more important and wider considerations, to get the Sanjak question finally and definitely settled with the Turks".<sup>265</sup> Bonnet requested closer definition of "wider considerations". Phipps pointed out the important work Turkey was doing pacifying the Balkans. He noted Turkey's position at the Straits and its growing military power. Turkey, he said, was one of the last moderate republics and a kindred nation. It "shared the same view of England and France about the ordinary decencies of

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<sup>262</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 297 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 26 Apr 1939.

<sup>263</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 329 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 2 May 1939.

<sup>264</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVI no. 130 London to Paris 10 May; no. 139 Paris to Ankara 11 May; no. 150 Ankara to Paris 11 May; no 158 Ankara to Paris 12 May; also, CC KNAT 2/100 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Kelly 1 Apr 1947.

<sup>265</sup> PRO FO 800/311 Phipps to Halifax 4 Apr 1939.

international life and definitely did not wish to be drawn once again into the military and political orbit of Germany".<sup>266</sup> Bonnet, at the end of the interview, admitted that France was reconsidering its position.

Potemkin, the Russian Envoy and Litvinov's deputy, in Turkey on one leg in his Balkan fact-finding tour, found Ankara full of harping on the unreasonable attitude of HMG towards Russia.<sup>267</sup> Potemkin told the Turks that Russia was happy with the movement toward an Anglo-Turkish convention and Mediterranean agreement, and was satisfied with Turkish policy in general, though Moscow thought it unduly weak over Rumania. He wondered, however, if the proposed Anglo-Turkish convention might be expanded into a tripartite Anglo-Turco-Russian pact. But if this were not possible, he assured the Turks, they could continue to count on Russian assistance if required.<sup>268</sup> Potemkin asked if Russia could reckon on Turkish assistance if involved in a war over Rumania.<sup>269</sup> Saraçoğlu told him that this would depend on the Bulgarian attitude. Potemkin promised that the Soviets would use their influence to produce a

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 357 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 4 May 1939; and, J. McSherry, Stalin, Hitler and Europe, (World Publishing: Cleveland) 1968. Vol I, p. 142-144.

<sup>268</sup> This was no news to the Turks. Russia had made similar declarations of support the previous year. Survey of International Affairs, 1938, III, p. 447; and, DGFP Series D, Vol V, no. 559.

<sup>269</sup> Maisky, in London, had just pledged Russian support to Rumania should it be attacked by Germany. D. Watts, op. cit., p. 121.



more cooperative attitude in Sofia.<sup>270</sup> Before he left, Potemkin had an audience with the President. İnönü urged him to advise Moscow to take whatever it was offered by the West.<sup>271</sup>

On 9 May, still in Ankara, Potemkin received the news of Litvinov's resignation.<sup>272</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson noted in his diary, that while the news "created rather a sensation", "P. told me that it made no difference".<sup>273</sup> In fact, Litvinov's replacement marked a policy shift more drastic than any. Potemkin's Balkan mission was the last gasp of Litvinov's popular front policy. It marked, though its significance could not have been noted at the time, the point after which Turkey and its Balkan neighbours had more to fear from Russian enmity than to hope from Russian support. The joint communique issued at the conclusion of Potemkin's mission, that Russia and Turkey would "pursue their respective and parallel efforts for the safeguarding of peace and security", in the light of subsequent events, becomes charged with more than a little irony.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 357 op. cit.

<sup>271</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 378 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 6 May 1939.

<sup>272</sup> Litvinov had announced his resignation on 3 May. On the same day, the change in policy direction not yet apparent, Izvetia called the coming Anglo-Turkish agreement "one of the links in that chain which is the only sure means of preventing the extension of aggression to new parts of Europe. All sincere partisans of peace in all countries would value the conclusion of the agreement as an investment in the cause of strengthening universal peace". BIA, Vol XVI, No. 10 (20 May), p. 59.

<sup>273</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op.cit., 9 May 1939.

<sup>274</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 10 (20 May 1939), p. 45.

Agreement, in principle, on the form that the Joint Guarantee should take was reached at the end of April.<sup>275</sup> All of Turkey's immediate reservations were set aside in the panic of the moment, in return for British promises of Staff talks<sup>276</sup> and assurances that the Turks would be free to keep the Russians informed of the progress of Anglo-Turkish negotiations.<sup>277</sup> Britain promised also to commence immediately negotiations towards a better defined long-term treaty.<sup>278</sup> By 6 May, Ankara was full of rumours that there was to be an announcement of an Anglo-Turkish agreement at the forthcoming meeting of the People's party.<sup>279</sup>

By 8 May, the members of the Balkan and Sa'adabad pacts were demanding information.<sup>280</sup> The Germans, meanwhile, were pushing the Italians to do something to quiet Turkish fears and signalled Rome that they feared a coming Anglo-French initiative in Ankara.<sup>281</sup> Von Papen, attempting to derail negotiations, proposed to the Turks that if they would delay the conclusion of the

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<sup>275</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol 5 no. 311 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 29 Apr 1939.

<sup>276</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V, no. 219, 239, and 310.

<sup>277</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V, no. 260.

<sup>278</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V, no. 271. Saracoglu wished a fifteen year duration for the proposed treaty.

<sup>279</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 395 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 6 May 1939.

<sup>280</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 414 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 8 May 1939.

<sup>281</sup> G. Ciano, Ciano's Diary 1939-1943, (Heineman: London), 1947. p. 82, entry for 3 May 1939.

agreement, Germany would ensure that Bulgaria and Italy entered the Balkan Pact, and would guarantee the borders of the neutral bloc thus created. Saraçoğlu rebuffed the new Ambassador. "It had been the entry of Italy into Albania", he complained, "which had necessitated [the] Turkish policy of understanding with [the] Western powers and that [the] actual admission of Italy into [the] Balkan Entente would be the last straw".<sup>282</sup>

The previous day, 7 May, Knatchbull-Hugesson talked to Saraçoğlu about Hatay in a last effort to bring the French into the agreement. Saraçoğlu was adamant. "The Minister for Foreign Affairs", Knatchbull-Hugesson wrote, "remarked to me angrily that [the] French Government were bargaining about a few villages when Turkey was offering the whole of her manhood to cooperate with the Western Powers".<sup>283</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson informed London of his belief that the Turkish leadership was being held to a rigid position by the People's Party which had been angered by the French failure to make good their promises. The Turks had, he wrote, "no confidence that [the] French Government will abide by proposals they have made". He might have added "or will make -- once a treaty is signed and that spur removed".<sup>284</sup> On 9 May, in Antioch, the President of the Republic of Hatay announced that Hatay would no

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<sup>282</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V, no. 414.

<sup>283</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 415 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 8 May 1939.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

longer accept its separation from the mother country.<sup>285</sup>

On 10 May, the Cabinet decided to go ahead with the guarantee even if it could not be made tripartite.<sup>286</sup> Halifax telegraphed Knatchbull-Hugesson that the decision had been made to proceed bilaterally if France and Turkey could not reach agreement. "I have no hint from Paris", he wrote, "that such a course would be resented and I do not propose to approach [the] French Government in the matter".<sup>287</sup>

By the evening of 11 May Franco-Turkish negotiations remained deadlocked and it was decided that a joint declaration should be made simultaneously in London and Turkey at 11:00 on 12 May 1939. Accordingly, at 11:00 the following day, Chamberlain rose and announced the Joint Guarantee to the House of Commons. He told it that discussions having indicated "the customary identity of view", a Joint Guarantee had been negotiated with Turkey and would go into effect immediately.<sup>288</sup> The Guarantee was based on the following conditions:

1. A long term reciprocal defence agreement.
2. Mutual guarantees. "Pending the completion of the definitive agreement, His Majesty's Government and the Turkish Government declare that in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area, they would be prepared to

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<sup>285</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 10 (20 May 1939), p. 45.

<sup>286</sup> PRO CAB 23/99 CAB 27(39) 10 May 1939.

<sup>287</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3548/143/44 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson May 1939.

<sup>288</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCXLVII 12 May 1939; also, PRO FO 424/283 T6131/436/384 Halifax Circular 11 May 1939.

cooperate effectively and to lend each other all aid and assistance in their power".

3. The guarantee would not be directed against any country and was defensive in nature.
4. Additional and more definite talks were to proceed.
5. Turkey and Britain would consult on how to ensure the stability of the Balkans.
6. The freedom of either signatory to enter other agreements.
7. A similar agreement was to be made in Ankara that night.<sup>289</sup>

The form of French association was to remain for decision by Turkey and France.<sup>290</sup>

The Government was widely praised for the agreement. "Unreservedly and unequivocally", Lloyd George said, "I congratulate them upon the Turkish treaty. It is of great value".<sup>291</sup> But the guarantee, he warned, would not be sufficient to ensure safety from the dictators unless accompanied by increased armaments and a Russian alliance. The real solution was not Turkey instead of Russia, he said, but Turkey and Russia. The other guarantees would be useless without such an agreement.<sup>292</sup>

Churchill too applauded the agreement. The news of the Turkish guarantee, he said, were "'rare and fresh fruit' the more

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCXLVII col 1814 19 May 1939.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

refreshing because perhaps, unhappily, they are somewhat rare".<sup>293</sup> He, like Lloyd George, hoped that the alliance might be a signpost on the road to agreement with Russia, because, he reminded the House, in the Balkans, Britain and Russia had a virtual identity of interest. If worries about Italy were holding the Government back, then: "If the Prime Minister desires to influence Signor Mussolini, let me assure him that there is one way, and one way only, in which you can do it, and that is to be strong, nothing else will have much effect".<sup>294</sup>

Archibald Sinclair, for Labour, warned that the agreement would not likely be operative without a corresponding Russian agreement. "Do not let anyone suppose" he warned:

that if any one of the countries in the Mediterranean area which we have guaranteed were the object of aggression next week that Turkey would necessarily move a man, a ship, or a gun. Turkey would not move unless and until -- and this brings me to my last point -- the cooperation of Russia were assured.<sup>295</sup>

Butler, answering for the Government, rejected fears that the agreement would be useless without Soviet adherence. He considered that this would be a "misreading of the declaration to which Turkey has put her hand, and I think, it would be definitely repudiated by the Government".<sup>296</sup> Lloyd-George and Churchill were correct. The fact that the guarantees had gone forward without any reference to

<sup>293</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCXLVII 19 May 1939.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., col 1872.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., col 1879.

Russia was an extravagant slight which Moscow did not soon forget and, in Turkish eyes, constituted a flaw which in isolation might have proved sufficient to deprive the Guarantee of most of its value.<sup>297</sup>

In the House of Lords, Halifax described the Guarantee as the first step in the "building up [of] a peace front against aggression".<sup>298</sup> He said that he hoped soon to be able to announce that the Guarantee had become a full-fledged treaty of Alliance. He concluded:

The attitude of friendly cooperation which the Turkish Government has adopted throughout these discussions has been a source of the greatest satisfaction to His Majesty's Government, as it has been to the whole of the country, and I think it is the best augury for the consolidation of peace in the Mediterranean area and South Eastern Europe.<sup>299</sup>

In Turkey, there was even less criticism, but one suspects, greater doubt. Refik Saydam, the Prime Minister, as agreed, at 11:00 on 12 May, announced the Guarantee to the Grand National Assembly. Turkey had been neutral, he said, but could be neutral no

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<sup>297</sup> See, T. Higgins, Hitler and Russia, (MacMillan: New York) 1966. p. 17-18; and, I.M. Maisky, Memoires of a Soviet Ambassador (Hutchison: London) 1967. For the interpretation placed by the Soviets on British diplomacy, to them inexplicable, see: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War, 2 Vols, (Foreign Language Publishing House: Moscow) 1948. The fears of the Government's critics were shared by the COS who tended, like Churchill and Lloyd-George, to see a Russian connection as the logical next step following from an alliance with Turkey. By 16 May, the COS had been "swung around to 'whole-hog' alliance with the Soviets" -- much to the annoyance, Cadogan thought, of the Prime Minister. Cadogan, p. 180. Entry for 16 May 1939.

<sup>298</sup> Hansard, Lords Vol CXIII col 351.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., col 355.

longer without jeopardizing its security. The threats in the Mediterranean and the Balkans were simply too obvious to ignore. "The best way" he told the deputies, "of saving Turkey from war was to associate her with those countries which were united together for peace and not shirking war if necessary".<sup>300</sup> This was only a beginning, he assured them: negotiations were continuing with France, the USSR and Turkey's Balkan allies.<sup>301</sup> İnönü, speaking to the fifth Grand Congress of the Republican People's Party on 3 June, exhibited the agreement as a safe-guard of the rights of little nations. Relations with the Soviets, he told the delegates, were excellent; those with France were good, and getting steadily better.<sup>302</sup> On 30 June, the Grand National Assembly ratified the Guarantee.<sup>303</sup> The Turkish press, the Embassy in Ankara reported, was quick to seize on the guarantee and to criticize with increasing boldness and virulence recent German and Italian actions.<sup>304</sup> The time for totalitarian demands had passed, Ulus

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<sup>300</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R3965/661/67 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 12 May 1939. See also, Pierre Rondot, "La Turquie et les Problemes Mediterraneens", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 5 (Oct 1939), p. 551.

<sup>301</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 506 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 12 May 1939.

<sup>302</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, Vol 10 (20 May 1939), p. 52.

<sup>303</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, Vol 14 (15 Jul 1939), p. 48. On this occasion, Saraçoğlu spoke. The Guarantee, he told the Assembly, was the last step in Turkey's reconstruction and the last, logical step in a chain of events beginning with Abyssinia and including Montreaux and Nyon.

<sup>304</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R4681/661/67 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 24 May 1939. See also, BIA, Vol XVI, No. 15 (29 Jul 1939).



warned: "the time had come to make claims on totalitarian states".<sup>305</sup>

France, meanwhile, had been placed in a nearly ludicrous position. On 12 May the Republic played host to a Turkish technical delegation which had arrived to tour the Maginot line.<sup>306</sup> General Dentz instructed that the Turks were "to be received politely but coldly".<sup>307</sup> Dentz was less polite when he excoriated Spears two days later. "That is your fault" he shouted, "it is you sales *Anglaises* who are responsible for that; it is impossible for us to have a dual policy in the East; our policy must be completely interlocking".<sup>308</sup> On 15 May, Bonnet instructed Massigli to begin negotiations aimed at ceding Hatay to Turkey.<sup>309</sup> On 23 June, having finally been brought to agree to Turkish annexation of Hatay effective 23 July 1939, France adhered to the guarantee.<sup>310</sup>

From Rome, the French Ambassador reported that Ciano was much

<sup>305</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 15 (29 Jul 1939).

<sup>306</sup> The Turks had requested that such a delegation be received in April; also, that French experts tour the Çatalca lines and make suggestions as to how they might be improved. PRO FO 371/2775/143/44 E2361 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 16 Apr 1939. Later, the Huntzinger, Lund and Butler delegations all contained officers for this purpose.

<sup>307</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3543/143/44 Phipps to FO 12 May; E3547/147/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 13 May 1939.

<sup>308</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3594 Phipps to FO 17 May 1939.

<sup>309</sup> G. Bonnet, De Munich a la Guerre, (Plon: Paris) 1967. p. 270-271.

<sup>310</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVI no. 517 Circulaire 23 Jun 1939; PRO CAB 23/99 Cab 31(39) 7 Jun 1939; and, BIA, Vol XVI, No. 13 (1 Jul 1939), p. 49. İnönü's speech welcoming Hatay into the Turkish Republic: İnönü, p. 340. Speech 1 Nov 1939.

angered by the guarantee and that Mussolini made no attempt to disguise his distaste for this development.<sup>311</sup> "Mussolini" wrote Loraine on 27 June:

is almost inaccessible. He had either chosen, or been persuaded, not to receive any foreigners but Germans. He seems moreover to be in a baddish humour. The main reason is probably the Anglo-Turkish declaration. This seems to have taken him and the Italian Government completely aback. Anglo-Turkish cooperation obviously puts a serious check on Italian liberty of manoeuvre, in the event of war, in the Eastern Mediterranean, and actually menaces the Italian naval and air base in the Dodecanese. I suspect too that either Italian diplomacy has been caught napping as regards the trend of Turkish policy, or has miscalculated it.<sup>312</sup>

Did, Mussolini questioned Loraine, Britain still consider the Easter Agreement as valid; and if so, how could it reconcile the agreement with the policy of encirclement which Britain seemed to be following?<sup>313</sup>

To Germany also the agreement came as a bitter blow. The Germans, the news from Berlin went, were not fooled by the Pact and did not believe for a second that it was limited to the Mediterranean alone. "England's pactomania continues to blossom", Goebbel's sneered. "We do not envy Turkey; she has let herself be lured away from a bilateral policy into the British encirclement ring. No good can come from that".<sup>314</sup> From Ankara, a worried Von

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<sup>311</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVI no. 316 Francois-Poncet to Bonnet May 1939.

<sup>312</sup> PRO FO 1011/77 Loraine to King George VI 27 June 1939.

<sup>313</sup> C. Seton-Watson, "The Anglo-Italian Gentleman's Agreement of January 1937 and its Aftermath", op. cit., p. 278-279.

<sup>314</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 10 (20 May), p. 39.

Papen wrote to stress to his superiors the importance of Turkey if war were contemplated with England.<sup>315</sup> In Rome, a Ciano annoyed by continued German hectoring, presented to a shocked Ribbentrop wireless intercepts showing that the Turks were as hostile to Germany as to Italy.<sup>316</sup> The Axis riposte to the guarantees was the Pact of Steel. The most pessimistic of the appeasers' predictions had proved to be correct. Association of the sheep had led to a gathering of wolves.<sup>317</sup>

The Balkan reception of the Joint Guarantee was, on the whole, unfavourable. The Rumanians observed, that while they agreed with the idea, they considered so formal and binding an agreement to be provocative. Prince Paul of Yugoslavia's disagreement was more violent. On 10 May he arrived in Rome and over the next week explored with Ciano the possibilities of forming a Balkan bloc excluding Turkey, aligned with the Axis.<sup>318</sup>

But what had been accomplished? Precious little. The real work had yet to be done -- the Staff conversations, the joint planning, and the economic and financial talks. The Joint Guarantee of 12 May 1939, did not represent an alliance, but an engagement to ally. One

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<sup>315</sup> DGFP Series IV, Vol VI, no. 413. Von Papen Memorandum 20 May 1939; also, Von Papen, p. 446-447.

<sup>316</sup> G. Ciano, Diaries 1939-1943. Entry for 21 May 1939.

<sup>317</sup> BDFP Series III, Vol V, No. 424, Loraine to Halifax 9 May 1939. See also, M. Toscano, The Origin of the Pact of Steel, (John Hopkins: Baltimore) 1967. p. 250-340.

<sup>318</sup> G. Ciano, Diaries, p. 85-89, entries for 10 and 18 May 1939; and, Survey of International Affairs, "The Eve of War", p. 129-136.

other thing is worth noting. The Joint Guarantee derived not from the triumph but the comprehensive failure of British policy and was carried through amid portents -- continued British unwillingness to make a combination with Russia, the resignation of Litvinov -- that Turkey's policy too was about to miscarry. It was less a sign that both nations were resolute against Axis aggression than that both were frightened and feeling vulnerable.

## Chapter VII -- The Military Convention

Definition of the Anglo-Turkish relation was not complete with the announcement of the Joint Guarantee in May. It was followed by the promised Staff conversations which aimed to produce a Military Convention, political negotiations, directed at a more definitive Tripartite Treaty, and by a complex series of talks in London and Paris which aimed to settle the nagging questions of financial and material assistance. For greater clarity, these will be dealt with separately below -- the military talks first because these preceeded the others.

The Staff conversations of the Spring and Summer 1939 took place in Ankara and were intended to produce a common Allied regional strategy. It was expected, particularly by the Turks, that this strategy would be formalized in a military convention to parallel the political agreement also being discussed at this time. The military conversations involved Western soldiers travelling to Ankara because the Turks claimed that they had insufficient Staff to permit the dispatch of experts to London.<sup>1</sup> Initially, the Foreign Office, while willing to concede that political negotiations might take place in Ankara, was adamant that their military counter-part occur in London. As for financial and economic discussions, the Foreign Office was not disposed that these should take place at all. As was the usual procedure, it advised Knatchbull-Hugesson to "lay low" in regards to these last.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3349/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 6 May 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Baggallay Minute 10 May 1939.

In truth, at the highest levels -- in the Cabinet and the CID -- London was not certain that it wanted Staff talks either. If the politicians ever forgot the lesson Liberals drew from the First World War, then Lord John Simon was there, like a death's head, to remind them. Staff talks were binding, and worse, were more apt to precipitate than quiet a crisis. Whatever they did to make coalition war winnable, they also made it more likely.<sup>3</sup> Chamberlain, a harder man than Simon, had always recognized that Staff conversations "with our prospective allies at the proper time" were necessary,<sup>4</sup> but in Spring 1939, was not certain that the right time had come. As late as 24 July, the Prime Minister was stressing to the CID how much he "thought it would be very undesirable for us to become committed to an agreement [military convention] of this nature".<sup>5</sup>

By mid-April, with negotiations for the Joint Guarantee nearing completion, the Services were becoming restive. On 19 April, the COS met to discuss the prospective alliance with Turkey. The JPC had already assessed the situation, and recommended that real Staff conversations and joint planning were an urgent necessity.<sup>6</sup> It considered, however, that before any ranking

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<sup>3</sup> PRO CAB 16/181 DP(P) 1st Mtg 19 Apr 1937 for example.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5696/G CID 368th Mtg 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>6</sup> PRO CAB 53/11 COS 290 Mtg 19 Apr 1939 (Composition: Newall, Gort, Cunningham); and, CAB 53/48 COS 878(JP), and COS 901(JP) Staff Conversations with Turkey 8 May 1939.

commander could be sent to good effect considerable progress was necessary at lower levels. For the moment, the most that the Services would consider was conversations conducted at the Attaché level. Before formal conversations commenced, they hoped to obtain from the Turks details of the operational support expected from Britain and to convince Turkey to consider in the event of war: closure of the Straits, the isolation of the Dodecanese, the opening of Turkish ports to British warships, and measures to keep Bulgaria out of the war, or, failing that, to engage Bulgaria in the interests of Rumania and Greece.<sup>7</sup> In return, the Attachés would be authorized to promise: the security of the Turks' Eastern Mediterranean flank, protection of coasts, harbours, and seaborne trade, and the containment of the German and Italian threat "to prevent any direct threat to Turkey either by land or sea and to reduce the threat from the air".<sup>8</sup>

Halifax, meanwhile, was taking a different tack. On 19 April Halifax instructed Knatchbull-Hugesson to request formally that Staff conversations begin immediately and that a Turkish delegation be sent to London.<sup>9</sup> This delegation would make tripartite the already on-going Anglo-French talks.<sup>10</sup> The Turkish response was not encouraging. The Turks were already planning to send a

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R2887/G Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 19 Apr 1939.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

technical mission to London and thought that Staff conversations would be better held in Ankara. This would offset Axis suspicion, the Turks said, and, added Knatchbull-Hugesson, allow the Allies a clearer view of Turkish plans and capabilities while avoiding the otherwise inevitable necessity of continual reference to Ankara.<sup>11</sup> Even so, the Cabinet Foreign Affairs Committee agreed at its 42nd Meeting on 24 April, "that Staff conversations with Turkey in London should be undertaken as proposed . . . and that these conversations should be started as soon as possible".<sup>12</sup> Chatfield instructed the COS to arrange things as quickly as possible.<sup>13</sup>

**Weygand in Ankara:**

The French, meanwhile, were less cautious and more accommodating. At the end of April, General Maxime Weygand was in Teheran. Unwilling to miss the chance presented by the proximity to Turkey of such a senior French officer at this crucial moment, on 26 April, Paris instructed Weygand to proceed to Ankara.<sup>14</sup> He was "to exercise in concert with the Turkish High Command the conditions to assure proper collaboration in the event of conflict".<sup>15</sup> In other words, he was to go to Ankara and talk with

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<sup>11</sup> PRO FO 424/283 E3378/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 5 May 1939.

<sup>12</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 869 Staff Conversations With Turkey 24 Apr 1939.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Chatfield Minute.

<sup>14</sup> See, M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, (Heinemann: London) 1952, 1950), p. 1-42.

<sup>15</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XV no. 491 Bonnet to Massigli 26 Apr 1939.



the Turks about common action in the event of war. Daladier explained to London, somewhat disingenuously, that Weygand was only going to Ankara to make a glorified social visit: "to exploit the very cordial relationship between General Weygand and President İsmet İnönü".<sup>16</sup>

On 1 May, Weygand arrived in Ankara. It was not İnönü with whom he closeted himself, but Marshal Çakmak, and Mediterranean strategy rather than friendly reminiscence which made up the matter of their discussion. Also present were Numan Menemencioğlu and Sedad Zaki Ors (European Bureau) from the Turkish Foreign Ministry, and Colonel Kuban from the Turkish General Staff.<sup>17</sup>

Marshal Çakmak began the discussion by giving as his opinion that the war would not begin in the West but in the East. In the West, the allies were simply too strong. If the war began in the Balkans, he said, then Salonika and Dedeagatch would be important bases for Allied forces. He thought too, that an attack on the Dodecanese would be a good first blow at Italy. Weygand agreed with Çakmak's analysis and asked if Turkey could obtain, and would accept, Russian aid. Çakmak said that the Turks would gladly accept Russian assistance, particularly Air assistance. If the Turks were attacked, he stressed, they would be in no position to refuse whatever help they could get in the Air.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> PRO CAB 44/49 The Higher Strategic Decision of the War 1939-1945, BGen Wynter, Vol I p. 79.

<sup>17</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVI no. 25 Rapport du General Weygand sur son Mission a Ankara.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Çakmak proceeded then to outline the material support he considered essential prior to Turkey's committing itself to any military convention. The Turks required urgently, he said: 200 Fighter aircraft, 200 light Tanks, 10,000 light machine-guns, 5,000 medium machine-guns, and 200,000 gas masks. Most urgently needed were anti-tank and anti-air weapons. In addition, Çakmak said, Turkey required instructional assistance. If relations with Germany broke down, Turkey would have to shift the training of 300 civil, and 100 military engineers from Germany to France. Help was also needed in the training of pilots. Colonel Kuban interposed the question whether the training of Turkish Intelligence and Staff officers might be switched to France from Germany. In addition, Çakmak continued, Turkey would require considerable technical and industrial aid.<sup>19</sup> Weygand could promise little, at this point, without reference to Paris.

On 3 May, Weygand met with Marshal Çakmak again. At this meeting, Marshal Çakmak stressed the importance of the alliance with Russia. Without a clear understanding with the Russians, he said, the Turks could well be paralysed by the need to provide for the defence of the Caucasus/Black Sea area. Moreover, he told Weygand, under agreement with Russia, Turkey was not allowed to treat with certain named powers without permission. Amongst these powers were Britain and France.<sup>20</sup>

On 4 May, Weygand was given a hero's send-off from Ankara. The

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

French Embassy considered this a calculated demonstration of Turkey's alignment with the Western Powers.<sup>21</sup> İnönü told Massigli that Weygand's visit had made an excellent impression on Turkey and particularly on the General Staff.<sup>22</sup> In fact, Weygand had committed neither himself nor France to anything. His mission was chiefly important as indicating the far from unhelpful attitude of the Turkish Army at this juncture, as an opening of Staff communications never entirely sundered thereafter, and, as an indication of certain Turkish concerns which continued to hamper operation of the alliance throughout and after the period under consideration: viz. the question of assistance, the attitude of Russia, and the associated difficulty of arriving at a guiding strategic conception acceptable to all parties.

**The Lund Mission:**

Britain, meanwhile, made no equivalent progress with the Turks until well into June 1939. Indeed, it was not until 12 May 1939, worried, saddled with a commitment, and anxious to see what it involved, that the COS jumped the Cabinet gun slightly and instructed the Attachés to begin talking to the Turks in Ankara.<sup>23</sup> The COS sought information regarding the Turkish strategy for the conduct of a possible war in the Eastern Mediterranean. Most

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<sup>21</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVI no. 39 Massigli to Paris 4 May 1939.

<sup>22</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVI no. 37 Massigli to Bonnet 4 May 1939.

<sup>23</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3501 COS to MAA 12 May 1939. In the British system, Attachés were seconded from the Services to the Foreign Office and did not, normally, correspond directly with their military superiors.

specifically, they needed information regarding likely Turkish actions in the Mediterranean and in South-Eastern Europe, how the Turks proposed to secure the Dardanelles, and whether there were any plans for potential Turkish operations in or from Turkish Thrace or against the Dodecanese. In addition, they wanted to know what could be expected in terms of access to Turkish ports and aerodromes and how local defences for these would be arranged. Finally, any details the Turks might be able to give them about the training, organization, and equipment of their forces would be appreciated as would a general outline of desired assistance. In other words, after five years of planning war with Italy, the COS hadn't the slightest clue of what to expect from the alliance.<sup>24</sup>

On 17 May, burdened with an alliance crying for definition, the Foreign Office gave grudging approval for Staff Conversations in Ankara.<sup>25</sup> It hoped, however, that further discussions could be kept bilateral rather than tripartite, and feared that if the conversations expanded to include France, Britain would either be dragged behind French conceptions or caught up in an unedifying and dangerous whirlwind of rivalry with Paris.<sup>26</sup>

Initial contact, in accordance with COS wishes, was made through the Attaché staff. At the end of May, Knatchbull-Hugesson advised London that preliminary discussions were nearly complete

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3547/143/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 17 May 1939.

<sup>26</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3547/143/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 17 May; and, E3548/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 17 May 1939.

and that the Attachés would be travelling to London on 5 June to debrief their military masters.<sup>27</sup> Soon after this, it was agreed that the proposed Turkish technical mission, headed by General Kazim Orbay, should come to London.<sup>28</sup> Judging that the first stage in the process had been successful, the COS decided that the time had come to send a British military delegation to Ankara. This delegation would be headed by Colonel Lund, the Deputy Director of Military Intelligence (DDMI).<sup>29</sup> Lund would be promoted to Brigadier General for the occasion and would travel to Ankara with the Attachés once they had been debriefed in London.<sup>30</sup> On 5 June, Lund received his instructions and departed for Ankara on the Orient Express with Captain Sprunt, his Staff Officer (SO), and the Attachés.<sup>31</sup> Lund took with him a bundle of questions and some information concerning the assistance the Turks might expect from Britain. He had, however, no power to make joint plans or to commit Britain to anything. At this point, the COS were only interested in a formal exchange of information.

While London wished to proceed at a leisurely pace, Paris and Ankara were looking for a quick and comprehensive settlement. The

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<sup>27</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3935/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO May 1939.

<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E4008/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 31 May 1939. See below for Orbay's mission. Orbay was in London to discuss the issue of material aid.

<sup>29</sup> PRO CAB 53/11 COS 294 Mtg 10 May 1939.

<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4076/147/44 Cornwall-Jones to Knatchbull-Hugesson 2 Jun; and, CAB 53/11 COS 294 Mtg 10 May 1939.

<sup>31</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 JP 424 (DCOS 93) 5 Jun 1939.

Turks had very clear ideas about what they wanted. Marshal Çakmak was obdurate that there must be, and quickly, a full-blown military convention negotiated by the military authorities of the three countries to parallel the political agreement -- rather along the lines of the Balkan Entente.<sup>32</sup>

Lund was hardly off the train before it became obvious that he would make no progress. In more than a month there, he did not obtain a single interview with Marshal Çakmak.<sup>33</sup> Turkish reticence was particularly notable on the part of Army, as opposed to Naval and Air, officers.<sup>34</sup> It was clear to Lund that the Turks wanted a military convention and that his powerlessness to negotiate one hamstrung his mission. The Turks sought, he informed London:

[an] undertaking on our side to control the Eastern Mediterranean and on their side to control the Dardanelles and on both sides to join in on an attack on the Dodecanese when the moment comes.<sup>35</sup>

He was "inclined to think that merely from the point of view of satisfying the Turkish soldiers something will have to be put on paper, but in my view it would be wise for us to insist that it only cover the broadest principles".<sup>36</sup> Such an agreement, Lund believed, would best be negotiated by a delegation of very high

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<sup>32</sup> PRO CAB 16/183A DP(P)69 Anglo-Turkish Staff Conversations Chatfield 18 Jul 1939.

<sup>33</sup> PRO CAB 16/183A DP(P)69 Anglo-Turkish Staff Conversations Chatfield 18 Jul 1939.

<sup>34</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4672/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 24 Jun; and, CAB 16/183A DP(P)69 op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

ranking officers -- he suggested the AOCME, GOCME and C in C Med.<sup>37</sup>

There was another problem. The Turks continued to insist that political, economic and military negotiations must be a seamless whole, and that lack of progress in the political and economic spheres made military negotiations a pointless sham. Knatchbull-Hugesson attempted to help matters by pushing Saraçoğlu to allow military conversations to go forward and to let political and economic matters follow. Saraçoğlu refused. It had been six weeks, he complained, since the Guarantee had been announced and no aid of any kind had reached Turkey.<sup>38</sup> On 1 July, Knatchbull-Hugesson tried again. With Lund, he went to Saraçoğlu to complain of Army stonewalling. The Air and Naval exchange, he said was "as good as complete".<sup>39</sup> The problem, he claimed, was with the Army. Saraçoğlu did not really see what he could do. On 3 July, Knatchbull-Hugesson took his case to the President.<sup>40</sup> On 4 July, realizing that he had done all he could in Ankara, Lund admitted failure and the talks were concluded.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> PRO CAB 16/183A DP(P)69 op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4697/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 29 Jun 1939.

<sup>39</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4736/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Jul 1939.

<sup>40</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4784/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 3 Jul 1939.

<sup>41</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4807/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 4 Jul 1939; and CAB 54/2 DCOS 40th Mtg 14 Jul 1939 (DCOS composition: Adams, Pierse, and Phillips).

Why had Lund failed? Why had his reception been so poor if the Turks did indeed desire military conversations? We cannot discount the unsatisfactory -- so far as the Turks were concerned -- provision of material aid and the chilling effect of Orbay's concurrent failure in London and Paris.<sup>42</sup> Saraçoğlu indicated this as the prime cause of Army reticence on 1 July. There seems, however, to have been other reasons equally important that Saraçoğlu did not, perhaps was too polite, to mention. First of all, there was the reality that military conversations, particularly if publically announced, were binding in a way that a political Guarantee could not be. They would represent a real commitment at a time when the Turks could no longer be certain that this was in their best interest. Secondly, Lund, though appointed Brigadier-General for the mission, was in reality only a Staff Colonel and was an extremely junior officer to be sending on such an important mission. As the MAA noted, the Turks were always conscious of seniority, possessed copies of the Army List, and were not slow to use them. Conscious of protocol and of their dignity, the Turks, and especially Marshal Çakmak, counted the dispatch of a mere Colonel as an insult. The French had sent a full General: the British were placing the Turks on the same level as the Iraqis and Jordanians. This, at least, was Cunningham's judgement of why the Lund mission had so badly miscarried. "As I saw it", he later

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<sup>42</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 39th Mtg 21 Jun 1939, Lund to WO 27 Jun 1939. Lund was complaining that nothing could be done in Ankara due to Orbay's difficulties in London, nor, he doubted would anything be done until the Turks saw some material aid. See Chapter IX below.



wrote:

they [the Turks] were divided among themselves and the Marshal had been difficult to control since Kemal's death. It was certainly difficult to get on friendly terms with him. He absolutely declined to talk to any foreign officer unless he was of high rank. A previous British Mission [i.e. Lund] had completely failed to get any response.<sup>43</sup>

In addition, it appears to have been the belief of the Marshal that Lund had been responsible for a drunken attack on his family in 1918. It was rumoured in Ankara that Lund had evicted Çakmak's family from its house during the occupation of Istanbul. The Marshal, it was said, refused to meet the man who had caused the death of one of his daughters. It was only on 6 August, after Lund had left, that the Embassy was in a position to counter this charge. Lund, in fact, had never been in Istanbul until 1932.<sup>44</sup>

On 14 July, Lund appeared before the Deputy Chiefs of Staff (DCOS). He had not seen Çakmak, he told them, but only General Gündüz. The Turks, he said, wanted a military convention, but they wanted a political agreement and material assistance first. The military convention was to be similar to that accompanying the Balkan Entente. He suggested Wavell, GOCME, as a British General of sufficient status to sign such an instrument.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Cunningham, A Sailor's Odyssey, (Hutchison: London) 1951, p. 214.

<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E6238/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Oliphant 21 Jul; and, Pownall to Oliphant 6 Aug 1939.

<sup>45</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 41st Mtg 14 Jul 1939.

Lund's report was scarcely more illuminating.<sup>46</sup> He had passed out the COS questionnaire. He had visited the Dardanelles and Izmir. "No difficulty" he wrote, "was experienced in connection with the exchange of information about foreign countries,"<sup>47</sup> but immediately General Asim Gündüz was questioned about Turkish dispositions and war plans, he became very reticent".<sup>48</sup> All Gündüz could be brought to admit was that the Turks urgently required mobile guns, AT and AA guns, tanks and aircraft. In return he said, the Turks would be willing to provide harbours, repair, supply and refuelling facilities for the RN and RAF.<sup>49</sup>

Gündüz had given Lund a questionnaire of his own. He wished to know how Britain would preserve the Mediterranean link, whether the British General Staff concurred that the Germans would attack -- if they attacked -- not in the West but in the East, and what the British and French proposed to do to hold Salonika. Lund was neither prepared nor authorized to speak on these issues. After a desultory exchange of views regarding the possibility of operations

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<sup>46</sup> PRO CAB 54/10 DCOS 139 Anglo Turkish Staff Conversations June-July 1939 (Lund Report) 21 Jul 1939.

<sup>47</sup> The Turks were quite interested in obtaining British intelligence on Italian strengths, intentions, and dispositions. The British wished information primarily on the forces of the Balkan nations; also anything the Turks had regarding the Germans and Italians. PRO FO 371/23294 E4354/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 15 Jun 1939; WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 German Army, M.13/5695/2 Italian Army, M.13/5695/3 Greek Army, M.13 5695/4 Bulgarian Army, M.13 5695/6 Yugoslavian Army, M.13 5695/7 Rumanian Army, M.13 5695/8 Dodecanese.

<sup>48</sup> PRO CAB 54/10 DCOS 139 op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

against the Dodecanese and in the Balkans, the Lund mission was effectively at an end.<sup>50</sup>

**The Huntzinger Mission:**

Despite Lund's obvious and admitted failure, London remained unwilling to consider tripartite conversations. At the end of June, the French Attaché in Ankara informed the British Attaché staff that there would be another French visit in mid July.<sup>51</sup> He wondered if the British wished to associate themselves with this delegation. Britain declined with the excuse that the time had not yet come for tripartite talks, and that it would not come until final plans were approaching completion.<sup>52</sup> Until then, London judged, liaison with the Turks would remain a matter for the local Commanders and the Attaché Staff.<sup>53</sup> The French had other ideas. In the middle of the month the French delegation arrived in Ankara. It was led by General Huntzinger, President of the Supreme Military Council. Unlike Lund, Huntzinger came bearing impeccable seniority, gifts, and definite proposals. He was, moreover, already well known to the Turks. Huntzinger had been the Commander of French Forces in the Levant at the time the Hatay treaty was being negotiated, and

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 424/283 E4481/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 21 Jun; and, FO 371/23294 E4481/43/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 21 Jun 1939.

<sup>52</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson, the Attaché Staff, and the DCOS judged that the time was ripe for tripartite talks. Ibid.; and, PRO FO 371/23294 E4554/43/33 Cornwall-Jones to FO 23 Jun 1939.

<sup>53</sup> PRO CAB 80/2 COS(39)22 Staff Conversations With Turkey 12 Sep 1939.

in December 1937, had met with Çakmak to consider provisions for the common defence of the Sanjak. Huntzinger was liked by the Turks and considered by the Marshal a comrade and an equal.<sup>54</sup>

On 17 July, Huntzinger met for the first time with Çakmak. Colonel Ross, present as an observer, judged that General Huntzinger dominated proceedings from the outset.<sup>55</sup> The talks followed an eight point agenda Huntzinger had brought with him; each point covering a proposed paragraph in the military convention to which, once negotiated by the Turks and French, the British were expected to adhere. Huntzinger's points were as follows:

1. Authorities, preparatory measures and military actions to be laid down in the convention.
2. Turkish military measures for security against Bulgaria.
3. The Dodecanese.
4. The defence of Salonika and the Aegean littoral.
5. The transport of a French Expeditionary Force to Salonika.
6. Collaboration with Rumania and the Soviets.
7. Material and economic assistance to Turkey.
8. Exchange of information.<sup>56</sup>

To these, the Marshal added one more:

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<sup>54</sup> DDF Series II Vol VI no. 375 Ponsot to Delbos 20 Dec 1937; Vol VIII no. 66 Daladier to Delbos 29 Jan; and, no. 211 Note by High Command in Levant Jan 1938.

<sup>55</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5492/143/44 MAA to Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 30 Jul 1939; also WO 208/1969 M.13 5695/8 Dodecanese (Record of Franco-Turkish Discussions Jul 1939) MAA to CIGS 30 Jul 1939.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

9. Maintenance of communications and coastal defence.<sup>57</sup>

The agenda having been accepted, discussion turned first to the matter of Bulgaria. The Bulgars, it was agreed, were a menace, and if the Balkan Entente in its entirety could not handle them, the Turks by themselves would have to be strengthened to do the job alone. It was agreed, the Turks were to continue their concentration in Thrace.

The Dodecanese were quickly dealt with. They were a menace, it was decided, and would have to be reduced. This, it was determined, would be a job for the Turkish Army and the Royal Navy.

Salonika, Huntzinger and Çakmak judged, was an essential strategic asset against the Italians. France, it was agreed, would prepare an Expeditionary Force in the Levant for dispatch as soon as this could be arranged. British support in such an operation would probably be only naval. If for any reason France were unable to go to Salonika, it was agreed, Turkey would cover Greek Thrace with its own forces. Çakmak thought, however, that Italy would not attack Greece; whatsmore, could not attack Greece, due to the poverty of communications, unless assured of Bulgarian aid. If the Turks could keep the Bulgars out of the war, therefore, Greece would be safe. The best course, then, according to Çakmak, would be to build up an interallied army for the common defense of Thrace. Huntzinger agreed that this might be possible, and promised that France would send a very high ranking officer to command its troops in the region, to establish liaison with the Turks, and to

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

establish communications with France's other regional allies -- chiefly the Yugoslavians.<sup>58</sup>

Such good running did Huntzinger make, that the British rushed to abandon their previous determination that talks be bilateral. On 20 July, Huntzinger and Çakmak invited Colonel Ross to attend their meetings as a participant rather than as an observer. Ross requested instructions from the War Office. "By all means accept [the] invitation" wrote the DMI&O, but added too typically: "Question of further delegation now under consideration but no decision yet reached. You should plead ignorance".<sup>59</sup>

Huntzinger, as was already apparent, was after more than information and basic liaison. "Huntzinger is in fact", Knatchbull-Hugesson rushed to inform London, "drafting a convention contrary to expectation". It might be an excellent idea, thought the Ambassador, if the War Office sent a General of its own competent to participate in this process, otherwise, he feared, Britain would have to take whatever the French got. Lund, returned to his post as DDMI, responded: "We are interested to have [an] outline of [the] convention and any further information you may obtain. We have noted your views regarding further contacts but cannot decide until we see draft convention".<sup>60</sup>

By 21 July, Huntzinger was claiming to have sounded the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5226/143/44 MAA to WO 20 Jul 1939.

<sup>60</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5247 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 24 Jul 1939.

British General Staff before coming to Turkey, and was being taken at his word in Ankara.<sup>61</sup> In fact, he had only had a short and informal conversation with Lund in Paris while the latter was on his way home.<sup>62</sup> Frightened by this development, the War Office decided that it might indeed be an excellent idea if it did send a real General of its own to Ankara.<sup>63</sup> More and more the British were being dragged behind French strategic conceptions. Bilateral talks were leading precisely to what the Foreign Office most feared from tripartite: the tune and tempo of the alliance were being set in Paris and Britain left with the unattractive choice of keeping up or refusing to play.

On 21 July, Huntzinger and Çakmak discussed further the deployment of French forces to Salonika. After considering various schemes for movement by rail, they determined that none of these were practicable, and that the only realistic solution would be to rely entirely on sea transport at least as far as Izmir, and then perhaps by land to Banderma or Salonika. The most elegant deployment, they concluded, would be sea transport all the way to Thrace.<sup>64</sup>

The next day, the guarantees to Rumania and Greece were

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<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5248/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 21 Jul 1939.

<sup>62</sup> DDF Series II Vol XVII no. 147 Bonnet to Massigli 8 Jul 1939; and, PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 41st Mtg op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5240 DDMO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>64</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.

considered. In all likelihood, the Marshal said, if either of these countries were attacked, Turkey would join the Allies. In the event of an attack on Greece, he said, Turkey's primary role would be "indirect support"; by which he meant provision of land-routes for the transport of war materials and assistance to the French Expeditionary Force from the Levant.<sup>65</sup> In the case of a general war, or an attack on Rumania, Turkey's role would be determined of necessity, Çakmak said, by the attitude of Bulgaria. If Bulgaria would conform to the common Balkan line, then the front would be pushed forward to the Danube; but if Bulgaria would not cooperate, then the Turks would not go beyond their own frontier unless Bulgaria were joined by a third power.<sup>66</sup>

Huntzinger asked if Çakmak thought that Russia would be willing to help to defend Rumania. Çakmak considered that it might, but warned that if Russia decided to remain neutral then Turkey would be obliged to make provision for the defence of the Straits and its Eastern provinces "which would curtail [its] liberty of action".<sup>67</sup> If the Russians were in, however, then "in general Turkey would gladly welcome the assistance of Russian Air units and of Russian Tank and heavy Artillery units to the exclusion of other troops of which she had no need".<sup>68</sup>

Finally, the Marshal stressed the importance of material aid.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.



Everything, he said, depended upon this. Material, industrial, and financial support were essential if the guarantee was to be more than paper. On 24 July, Huntzinger played his trump card -- immediate material aid. Upon the completion of a satisfactory military convention, the French were prepared to give the Turks, he said:

1. 12 X 105mm Schneider guns
2. 156 X 90mm guns
3. 24 X 155mm long mark 77/14 guns
4. 24 X 240mm mark 84 guns with tractors
5. some 120mm Delange long guns
6. 2 Battalions of light tanks [100 total]
7. 500,000 hand grenades
8. 400,000 gas masks
9. 200 trucks <sup>69</sup>

After six months:

10. 1,273 wireless sets.

Between six months and a year:

11. 10,000 X 7.5mm mark 2489 machine-guns.

After ten months:

12. 2,000 telephones.

After one year:

13. 100,000 X 8mm rifles.

Annually:

14. 500,000 grenades.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to this, Huntzinger promised that details on the availability of anti-tank (AT) guns would soon follow. French

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

engineering aid, he said, would also be available.<sup>71</sup> The icing on the Huntzinger cake: the guns he had promised with 500 rounds per gun were awaiting shipment.<sup>72</sup> Effectively, the French promised to underwrite the entire Turkish Ground expansion program.

Beside the French offer, Colonel Ross' contribution looked singularly inadequate. Britain, he said, could add to the French promises five Batteries of 3.7" AA guns -- twenty guns in total. As for the possibility of sending formed units, Ross confessed to Çakmak that it was "almost if not quite impossible to send any British units to Turkey" under the present circumstances.<sup>73</sup>

On 26 July, Huntzinger and the Marshal completed their draft military convention and the French delegation departed for Paris.<sup>74</sup> There was little the British could do but propose a mission of their own on the Huntzinger model -- perhaps headed by the regional commander, General Wavell. The problem was that Marshal Çakmak would not be available again until September.<sup>75</sup> This being the case, the Services were understandably anxious to discover what Huntzinger had committed them to, and sought both a

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5315 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 26 Jul 1939; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 399 Proces Verbal de la Decision de Chefs d'État Major Generaux -- 1 Aout 1939 (Report of the Huntzinger mission)

<sup>75</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5364/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 28 Jul 1939.

copy of the draft convention, and Huntzinger himself to answer questions.<sup>76</sup>

The War Office sent Lund to Paris to see Huntzinger to determine if it were worthwhile sending Wavell to Ankara or not.<sup>77</sup> On 11 August, Huntzinger arrived in London to be debriefed by the COS and to visit Gort, CIGS, and Hoare-Belisha.<sup>78</sup> Huntzinger also appeared at meetings of the JPC and DCOS to answer their questions.<sup>79</sup>

The Huntzinger Military convention became the focus of all subsequent military discussion between the three nations. It provided that:

1. Further Staff conversations were to proceed.
2. Turkey, with Western assistance, was to hold Bulgaria in check if it entered the war.
3. The Dodecanese would be attacked by an Anglo/French/Turkish force as soon as local command of the Air and Sea could be achieved. It was understood that airbases in Turkey would be required and would have to be equipped.
4. At Salonika, the defence would be interallied from the outset, but would remain primarily a Greek concern. Turkish responsibility would be limited by article II.
5. Turkey would "facilitate the transport of Allied forces through her territory and through the sea of Marmora".

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<sup>76</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 44rth Mtg 28 Jul; and FO 371/23295 E5487/143/44 29 Jul 1939. The DCOS made the approach to Gamelin to send Huntzinger to London through Ismay.

<sup>77</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5391/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 30 Jul 1939. Bowker minute.

<sup>78</sup> DDF Series II Vol XVII no. 421 Cambon to Bonnet 4 Aug 1939.

<sup>79</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII : . 526 Huntzinger to Daladier 11 Aug 1939.

The Allies would cooperate in the construction of whatever roads, railroads, and aerodromes were required for this. The Western Allies would be allowed to establish bases and depots in Turkey.

6. Towards Rumania, Turkey's responsibility would be limited under Article II. In general, the Allies would provide aid "directly so far as possible".
7. Britain would undertake naval responsibility for the maintenance of sea communications with Turkey.
8. Turkey would receive all possible material aid from Britain and France.
9. Exchange of information.
10. The duration of the military convention would be the same as the political treaty.<sup>80</sup>

The draft convention met with less opposition in London than might have been expected. At the Foreign Office, it was considered an:

Admirable document, covering all the points which we would wish to include without involving His Majesty's Government in any undesirable commitments. His Majesty's Government have therefore decided to accept the terms of the draft convention, subject to certain minor amendment.<sup>81</sup>

The Huntzinger draft was approved by London and returned to Ankara (via Paris) on 27 August.<sup>82</sup>

The fact that the Huntzinger Convention was much more acceptable than it might have been was little consolation for London. It was less the convention than the way it had been achieved, and the realities it seemed to represent, that were

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.; also, DDF Series II, Vol XIX no. 77.

<sup>81</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5530/G Bowker to Campbell (Paris) 14 Aug 1939.

<sup>82</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 77 Paris to Ankara 27 Aug 1939.

important to London. The Foreign Office worried that the Balkan nations would draw:

an invidious distinction between the active help given by the French in the Balkans compared with that of the United Kingdom . . . The fact that the French had so committed themselves will doubtless be used as a political weapon to force us to undertake a similar commitment . . . [moreover] the French commitment as regards Salonika may, when the moment arrives, produce serious political difficulties if we are not prepared to add a small quota of British troops to the defence of Salonika.<sup>83</sup>

In fact, the worst appeared to have happened. Huntzinger had completely upstaged the British, whose regional policy, therefore, had of necessity to accommodate itself to that of Paris -- and this in such a way that Britain would receive no credit and in a region which Britain considered particularly its own. The British swallowed this bitter pill but became convinced that France and Britain must henceforward coordinate their efforts -- which meant that future talks would be tripartite.<sup>84</sup> In London, it was also believed that Britain needed to send a creditable representative to Ankara in order to regain some control over interallied strategy.

#### Cunningham in Ankara:

In August, Çakmak was visited by an officer of an entirely higher status than the hapless Lund. On 2 August, Admiral Cunningham, C in C Med, paid a social call in HMS Warspite, with

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<sup>83</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5530/143/44 DCOS 155/156/159 Chatfield to Halifax. Wigram minute to Draft convention 8 Aug 1939.

<sup>84</sup> In fact bilateral, in that a common Western line would be hammered out in London and Paris, and then tripartite in Ankara.

Zulu, Cossack, Nubian, and Maori accompanying.<sup>85</sup> Cunningham remained in Turkey until 6 August, and during that time transacted remarkably little business; his time being taken up instead by social engagements. Whether this was because Marshal Çakmak had little to say to an Admiral, or little to say at that time is unclear. Cunningham was inclined to believe that the Marshal, a Land commander, was simply at sea with an Admiral.<sup>86</sup> Cunningham, for his part, had nothing to tell the Turks that they had not heard before.<sup>87</sup> During his time in Turkey, however, Cunningham did see İnönü in Istanbul, and when the Marshal could not get away to Istanbul, he sent a plane to fly Cunningham to Ankara.

Cunningham judged the visit an unqualified success. İnönü had been "embarrassingly cordial", and had gone out of his way to be pleasant.<sup>88</sup> Saraçoğlu, too, had been more than friendly -- "A real live wire", Cunningham thought, "by whom I was greatly impressed".<sup>89</sup> Cunningham's reception by the Turkish navy had been

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<sup>85</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5544 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 8 Aug; and, FO 371/23295 E5741/139/44 Saraçoğlu to Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 27 Jul 1939. See also, Cunningham, A Sailor's Odyssey, (Hutchison: London) 1951, p. 214-215; and, BIA, Vol XVI, No. 16 (12 Aug 1939) p. 46.

<sup>86</sup> Cunningham, p. 215.

<sup>87</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 43rd Mtg 27 Jul 1939.

<sup>88</sup> Cunningham, p. 215. "He was almost embarrassingly cordial, seizing my hand in both of his while saying haltingly how pleased he was to see us. I was greatly taken with him, and it was difficult to believe that this friendly, quiet little man was the tough General İsmet Pasha who had thrashed the Greeks in Asia Minor and had made things so uncomfortable for us at Chanak in 1922".

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

excellent, and he described it as being strongly anglophile. Cunningham suggested strongly, however, that any future meetings be tripartite.<sup>90</sup> One expects that the Cunningham visit was not intended to do much more than make atonement for the sin of Lund's seniority and to regain centre-stage from the French.

**The Military Convention:**

For some months past, London had been considering whether to send Wavell to Turkey or not. On 2 September, with war hours away, Wavell received instructions to go to Ankara to sign a Military Convention based on the Huntzinger draft.<sup>91</sup> Weygand also, the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the French forces in the Levant,<sup>92</sup> was instructed to move poste-haste to Ankara to sign the Convention on behalf of France.<sup>93</sup> On 3 September, Weygand had still not arrived. Beginning to panic, due to the outbreak of war, the Turks begged that the allied representatives be sent to Ankara as quickly as possible.<sup>94</sup> Soon afterwards, the Commanders arrived in Ankara.

The Convention was not signed. Weygand and Wavell had been

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<sup>90</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5565/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 6 Aug 1939.

<sup>91</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5544 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 8 Aug; and CAB 54/2 DCOS 47th Mtg 3 Aug 1939. Because Cunningham had been to Ankara, and Wavell was going, it was thought a visit by Longmore, AOCME, would be pointless. FO 371/23295 E5605/6 11 Aug 1939.

<sup>92</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIX no. 97 Paris to Ankara 28 Aug 1939. Appointment effective 28 August.

<sup>93</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIX no. 362 Paris to Ankara 2 Sep 1939.

<sup>94</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIX no. 417 Paris to Ankara 3 Sep 1939.

rushed to no good effect. Having spent four days visiting İnönü, Çakmak, Saraçoğlu, and Colonel Povas, the Greek Chief of Staff-Operations, Weygand departed Ankara for Beirut.<sup>95</sup> The Military Convention hung on the negotiation of a satisfactory political instrument which itself waited upon agreements on financial and material assistance. On 18 October, just before the signature of the Tripartite Alliance, the Military Convention was initialled in Ankara by Weygand, Çakmak and Wavell for their respective countries.

What was the significance of the Military Convention? The Military Convention, as has been suggested, was chiefly important because it formalized the political accommodations of the Joint Guarantee, and laterly of the Tripartite Treaty, into a number of operational scenarios the conditions and preconditions of which henceforward guided all joint planning attempting to square Allied actualities with possibilities and aspirations. The failure of the tripartite relationship, therefore, is, on one level, much more immediately comprehensible if viewed not as the failure of a general understanding, but as the collapse of a series of operational scenarios based upon strategic perceptions which insufficiently described the harsh facts of 1940. It was the Military Convention, rather than the Tripartite Treaty, which formalized and gave to these official status and ensured that the alliance could only be effectively articulated through their

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<sup>95</sup> M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, (Heinemann: London), 1952(1960). p. 9.



medium. The breakdown of the Alliance was, in this way, as will be further demonstrated below, not only a failure of fact, but an insufficiency of conception. Finally, this deficiency derived not least from the fact that the Huntzinger draft, later canonized as the Military Convention, was a Franco-Turkish document little concerned with the realities of greater British strategy. The later failure to produce a plan for common action, for this reason, largely sprang from the fact that those operational scenarios embodied in the military convention, while largely dependent for their success on British power, could only be reconciled with difficulty to Britain's wider strategy.

**Alliance and After**

## Chapter VIII -- Tripartite Treaty

As the movement towards alliance began in the Summer of 1939 basic flaws began to appear within the fabric of the fragile Balkan condominium which threatened to rob the fledgling relationship of much of its significance. One of these problems was the lingering Bulgarian complication. Another lay in defining the relationship of the Tripartite agreement with Turkey's pre-existing Balkan commitments, and with the Anglo-French guarantees to Rumania and Greece. Finally, the emergence of a greatly increased Russian menace after September upset many of the premises upon which the prewar policies of both partners had been based, and if productive of distress in London, resulted in something approaching panic in Ankara. While the first two of these problems remained even after our period as complications in the continued development of the Anglo-Turkish relationship, the last, the Russian threat, produced rapid movement toward the Tripartite Treaty while ensuring that effective operation of the Treaty would be unlikely in any scenario but the defence of Turkey against direct attack. A Turkey with its prewar policy rapidly unravelling, had little choice but to cling to its connection with Britain if it were to reinsure itself against isolation in a world of enemies: a Turkey, finding itself in a world of enemies where hitherto there had been mostly friends, was unlikely to willingly adopt any posture likely to end in conflict.

### **The Bulgarian Complication:**

Turkey continued to watch Bulgaria closely, and tended to describe the role it might play in relation to the Bulgarian

position in any given case. A friendly Bulgaria relieved the Turks of anxiety about the Straits. Without Bulgarian assistance, simple geography dictated that an Axis attack would be launched only with great difficulty.<sup>1</sup> If, however, Bulgaria were hostile, the COS confessed:

then we might find it difficult in holding up the enemy offensive before it reached the Dardanelles. In addition Greece would be in no position to withstand a combined Italian and Bulgarian drive towards the Aegean.<sup>2</sup>

And if Bulgarian policy was an important consideration in Ankara, the COS thought it might be a determinate consideration in Yugoslavia and Rumania. These two powers could hardly face resolutely northward if they feared a blow from behind. Bulgaria, the COS concluded, "was the key to the Balkan situation today".<sup>3</sup> As such, the British placed a high premium on Turkish efforts to secure Bulgarian friendship. The Turkish plan was to attach Bulgaria to the Balkan Entente after resolving the worst of its territorial grievances.<sup>4</sup>

The Northern Balkan allies, however, continued to refuse to consider cession of territory. Even in July 1939, Gafencu, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, was resisting Saraçoğlu's suggestions that Rumania cede the Dobrudja to Bulgaria. Rumania, Gafencu said,

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<sup>1</sup> PRO CAB 53/50 COS 923 Strategic Importance of Bulgaria 12 Jun 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; see also PRO CAB 53/53 COS 959(JP) Problem of Italian and Balkan Neutrality in the Event of War 14 Aug 1939. Bulgarian adherence to the "anti-aggression front" was "essential"; indeed, the JPC thought "it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of securing their adherence to the allied cause in Eastern Europe".

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

had no wish to end up like Czechoslovakia -- "demoralized and disheartened and ready to fall into the first open mouth". Faced with apparently implacable Rumanian opposition, Saraçoğlu judged that his "policy ha[d] entirely failed".<sup>5</sup>

If this bird wouldn't fly, then the Turks had another. At the Balkan Chiefs of Defence Staff meeting in November 1938, Gündüz told Lund, it had been agreed that if the Balkans were threatened with attack from outside a common policy would be forced on Bulgaria, and, if it refused to adhere, each of the four Balkan Entente nations would immediately invade with ten Divisions.<sup>6</sup> The Balkan CDSs

were agreed that it was impossible to have a politically hostile Bulgaria in their midst who at any convenient time might stab them in the back and render their power of defence against the principle enemy impotent. Moreover, they required the communications in Bulgarian territory. Bulgaria must therefore throw in her lot with the Balkan Entente powers, which she would be given the opportunity of doing, or be liquidated at the outset.<sup>7</sup>

If Germany looked about to attack, the Balkan states:

would collectively demand the immediate surrender of armaments from Bulgaria and the right to use the railway for military purposes. Failing acceptance of these terms by Bulgaria they will collectively fall upon and destroy her as a first move so as to free themselves for the main

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<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Ingram 21 Jun 1939.

<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/40 Wigram to Knatchbull-Hugesson ("Snatch") 14 Jul 1939.

<sup>7</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/40 Stronge to Campbell 1 Feb 1939. Reporting a conversation with the Col Vaghenas the Greek Attaché.

conflict.<sup>8</sup>

In London, the War Office was inclined to think that such an operation might be more difficult than it initially appeared -- especially if Greece, Rumania, or Yugoslavia were concurrently threatened by Germany or Italy.<sup>9</sup> In any case, if it were honestly Turkish policy to invade Bulgaria under certain circumstances then Turkey's actual military dispositions are difficult to understand. By September 1939 the Turks had constructed concrete defences ten miles deep all along their frontier with Bulgaria but had failed to build access routes for rapid reinforcement beyond their own borders.<sup>10</sup> While these defences were intended more against the Germans than the Bulgars, the MAA judged nevertheless, that "by no possible flight of the imagination could Turkish preparations in Thrace be described as preparations for an offensive".<sup>11</sup> Thus, if, in a time of emergency, Bulgaria could not be reconciled -- and this seemed hardly likely -- then it would be eliminated -- and this seemed little more likely.

**The Problem of the Coordination of Commitments:**

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<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/40 Stronge to Campbell 14 Dec 1938; also, Campbell to Ingram 22 Feb 1939; Campbell to Ingram 9 Feb 1939; and, Stronge to Campbell 1 Feb 1939. Col Stronge, the Military Attaché in Yugoslavia, confirmed the accuracy of Vaghenas' account with the Greek and Turkish Attachés, and with the Rumanian Chargé. All asserted that it had been agreed at the meeting that "the only way to keep Bulgaria in line is to crush her if she causes trouble".

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/40 Wigram to Knatchbull-Hugesson ("Snatch") 14 Jul 1939.

<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 R7938/7378/44 MAA to Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 16 Sep 1939.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Another stumbling block in the search for an acceptable formula for the Tripartite Treaty, was the question of the Anglo-French guarantee to Rumania which Turkey persistently declared it would not underwrite if it were to apply against Russia, nor would it associate itself in the undefined guarantee as given.<sup>12</sup> Dr. Aras, in fact, thought that Turkey could not give such a guarantee even had it desired to do so because this would be in contradiction to its arrangements with Russia.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Saracoğlu insisted, a British guarantee could be withdrawn; not so a Turkish guarantee.<sup>14</sup> In London, meanwhile, Halifax persisted in viewing Turkish adherence to the Anglo-French guarantees as the logical next step in the development of Anglo-Turkish friendship.<sup>15</sup> He advised Knatchbull-Hugesson on 22 June, in reference to the Tripartite treaty, that:

you may take it that if the Turkish text ensures beyond all manner of doubt Turkish belligerency on our side in the event of His Majesty's Government giving effect to the guarantees to Greece and/or Roumania, our requirements will be met.<sup>16</sup>

Even in September, after the start of the war, the War Cabinet

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<sup>12</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 549 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 18 May 1939.

<sup>13</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 64 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 18 June 1939.

<sup>14</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 549 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 18 May 1939.

<sup>15</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol V no. 537 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 17 May 1939.

<sup>16</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 128 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 22 Jun 1939.

continued to hope that the Turks could be induced to underwrite the British guarantee. In this, they were encouraged by the Rumanians, if not by the Turks. Tilea, in London, told Halifax at the beginning of September, that he was confident that Turkey would support Rumania against German attack.<sup>17</sup> Even so, one can only conclude that the British were almost wilfully deluding themselves. Turkey did not, and never would, accept an obligation which might end in war with Russia. The upshot of this dispute was that Halifax got his way in the text of the treaty, but was undercut in Protocol II which specifically exempted Turkey from the requirement to fight the Soviets.

Yet another problem was the attitude of the other Balkan nations to the ripening Anglo-Turkish relationship. On 14 June, Gafencu, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, then in Ankara for talks with Sarıoğlu in relation to the Bulgarian situation, told Knatchbull-Hugesson that Rumania was "100%" behind the British and Turks.<sup>18</sup> The problem, he thought, would come if the relationship were to go further in the same direction. Yugoslavia, he said, would react badly to too formal an understanding and might be driven in the opposite direction. Gafencu advised Knatchbull-Hugesson against too closely defined a relationship. He thought that if Britain avoided this pitfall, it could have the "substance

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<sup>17</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 15(39); 14 Sep 1939. Churchill in particular was taken with the idea. He considered that three or four Turkish Divisions in Rumania would be "the greatest possible assistance".

<sup>18</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 53 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 14 June 1939.



without [the] shadow".<sup>19</sup> If it did not, it was apt to obtain only the shadow without the substance.

Finally, there was a fundamental disagreement between Britain and Turkey as to the nature of the alignment that was being negotiated. By April 1939, Turkey, frightened by the dangerous international environment, was beginning to shy from public commitment. It was not that the Turks did not want an agreement, but they thought that it would be better to keep it secret. Turkey, Aras said, would prefer not to declare publicly its position unless there were Axis aggression in the Balkans or the Mediterranean, but was quite willing to secretly give HMG assurance of aid in the event of conflict in the Balkans or a general war.<sup>20</sup> Halifax did not think such a private understanding would be sufficient. He much preferred an arrangement whereby:

Turkey could give HMG an assurance of co-operation in the event of HMG being involved in war in the Balkans or Mediterranean by reason of their guarantee to Greece and Roumania or in the event of a general war breaking out in which HMG were involved against Italy or Germany or both Germany and Italy. In return, HMG for their part would guarantee the Turkish Government in the event of the Turkish Government's being involved in a war with either or both of these countries [i.e Italy and Germany], however it arises.<sup>21</sup>

This Halifax suggestion was the father, in the first instance, of the joint guarantee, and in the second, of the Tripartite Alliance of October 1939.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 882 Anglo-Turkish Staff Conversations 19 Apr 1939.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Halifax's conception of a bilateral public alliance, whatever else it might have done, cut straight across Dr. Aras' policy of a Mediterranean Pact, or an alliance with Britain associated with certain other of the Turkish commitments. Prior to the outbreak of war, Britain steadily refused to commit itself to such a scheme. In Halifax's eyes, a Mediterranean pact excluding Italy meant that either Italy would feel so menaced so as to move irreversibly into Germany's arms, or the alliance would have to be enlarged so as to include Italy, in which case it was valueless. The most Halifax would contemplate was an intermediate arrangement whereby Britain and Turkey were allied, and agreed to act jointly in common commitments -- chiefly in the event of attack on Greece or Rumania.<sup>22</sup>

It was precisely this point that caused the Turks the greatest distress. Ankara was reluctant to assume publicly additional obligations in the Balkans and continued to view the agreement as predominantly a Mediterranean instrument. This, of course, was in contradiction to the predominant view in London.<sup>23</sup> The Turks were also suspicious of British reluctance to grant a fifteen year period to the treaty.<sup>24</sup>

The clash of desiderata requires little comment. It was a simple illustration of the basic reality that the Treaty, in

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<sup>22</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 885 Alliance with Turkey Annex V, Possibility of an Anglo-Greek Alliance Halifax 13 Mar 1939.

<sup>23</sup> PRO CAB 23/99 Cab 27(39) 10 May 1939.

<sup>24</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E6247/43/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Sep 1939.

Ankara, was viewed as a fundamental realignment with specific application, while in London it was considered a temporary expedient of general import; in Ankara as security primarily against Italy and a means of avoiding war with Germany, in London as a means of waging war against Germany while avoiding war with Italy.

**The Russian Complication:**

Movement towards agreement was speeded by the outbreak of war in September. Problems were put aside, and differences of conception shelved in the haste to achieve some sort of agreement. In London, feverish attempts were made to satisfy Turkish desires. In Ankara, dislike of German aggression combined with fear for the future.<sup>25</sup> Turkish misgivings were increased by suspicions that HMG was flirting with Italy, and that if agreement was not reached quickly, the much desired Mediterranean Treaty might move forever beyond reach. Turkish anxiety intensified with the revelation of Allied cynicism inherent in the tardy, in Turkish eyes, declaration of war by the Allies.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, final ratification was held up, in the first instance, by the failure to reach agreement on the financial and material side of negotiations,<sup>27</sup> and in the second,

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<sup>25</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E6246/297/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Sep 1939. On 1 September, Knatchbull-Hugesson saw Saraçoğlu and the President. Both were outraged by the attack on Poland.

<sup>26</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E6246/297/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Sep. Bowker Minute; FO 424/283 E6246/297/67 Knatchbull Hugesson to Halifax 1 Sep; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 428 Ankara to Paris 3 Sep 1939.

<sup>27</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 No. 393 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 5 Sep 1939.

by the continuing Turkish hope that the Treaty might be reconciled with the Turco-Russian relationship. The Turks had never disguised the fact that, if they could, they would parallel their attachment to London with a similar relationship with Moscow -- Staff conversations with the British with Staff conversations with Russia, a Tripartite Treaty for the Mediterranean with a Black Sea Agreement; the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Black Sea, being for the Turks, very distinct problems each requiring different handling.<sup>28</sup> The British, in their conception, blurred the distinction between the three. In the House of Commons, when announcing the Joint Guarantee, Chamberlain was asked by Lieutenant Commander Fletcher if the paragraph concerning the Mediterranean excluded the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. The Prime Minister had answered most emphatically "No".<sup>29</sup> In May, Halifax, instructed Knatchbull-Hugesson that in the view of London the Mediterranean included the Adriatic, the Aegean and the Dardanelles. The Black Sea, he said, was covered under the paragraph dealing with the Balkans.<sup>30</sup> In Ankara, the difference between these three conceptions was razor sharp, and no agreement with London could replace Soviet friendship in the Black Sea, and the Straits were an altogether separate and most sensitive matter in consideration of

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<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R3301/661/67 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 26 Apr; and, R3345/661/67 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 26 Apr 1939.

<sup>29</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCXLVII 12 May 1939.

<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R4145/661/67 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 18 May 1939.

which Britain was only one of several factors.<sup>31</sup>

In the Black Sea, the dominant factor in Turkish calculations was Russia and Turkey's relationship with the Soviet Union was strongly conditioned by fear that underneath the Soviet Lamb might be hiding a Russian bear. At Elmhirst's farewell party in April 1939, Colonel Kuban, the Turkish Director of Military Intelligence (DMI), told him that in his opinion Germany would fight France, but try to avoid real conflict with Britain. Russia would stay out, Kuban thought, from worry and suspicion. Turkey itself, he said:

would not be inclined to go to war themselves if she [Russia] did not participate in hostilities. They feel that if they go to war while Russia remains neutral the latter might take advantage of Turkey's preoccupations elsewhere to seize Constantinople and the Straits.<sup>32</sup>

If Turkey could not have definite Soviet friendship, then its marked tendency was to fear Russian malice; and this, in turn exercised a paralysing influence on other foreign policy initiatives -- including the effective exercise of the Tripartite Alliance.

#### **The Search for a Neutral Bloc:**

Fear of Russia and of Germany, worries that HMG might run out on its obligations, and German assurances that the Reich, at least, had no plans to make the Balkans an active theatre in any possible war, led to the suggestion that Turkey would serve its own and Allied interests best by preserving its neutrality and forming the

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<sup>31</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R3345/661/67 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 26 Apr 1939.

<sup>32</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3167/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 21 Apr 1939.

centre of a Balkan neutral bloc, and by August 1939, this no longer appeared impractical politics. Even Whitehall was beginning to doubt that the Germans would attack South-East after all. As Knatchbull-Hugesson advised Halifax on 8 July, it might, in fact, be Germany's best interest to keep the Balkans neutral even if the price were continued Italian neutrality.<sup>33</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson had been alerted to this possibility by Saraçoğlu's account of his conversations with Kroll, the German commercial envoy. Germany, Kroll said, had no interest in fighting in South-Eastern Europe and judged that Italian neutrality would be a small price to pay for Balkan peace. In any case, he said, Italy's obvious economic vulnerability would make the Italian connection a liability rather than an asset in war.<sup>34</sup> Rendel, from Sofia, agreed, and judged that the Germans were, in fact, attempting by this policy to establish a "neutral corridor" to the Black Sea.<sup>35</sup>

Kroll's protestations were well timed. By August 1939 the Turks were becoming nervous about the ambiguities of the British position, and this, combined with Germany assurances and basic fear of the consequences of war with Germany, led to the Turkish suggestion, noted above, that Turkey's best service to the alliance in the coming war might be to remain neutral and to ensure the

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<sup>33</sup> PRO CAB 53/53 COS 955 The Problem of Italian and Balkan Neutrality in the Event of War Halifax to CID 31 Jul 1939.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 8 Jul 1939.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Rendel to Halifax 14 Jul 1939.

neutrality of the other Balkan nations.<sup>36</sup> Did British reluctance to commit to operations in the East, Ankara wondered, even cover the case of the defence of Turkey against German attack? By August, Turkey was pressing for the minimum assurance that if war spread to the Balkans Britain would come to its assistance. Even this, seemingly moderate request, produced uneasiness in London -- a strange thing four months after the Joint Guarantee. The FO, in general, was willing to consider the extension of such an assurance, but wished it clearly understood, that Turkey would not move first and "take the initiative in any precautionary measures" against Bulgaria, also, that the proposed guarantee would be limited to the case where "it was evident that the objection of the German Forces was to attack Turkey or Greece".<sup>37</sup> The problem, as Whitehall saw it, was that an absolute guarantee would lead the Turks either to launch a preemptive attack on Bulgaria or to assume such comprehensive obligations in respect to their Northern allies that a treaty relationship which Britain had hoped would bring strength, would end either by involving it in a Balkan squabble or in an unsupportable continental commitment. The War Cabinet, for its part, was willing to concede that the position of Turkey was crucial if the Guarantees were to be honoured; but were doubtful how the Guarantees could be honoured with the best of wills given British weakness.<sup>38</sup> The JPC acknowledged the objections of the

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter IX above.

<sup>37</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS(39)25(JP) The Turkish Alliance Sep 1939.

<sup>38</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 2(39) 4 Sep 1939.

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter VI above.

<sup>37</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS(39)25(JP) The Turkish Alliance Sep 1939.

<sup>38</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 2(39) 4 Sep 1939.



others, but hoped that these would not be allowed to interfere with an alliance crucial in its own right. The greatest danger was not that Britain might unwittingly commit itself to something, or that Turkey would bend a guarantee to its own ends, but that if sufficient attention were not paid to Turkey's desires, the Turks would cease to be a reliable friend. The planners warned:

in view of the circumstances at the moment we have no hesitation in saying that we must accept the note as it stands without qualification, as the necessity of getting Turkey into the war on our side in the event of a German drive to the Aegean outweighs all considerations.

The conclusion of the Anglo-Turkish alliance is of the greatest military importance. If further delays in signing this treaty should lead to the loss of Turkey as an ally it would be a strategical disaster.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile, as has been noted, official opinion in Ankara was shifting toward the idea of a neutral bloc encompassing Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Turkey but excluding Italy -- at least initially. Dr Aras, in particular, had become a partisan of this position but was universally ignored and criticized by London and Paris.<sup>40</sup> The French noted hopefully that Saraçoğlu, at least, had not made any statement in support of this policy.<sup>41</sup> In the Turkish conception such a bloc, while intended to avert German or Russian attack on the Balkans, did not necessarily preclude a forward stance against Italy. In fact, by August 1939, Germany, aware of this, was pushing Turkey to sign a nonaggression pact with

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<sup>39</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS(39)25(JP) The Turkish Alliance Sep 1939.

<sup>40</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E6213/297/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 31 Aug 1939.

<sup>41</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 276 Ankara to Paris 31 Sep 1939.

Italy. Saraçoğlu promised Massigli that he "had given this the response that it merited".<sup>42</sup>

The first visceral reaction of the Services to Turkish backsliding, contrary to earlier advice, was to oppose the notion of Balkan neutrality for the simple reason that it would be congenial to the Germans. According to the first rule of economic warfare, after all, anything the enemy wants is by definition something he is to be denied. The JPC doubted that the Germans would be able to wean Turkey, at least, from the West and hoped that everything necessary would be done to encourage the Turks to be steadfast in their alignment.

It is hardly to be regarded as likely that they will be successful in this game so far as Turkey is concerned, though it is essential that, by offering Turkey as much material and financial aid as we can afford, we should eliminate any risk of such a possibility.<sup>43</sup>

While the planners continued to believe that strict Italian neutrality would be "decidedly preferable" to active hostility,<sup>44</sup> they confessed, "we realize the importance of Turkey coming in as an ally, as her cooperation is essential in building up the long, solid and durable Eastern front that is necessary in order to commit Germany to a two front war".<sup>45</sup>

It had always been considered that Italy would look to Germany

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<sup>42</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 364 Istanbul to Paris 24 Aug 1939.

<sup>43</sup> PRO CAB 53/53 COS 959 (JP) Problem of Italian and Balkan Neutrality in the Event of War 14 Aug 1939.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

if it saw the Allies active in the Balkans, and therefore, that a Turkish alliance would cost more than it was worth. The JPC resolved this dilemma by disputing the connection generally drawn between an active Turkish alliance and Italian hostility. Perhaps, they thought, Turkish intervention would frighten Italy into friendship rather than opposition, and if this were so, then it was "obviously to our advantage to bring Turkey into the war as soon as possible".<sup>46</sup> But even if it were admitted that Italian hostility would be earned by the entry of Turkey, British policy should be determined not by the wishes of Rome, but by calculation of whether Turkey was a better ally for the West than Italy for Germany.

In the case that Japan remained neutral, Britain would be able to concentrate its forces in the Mediterranean, and Italy would become a negligible factor. Therefore the JPC were:

of the opinion that in such a situation the advantage of bringing Turkey into the war as soon as possible would outweigh the disadvantages of the risk of disturbing the Italian neutrality, and in fact might go far to ensure that neutrality. The earlier Turkey is committed the better.<sup>47</sup>

In the case that Japan were hostile, Italy's value would be at a premium, and it would be to Italy's advantage to enter the war. But in this case too, the advantage of Turkey's entry would be at a premium:

In this case also early Turkish intervention would be to our advantage unless it is certain, in the light of the strategical and political situation prevailing at the time, that such intervention would change the attitude of

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Italy from one of genuine neutrality to one of active hostility.<sup>48</sup>

The JPC concluded:

1. It is therefore in [sic] our opinion that it would be preferable to get Turkey in with us at once in any war between us and Germany, even though Italy should at that time still be neutral.
2. We think that Turkish intervention is likely to strengthen any desire Italy has to remain neutral.<sup>49</sup>

In the opinion of a JPC uninstructed by the COS, then, an active Turkish ally was considerably more important to Britain than an Italian alliance to Germany: Turkey's friendship outweighed Italy's hostility. Therefore, if Germany wanted Balkan peace, it was Britain's interest to pursue a forward policy in the Balkans.

This too was the opinion of Percy Loraine, now Ambassador to Rome. He advised Halifax, that the time when Italy could be detached from the Axis had long passed. In June 1939, he had written:

When in London in June I suggested to you that the time was past when we could expect to wean Italy from her German partner, and that direct attempts to do so would fail and merely expose us to a check . . . they accuse us of infidelity to the spirit of the Anglo-Italian agreement as specifically exemplified by the Anglo-Turkish declaration; they resent our negotiations with Russia. Their press loads us with ridicule and calumny, and now, through the pen of Loyola, charges us with hostility and incomprehension.<sup>50</sup>

Lorraine's position was typical of the Cadogan school in the Foreign

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> PRO FO 800/319 Loraine to Halifax 21 Jun 1939.

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Office which remained very sceptical of the value of approaches to Mussolini. It considered that HMG should "not 'consult' the Italians about the Balkans but that we should tell them what we propose to do".<sup>51</sup> Baggallay at the Foreign Office reacted savagely to Dr. Aras's proposed desertion. On 1 September, just after the outbreak of war, he minuted:

We have always known that Dr. Aras was an intolerable busybody, full of rather half-baked and impracticable ideas the diffusion of which often gave a lot of unnecessary trouble . . . His recent activities . . . throw a new and somewhat unpleasant light upon him, although I suggest that due allowance should be made for the fact, which I have already mentioned, that a great deal of the trouble which he causes is the outcome of a desire constantly to keep the limelight.<sup>52</sup>

Cadogan himself was less censorious of Dr. Aras and more critical of British policy. He feared that by chasing both Italy and the Balkan nations, Britain risked losing both. "I am rather frightened" he wrote Loraine in December,

of falling between two stools -- of telling the Italians we are planning something which they will pass on to the Germans and of not being able to make plans for an effective Balkan expedition (largely owing to Italian hostility or malevolent neutrality) . . . The action they [HMG] are contemplating is designed to provide defence and protection against possible action by others. It is not possible for the allied Governments to remain with arms folded awaiting German and/or Russian aggression in the Balkans and to postpone all measures likely to meet that onslaught with success until it is actually launched.<sup>53</sup>

COS and Cabinet, meanwhile, were not so certain that the idea

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<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 1011/66 R11838/G Cadogan to Loraine 36 Dec 1939.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Baggallay Minute 1 Sep 1939.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

of a neutral bloc was necessarily a bad one. The Turkish alliance, it was generally conceded, was essential to imperial security, but full military operation of the Tripartite Alliance, they agreed, would be hazardous; both because of the effect that this would have on Italy, and because Turkey's close relationship with other Balkan nations might end in extensive and unwelcome commitment.<sup>54</sup> If Italian neutrality, on the other hand, could be ensured by the creation of a neutral bloc -- possibly including Italy -- then the Service Chiefs and their political masters were inclined to think that this would be a good thing. The disagreement between the JPC and COS defined the parameters of the later internal debate which was to paralyze British policy in consideration of the Balkans.

#### **Saraçoğlu in Moscow:**

Meanwhile, Turkey continued to search for the illusive Russian connection to parallel its accommodation with Britain. Through the Spring and Summer 1939, there were definite signs that an agreement with the Turks would not be uncongenial to the Russians. Molotov's deputy Potemkin told Payard, the French Ambassador in Moscow, that the Anglo-Turkish Joint Guarantee had made such a development essential for Russian security because of the twist it had given the Straits regime established at Montreaux.<sup>55</sup> When in Ankara, in April, Potemkin had assured Saraçoğlu that Russia aspired only to an identical arrangement to that negotiated with the Western

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<sup>54</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)18(JP) Balkan Neutrality 8 Sep 1939. (Composition: Danckwerts, Kennedy, Slessor).

<sup>55</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVI no. 305 Payard to Bonnet 29 May 1939.

powers. Molotov, he said, was anxious that Saraçoğlu come to Moscow to sign a mutual assistance pact.<sup>56</sup> On 29 May, Tass reported quite explicitly that Russia desired a military accord with Turkey.

The Turks continued to believe a Russo-German rapprochement unlikely, and thought that such rumours were only a Russian attempt to light a fire under the British.<sup>57</sup> By the middle of July, however, they were becoming anxious at the obvious lack of progress towards an understanding between its Western Allies and Russia.<sup>58</sup> Despite this, Ankara considered that whatever the final outcome of Russia's talks with the West, this need not preclude a satisfactory Russo-Turkish arrangement.<sup>59</sup>

In the middle of July, Stalin began to push hard for an understanding with the Turks. On 18 July, he warned them -- much to their annoyance -- that signature of a Russo-Turkish pact was a precondition for an understanding with Britain and France.<sup>60</sup> By 22 July, however, the Soviet attitude apparently had softened. Molotov instructed the Soviet Chargé to see if the Turks would like to sign

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<sup>56</sup> F.C. Erkin, Les Relations Turco Sovietiques et la Question des Detroits, (Basnur Matbassi: Ankara) 1968, p. 154.

<sup>57</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 66 Ankara to Paris 1 Jul 1939.

<sup>58</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 211 Istanbul to Paris 15 Jul 1939.

<sup>59</sup> Erkin, p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 230 Massigli to Bonnet 18 Jul 1939. This demand does not seem to have been entirely a ruse on Stalin's part -- and if it was, then it accorded well with contemporary Western thinking. In Paris, Bonnet also considered that Turco-Western and Turco-Soviet treaties would be preconditions of a Soviet-Western accomodation. G. Bonnet, De Munich à la Guerre, (Plon: Paris). p. 273.



to sign a bilateral agreement such as Saraçoğlu had discussed with Potemkin in May. The Soviet Ambassador in Ankara assured the worried Turks that there was no truth to the rumours that Moscow was negotiating with Germany.<sup>61</sup> Both Menemencioğlu and Saraçoğlu were considerably warmed by this development and considered it, understandably, a certain sign that the Soviets desired good relations with Ankara.<sup>62</sup> To Massigli, the Turks stressed the importance of the Soviet initiatives in regards to the formation of a possible Eastern Front against Germany.<sup>63</sup> The Turks do not appear, at this juncture, to have had any insurmountable doubts regarding Soviet policy and seem to have continued to expect that the good relations which had existed between the two nations since the war would continue. In any case, vigorous Soviet efforts to obtain some accommodation with Turkey were consistent with Molotov's statements to the Anglo-French delegation then in Moscow. Agreements with Poland and Turkey, Molotov had insisted, must be concluded simultaneously with any agreement with Britain and France and were essential if this last agreement were to operate with any hope of success.<sup>64</sup> In Ankara, vigorous Russian attempts to bring a Turk to Moscow competent to assist in talks of the highest order, appeared to underline the consistency of Russian policy rather than

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<sup>61</sup> McSherry, Vol I, p. 162.

<sup>62</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 276 Massigli to Paris 22 Jul 1939.

<sup>63</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 350 Massigli to bonnet 28 Jul 1939.

<sup>64</sup> McSherry, Vol I, p. 186.

to indicate any change.

On 8 August, once again, the Soviets requested the earliest possible dispatch of an Emissary to Moscow, perhaps Saraçoğlu, in any case, someone with the power to conclude an alliance.<sup>65</sup> Saraçoğlu answered that while not prepared to negotiate an alliance based on unlimited obligations, he would be quite willing to come to Moscow to negotiate a mutual assistance pact.<sup>66</sup> Until late in the month, despite rumours of Russo-German talks, it appears to have been the Turkish belief that the Soviets intended to use the Turks as intermediaries between themselves and the Western allies.<sup>67</sup> On 10 August, the Turks decided to accede to the Russian request and Saraçoğlu informed the Soviets that he had been invested by the Council of Ministers and the Marshal with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate a bilateral accord<sup>68</sup> and forwarded to Moscow a memorandum outlining his proposal for a Russo-Turkish Treaty:

1. It would be defensive and, while limited in liability, would be based upon a broad definition of aggression.
2. The Treaty would be constructed in such a way as to allow its eventual insertion into a larger Anglo-Franco-Turco-Russian Pact.

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<sup>65</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 471 Naggiar to Bonnet 8 Aug 1939.

<sup>66</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 481 Massigli to Bonnet Aug 1939.

<sup>67</sup> McSherry, Vol I, p. 204.

<sup>68</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 506 Massigli to Bonnet 10 Aug 1939.

3. The Treaty would have both maritime and territorial application.
4. The Treaty would have limited territorial application.<sup>69</sup>

Saraçoğlu's visit was, however, held up for some weeks by the announcement of the Russo-German Nonaggression Pact and the outbreak of war.<sup>70</sup>

The news of the Pact arrived in Ankara during a diplomatic ball. The Turks, Massigli informed Paris, reacted to it with a "sentiment near to stupor",<sup>71</sup> and, "lost themselves in conjectures, most often pessimistic, on the motives that had inspired Stalin's decision".<sup>72</sup> For the moment, desire for an alliance with Russia was paralysed by fear for the future and doubts about Russia's motives. Saraçoğlu, had been readying himself for his trip to Moscow, for the moment, put off his preparations. Meanwhile, in London and Paris, there was fear: in Madrid and Rome, anger.<sup>73</sup> Later in September, recovering from his shock, and anxious to test the altered waters, Saraçoğlu accepted

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<sup>69</sup> Erkin, p. 157.

<sup>70</sup> Text of Treaty: E. Jacobsen, A. Smith, World War II. Policy and Strategy. Selected Documents with Commentary. (Clio: Santa Barbara) 1979. p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 281 Massigli to Bonnet 23 Aug 1939; also, CC KNAT 1/13 Knatchbull-Hugesson Diary 19 Nov 1939. Knatchbull-Hugesson called the pact "about the most cynical political bargain ever made".

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Marie Pernot, "L'Accord Germano-Russe et ses Incidences", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 5 (Oct 1939), p. 473-487.

a new invitation to go to Moscow and meet with Molotov and Stalin.<sup>74</sup> It is not improbable that at least part of the rationale for Saraçoğlu's visit was to determine if a Russian policy too obviously altered from previous, following the Russian attack on Poland on 17 September, marked a change in Moscow's attitude toward its Turkish friends.

In London, the announcement that Saraçoğlu was going to Moscow was not entirely welcome. Chamberlain, for one, considered it a regrettable, if inevitable, result of the German victory in Poland. Turkey, he thought, was seeking to reinsure itself with Russia. "Up to now", he noted, Ankara had "continued to assure us that we need have no fears of backsliding on Turkey's part".<sup>75</sup> By the end of the month, however, faced with German victory and at least potential Russian hostility, Chamberlain was no longer convinced that the continued confidence was justified. Others, particularly in Paris, hoped to use that Turks to ensure that if not allied the Russians were at least not hostile by pulling them into the Balkan group of neutrals.<sup>76</sup> In short, the Western Allies, viewed the coming Turco-Russian negotiations with considerable misgivings, and not a little suspicion; these only partly tempered by hope that Saraçoğlu might partly offset the diplomatic set-back the West had

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<sup>74</sup> News that Saraçoğlu would make a trip to Moscow, arrived in the German Embassy in Ankara on 17 September from the German Ambassador in Moscow, Schulenburg. Von Papen, p. 455.

<sup>75</sup> BR NC 18/1/1123 Neville to Hilda Chamberlain 1 Oct 1939.

<sup>76</sup> Marie Pernot, "*L'Accord Germano-Russe et ses Incidences*", Politique Etrangere, Vol IV, No. 5 (Oct 1939), p. 473-487.

been administered by the Russian defection from the peace front.

In the House of Lords questions were asked about the significance of the Saraçoğlu visit.<sup>77</sup> Halifax admitted that Russo-Turkish talks were proceeding and sought to allay fears that these might damage the fledgling Anglo-Turkish alliance. "We should certainly always be glad to see friendly relations maintained between two great neighbours, Russia and Turkey", he told the Lords, "which need not in any way conflict with the closest relations between this country and Turkey or between Turkey and France".<sup>78</sup> Halifax, faced with a development he might influence but could not change, was nervous but resigned.

Halifax's first diplomatic reaction to news that Saraçoğlu was going to Moscow was to attempt to establish the tripartite relationship beyond recall by obtaining ratification and signature of the Tripartite Treaty before Saraçoğlu left.<sup>79</sup> By 28 August, in fact, the political agreement was ready to sign, but signature hung on the successful completion of financial negotiations.<sup>80</sup> These last could not be successfully concluded quickly enough and

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<sup>77</sup> Hansard, Lords Vol CXIV col 1300.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., col 1325-1326.

<sup>79</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R7644/7213/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 17 Sep 1939. London suddenly conceded the better part of the Turkish financial demands. It promised the Turks 25 million pounds in war material; 15 million in gold; and 2 million to unblock the clearing; with a suspensive understanding to be included in the proposed treaty. See also, DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 65 London to Paris 27 Aug 1939.

<sup>80</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 100 Paris to Ankara 28 Aug 1939; also, PRO CAB 80/2 COS (39)25(JP) The Turkish Alliance Sep 1939.

Saraçoğlu departed with the Tripartite Treaty neither signed nor initialled by the Turks.<sup>81</sup> Turkish reluctance to sign did not derive only from the failure to reach agreement on assistance. As well, Saraçoğlu was reluctant to travel to Moscow bound by a signed treaty. As he explained to Feridun Erkin at the Foreign Ministry, to present the Russians with a *fait accompli* even before negotiations began would be extremely discourteous and would take from the Turks all room for diplomatic manoeuvre.<sup>82</sup> In the middle of the month, however, Menemencioğlu assured Knatchbull-Hugesson that whatever happened in Moscow, the Turks would do nothing without prior consultation with their Western Allies,<sup>83</sup> and prior to his departure, Saraçoğlu was careful to notify Knatchbull-Hugesson that no change in foreign policy was contemplated as a result of the meeting. Whatever the outcome, he promised, nothing would be done which would prejudice the relationship being built between Turkey and Britain and France. Turkey sought nothing more, he said, than to improve its relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>84</sup> On 22 September, still full of assurances that negotiations with Russia would not be allowed to harm the agreement with Britain and France, Saraçoğlu left for Moscow.<sup>85</sup> Somewhat mollified, Halifax initialled the Treaty as it stood on 28 September and received

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<sup>81</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 20(39) 21 Sep 1939.

<sup>82</sup> Erkin, p. 158.

<sup>83</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 19(39) 18 Sep 1939.

<sup>84</sup> PRO CAB 65/3 WM (39)25 Sep 1939.

<sup>85</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 20 (7 Oct 1939), p. 66.

assurances from Ankara that formal signature would take place as soon as Saraçoğlu returned from Moscow.<sup>86</sup>

The Turks had very definite ideas about what they wanted from Russia. Basically, they sought a nonaggression pact which would free them from the necessity of deploying large numbers of troops to their Eastern provinces. Prior to leaving, Saraçoğlu had given Knatchbull-Hugesson the text of a proposed nonaggression pact between Turkey and Russia.

1. In the case of an aggression by a European power directed in the area of the Black Sea, including the Straits, against Turkey or the USSR, high contracting parties will effectively cooperate and send each other all aid and assistance in their power.
2. In the case of an aggression by a European power against Turkey or against the USSR in the Balkan area, high contracting parties will effectively cooperate and lend each other all assistance in their power.
3. The engagements by Turkey in virtue of articles 1 and 2 of the above cannot force that country into an action having for effect or leading to the consequence of putting it in armed conflict with Britain and France.
4. Suggested Treaty fifteen years with tacit renewal five years.<sup>87</sup>

Saraçoğlu presented this draft Treaty to Molotov on the first day of discussions, 30 September 1939.<sup>88</sup> Molotov gave to Saraçoğlu a document of his own. It was a list of proposed amendments to the

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<sup>86</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 31(39) 29 Sep 1939.

<sup>87</sup> PRO FO 424/283 C13247/3356/18 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 8 Sep 1939.

<sup>88</sup> Erkin, p. 162.

Montreaux Convention. When he realized what it was, Saraçoğlu refused to take it, touch it, or discuss it.<sup>89</sup> This exchange set the tone for the remainder of the conversations. The truth was, that the Russians had already promised the Germans to use their influence to draw the Turks away from the West and regarded the talks more in this light than as an attempt to come to some mutually beneficial bilateral accomodation with the Turks.<sup>90</sup>

On the second day of discussions, 1 October, Stalin himself appeared.<sup>91</sup> He made very plain that he objected to the Tripartite Treaty as negotiated to date. He thought that the Treaty should commit the Turks only to consultation, and not to action, in regard to the guarantees to Greece and Rumania. Further, he thought that in the event that the USSR went to war with Britain and France, the Treaty should be suspended for the duration.<sup>92</sup> Stalin returned to the question of the proposed Montreaux modifications. The substance of Soviet demands was that whether in peace or war, the Turks belligerent or nonbelligerent, Turks and Soviets should decide in common, in each case, if passage through the Straits of a nonriverine power would be permitted. Nonriverine powers would be limited to a fifth of the presently authorized tonnage.<sup>93</sup> Ships would not be allowed in for humanitarian work or in execution of a

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Deringil, p. 78-79.

<sup>91</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 21 (21 Oct 1939), p. 59.

<sup>92</sup> PRO CAB 29/1 WC 36(39) 4 Oct 1939; and Erkin, p. 162.

<sup>93</sup> 5,000 rather than 30,000 tons



League decision unless the Soviets participated in the decision. Finally, there would be no further revision except by bilateral agreement between Turkey and Russia.<sup>94</sup>

Saraçoğlu agreed to pass on to France and Britain the Russian demands for modification of the Tripartite Treaty, but was not hopeful of their response. Straits revision, he refused to discuss. Turkey, he vowed, would never repeat the mistake of *Hunkiar-Iskelesi*. If this were Russia's last word, he said, then he would go home.<sup>95</sup> "Saraçoğlu is perfectly correct", answered Stalin disarmingly: "This project is just too grotesque".<sup>96</sup> Stalin turned, lastly, to the nature of the alignment between Russia and Turkey. The Russians, he said, would guarantee the Turks except in the case of German attack. In this event, the Turco-Russian agreement would be suspended.<sup>97</sup>

Halifax considered the substance of Soviet demands "highly disquieting".<sup>98</sup> As other Soviet objections came to light, the majority opinion in the War Cabinet was to refuse revision and to insist that the Alliance stand as already initialled by Britain and France. The only other course would be to abandon it altogether and negotiate a new treaty limited to the Mediterranean. The Prime Minister, however, was not anxious to abandon what had been

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<sup>94</sup> Erkin, p. 163.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

achieved only with difficulty. He convinced the Cabinet that the Soviet objections should be admitted, but that HMG must receive full information in regards to the proposed Turco-Soviet agreement and the assurance that Turkey would be able to enter the war if it chose to do so.<sup>99</sup> Paris, in contrast, had come to the conclusion that the Soviet demands should be refused and the Treaty signed as it stood. The French agreed, however, to follow the British lead in this matter.<sup>100</sup> Puzzled, and with considerable misgivings, HMG advised the Turks that it would accept the Russian reservations if the Turks wished it. Had this permission not been forthcoming, in Erkin's opinion, a rupture with Russia would have been certain, rapid and rancorous.<sup>101</sup>

On 14 October, the Turks, fortified by Britain's reluctant acquiescence, agreed to Stalin's demand that the Tripartite Treaty would bind them only to consultation in the event of a threat to Greece or Rumania. Turkey would not, however, Saraçoğlu informed Molotov, agree to the German reservation to be placed on the proposed Turco-Russian treaty. To do so would be to embrace a daydream because Turkey's most probable and most dangerous enemies were Germany and Italy. If Germany attacked, the reservation would suspend the treaty; if Italy attacked, Germany would be behind its Italian ally and the reservation would again come into play. Such

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<sup>99</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 39(39) 6 Oct 1939.

<sup>100</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 43(39) 10 Oct 1939.

<sup>101</sup> Erkin, p. 179.

a treaty would be entirely without value.<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, said Molotov, he had promised this reservation to Ribbentrop, then in Moscow, and if the Turks would not agree to it, then he doubted that a Treaty would be possible.<sup>103</sup>

What of Straits revision? Molotov asked, reminding Saraçoğlu that he had promised Voroshilov earlier that Turkey was prepared to proceed bilaterally with the USSR in this matter. Saraçoğlu denied that this was so and blamed Voroshilov's misunderstanding on a translation error.<sup>104</sup> Even so, Molotov asked, how, if Montreaux were allowed to stand, could Turkey use its rights under the present regime to benefit the USSR? Saraçoğlu refused to consider this last. Such a course, he said, would be illegal and illegitimate.<sup>105</sup>

On the 16 October, Molotov simply restated all the Soviet demands. The German reservation, he assured Saraçoğlu, was essential. Straits revision was a prerequisite.<sup>106</sup> Molotov insisted also on further changes to the Tripartite treaty; most particularly that its operation not include the case of war with

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<sup>102</sup> Erkin, p. 168.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. At this point, Molotov introduced another document prepared under Stalin's own direction. Stalin's revised Straits regime eliminated all obligations under the League and placed the discretion to open and close the Straits entirely in the hands of Turkey. In practice, since unilateral Straits revision would lose for Turkey its Western friends, this would place Turkey entirely in the hands of the USSR.

Bulgaria.<sup>107</sup> None of this was admissible for the Turks. In London, the Soviet demands seemed incomprehensible. Halifax questioned Knatchbull-Hugesson:

Would the effect of such a suspensive clause be that guarantee by Russia to Turkey in respect of Black Sea would not operate if aggressor were Germany? If so guarantee would be valueless, since it is difficult to conceive of any other aggressor but Germany.<sup>108</sup>

On 17 October, Stalin put in his second and final appearance. He insisted that the suspensive clause on the Tripartite Treaty must cover both Russia and Germany. If the Turks would permit no revision of Montreaux, then, he said, they must at least promise to invoke Article 22 of the Convention to deny passage to the vessels of nonlittoral powers.<sup>109</sup> Saraçoğlu could admit none of this. That evening, Numan Menemencioğlu telephoned Knatchbull-Hugesson with the news that it looked as if the negotiations would fail and that Turkey was anxious to sign as quickly thereafter as possible. Would October 19 be possible he wondered? Until then, Turkey attached "great importance to [the] maintenance of secrecy as regards signature until [the] Minister of Foreign Affairs is out of Russia".<sup>110</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson minuted Halifax's query of the

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<sup>107</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 49(39) 16 Oct 1939.

<sup>108</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/65 65/672/39 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 16 Oct 1939.

<sup>109</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 51(39) 18 Oct 1939.

<sup>110</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/65 No. 616 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 17 Oct 1939.

previous day: "No answer necessary now, I think".<sup>111</sup> That same day, Refik Saydam, the Turkish Prime Minister, informed a parliamentary meeting of the People's Party that negotiations with the Soviets had broken off because Soviet proposals could not be reconciled with Turkey's other obligations.<sup>112</sup>

On 18 October, the last day of talks, Molotov alone was present for the Soviet side. He presented all the demands that had been made to this point as if there had been no negotiation at all.<sup>113</sup> The few pallid assurances which Russia was offering were simply insufficient to offset the cost of the concessions they required. Menemencioğlu informed Knatchbull-Hugesson and Massigli later in the day that it was Turkey's urgent desire to sign the Treaty as initialled.<sup>114</sup>

What had the Russians been after? Firstly, it seems obvious that they wished to remove all substance from the Tripartite Treaty, and if this were not possible, to negate its possible operation against the Soviet Union. Secondly, the proposed amendments, taken together, could not but have reduced Turkey to something like political vassalage. Thirdly, certain of the amendments, in particular the Bulgarian reservation, would have nullified the Balkan Entente. What had the Russians wanted? They

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<sup>111</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/65 65/672/39 op. cit. Knatchbull-Hugesson Note 17 Oct 1939.

<sup>112</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 22 (4 Nov 1939), p. 56.

<sup>113</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/65 65/681/39 Seeds (Moscow) to Halifax 17 Oct 1939.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid; also, CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 1 Nov 1939.

wished to supply a Finnish solution to the problem of Turkey and to return Turkey to the state of dependency in which it had existed prior to 1932.<sup>115</sup> Lastly, Erkin's suggestion that Saraçoğlu's visit to Moscow was intended by the Soviets to act as a counter in their concurrent negotiations with Ribbentropp is a good one.<sup>116</sup> The Turks in Moscow were less important to the Soviets for what they were or could do than for the possibilities they would represent to Ribbentropp.

#### **Tripartite Treaty:**

On 19 October 1939, "amidst a blaze of lights and cinemas", the Tripartite Treaty was signed.<sup>117</sup> That same day Chamberlain spoke to the House of Commons. "I am sure", he said, "that it will give the House quiet satisfaction to hear that our negotiations have been brought to this successful conclusion, and that the seal has been set on our close and cordial relation with a country for the qualities and character of whose people we have the highest regard and admiration".<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> The parallels between the Turkish and the Finnish cases are suggestive. Finland too received an urgent invitation to send a plenipotentiary to Moscow to "discuss concrete political matters" in October 1939. Like, the Turks, the Finnish delegation was confronted with impossible demands -- border modifications and the acceptance of a Soviet base in the South; unlike the Turkish case, Finnish refusal led to virtually immediate hostilities with the Soviet Union. See, M. Jakobson, The Diplomacy of the Winter War, (Harvard: Harvard) 1961; A. Upton, Finland in Crisis, (Faber: London) 1964; and, G. Gripenberg, Finland and the Great Powers, (Nebraska: Lincoln) 1965.

<sup>116</sup> Erkin, p. 178.

<sup>117</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 19 Nov 1939.

<sup>118</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCLII col 1129 19 Oct 1939.

Attlee, speaking for the opposition, welcomed the Treaty,<sup>119</sup> and returned to the matter, on 25 October, to criticize the Government for its failure to expedite quickly enough the ratification procedure.<sup>120</sup> Somewhat later, Dalton, also speaking for the opposition, considered that "The Anglo-French-Turkish pacts are the most solid fact that has emerged in the Mediterranean in this last month or two, a solid fact on which less solid bodies might break".<sup>121</sup> Opposition criticism was not that a treaty had been negotiated but that HMG was not sufficiently active in its articulation.

On 26 October, Halifax spoke to the Lords. He told them that Saraçoğlu's visit to Moscow had produced "no definite result". He noted however, that even though this was the case "both Governments were at pains to show that their traditional friendship and their general relations remained unaffected by their failure to achieve final agreement at this stage".<sup>122</sup> Finally, he welcomed General Orbay to Britain for the second round of negotiations aimed at settling the question of material assistance, and laid the completed Treaty of alliance before the Lords with the request that it might at once be approved and sent back to Ankara, thus dispensing with the customary twenty-one day waiting period.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCLII 25 Oct 1939.

<sup>121</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCLII 30 Nov 1939.

<sup>122</sup> Hansard, Lords Vol CIV col 1566.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., col 1567.

With one eye on Rome, and the other on Moscow, Halifax stressed that:

the treaty is directed against no other power, and implies no change in our desire to continue to collaborate on all possible occasions with other Governments which have interest in the areas within the scope of the provisions of the Treaty that we have just signed.<sup>124</sup>

Lord Stanhope, Britain's representative at Montreaux, followed. He called the Treaty "the outstanding event of foreign affairs during the past week" and noted that:

The treaty has been received with profound satisfaction throughout the Empire and in France, and it is a great encouragement to us to know that it has been widely welcomed in many other parts of the world. This is doubtless because the world sees it as a guarantee of peace in at least one region of the world.<sup>125</sup>

Lothian, in Washington, judged that excellent as it might be, the Turkish treaty was a poor second to such a treaty paralleled by a similar agreement with Moscow.<sup>126</sup> It was no longer a question, he thought, of what Turkey would do, but what it would not do.

The Tripartite treaty consisted of nine articles and two protocols.

- I If the war came to the Mediterranean, Turkey would lend the UK and France all the assistance in its power.
- II If Turkey became involved in war in the Mediterranean, then the UK and France would provide

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., col 1564.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., col 1552.

<sup>126</sup> PRO FO 800/310 Lothian to Halifax 13 Oct 1939.



all the assistance in their power.<sup>127</sup>

- III Turkey associated itself, to the extent of its power, with the guarantees to Rumania and Greece.
- IV In the event of war outside the Mediterranean, the powers would consult together. Turkey, in any case, would be at least benevolently neutral.
- V In the event of war from any other cause, the powers would consult together.
- VI The treaty was defensive and not directed against any other power.
- VII Provisions of the treaty were equally binding as bilateral between Turkey and each of the other two powers.
- VIII If engaged in hostilities by virtue of the treaty, there would be no separate peace.
- IX The treaty would be ratified as soon as possible; enter into force as soon as deposited in Ankara; and be for a period of fifteen years.

Protocol I: The treaty would enter into effect as soon as signed.

Protocol II: "The obligations undertaken by Turkey in virtue of the above mentioned Treaty cannot compel that country to take action having as its effect, or involving as its consequence, entry into armed conflict with the Soviet Union".<sup>128</sup>

Having finally been driven to sign the Treaty, the three allies had now to determine how exactly it would work.

#### **The Neutral Bloc Revisited:**

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<sup>127</sup> The "Mediterranean" for the purposes of this document was taken to include a Turkish security zone extending to the Eastern and Southern border of Yugoslavia. PRO CAB 80/2 COS (39)25(JP) The Turkish Alliance Sep 1939.

<sup>128</sup> Treaty of Mutual Assistance Between His Majesty in Respect of the United Kingdom, the President of the French Republic, and the President of the Turkish Republic. Turkey no. 2 1939; also, Hurewitz, Vol II, p. 226-228.

This question was much more a poser since, faced with Saraçoğlu's failure in Moscow, both Turkey and the other Balkan nations were much less willing, and much less able, to contemplate active participation against Germany. In addition, there were continuing fears in Ankara that HMG might run out on its obligations -- fears which the Germans were quick to play upon while assuring the worried Turks that Germany, at least, had no plans to make the Balkans an active theatre. The upshot was the rebirth of the suggestion that the Balkans, as a bloc, should stay out of the war altogether.

In November, the possibility was raised again by the Rumanians and Greeks, and HMG -- faced with actual war -- was quick to close with it. If such a bloc could be stretched to include Hungary and Italy, London thought that it might be a rather good idea.<sup>129</sup> Such a neutral bloc, as envisaged by the Rumanians, would include provisions for:

1. Complete neutrality.
2. Nonaggression with mutual obligations.
3. Benevolent neutrality, at least, in the face of attack from outside.
4. No outrageous military preparations on frontiers.
5. Exchange of information.
6. Economic coordination.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 61(39) 26 Oct 1939; and, CAB 65/2 WC 67(39) 1 Nov 1939.

<sup>130</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 69(39) 3 Nov 1939. See also, F. Marzari, "Projects for an Italian led Balkan Bloc of Neutrals, September - December 1939", HJ, Vol XIII, 1973.

### The Lloyd Mission:

HMG was highly intrigued by the idea of a neutral bloc and decided to support the idea if the Turks were willing to accept the notion.<sup>131</sup> London decided further that it might be a good idea to send some influential British statesman to the Balkans to test the waters. After careful consideration, it was agreed that Lord Lloyd, one-time Consul-General of Egypt and presently MP and Chairman of the British Council, would make as good a candidate as any for the job of Balkan catspaw.<sup>132</sup> George Lloyd was an excellent choice. He was close enough to the first rank of imperial statesmen so not as to cause offense, but far enough below the first rank that he could be spoken to and speak candidly. He also was well known to Balkan statesmen and had made several previous trips to the region. In 1936, for instance, he had gone to Ankara and had been received by both İnönü and Atatürk.<sup>133</sup> In May 1939, he had made an inspection tour of British Council operations in the Near East, and had visited Greece at that time.<sup>134</sup>

On 11 November, Lord Lloyd departed on his trip to the Balkans. By 13 November, he was in Bucharest, and spoke to Gafencu on the fifteenth. Lloyd spoke about Britain's concern for Balkan solidarity and of the need to make concessions to Bulgaria.

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<sup>131</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 70(39) 4 Nov 1939.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> PRO FO 1011/39 Loraine to Oliphant 19 May 1936.

<sup>134</sup> CC GLLD 20/3 Tour of the Near East 1939.

Gafencu, Lloyd said:

entirely agreed with me in the main on the need of mutual sacrifices but said that if a sacrifice was to be made by Roumania it could not be made in favour of Bulgaria on the latter's usual hard luck plea. If Bulgaria had lost territory it was because her policy had been bad and for no other reason. She had lost territory after the first Balkan War because of her treacherous conduct towards her neighbours. She had lost it again after the Great War because she had miscalculated the situation. If the Bulgarian territorial position was bad it was her own fault.<sup>133</sup>

Roumania, Gafencu said, might make sacrifices but only for some real Balkan Pact -- not just for the neutrality of Bulgaria. At the time of the Saraçoğlu visit to Moscow, Gafencu continued, the Rumanians had been prepared to cede to Bulgaria the South Dobrudja. Yugoslavia, for its part, was ready to throw Tsalibrod into the Bulgar pot, and the Greeks were ready to permit the Bulgars to establish port facilities at Salonika or Degeagatch. All of this, he said, would have been contingent upon Bulgarian readiness to enter the Balkan pact "unconditionally". Saraçoğlu had gone to Moscow in October, Gafencu hinted, as little less than a Balkan plenipotentiary.<sup>134</sup> If a Black Sea guarantee could have been wrangled from the Russians, then Rumania could have seen its way clear to the territorial transfer. The Russian attitude, however, had quickly disillusioned Saraçoğlu. Molotov, according to Gafencu,

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<sup>133</sup> CC GLLD 20/4 Balkan Diary, Interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Gafencu 15 Nov 1939.

<sup>134</sup> This would not be the first time that Rumania had sought Turkey's help to ease its relations with Moscow. During the crisis of the Spring, Rumania had requested Turkish mediation. Deringil, p. 74; and, D. Patmore, Balkan Correspondent, (Harper: New York), p. 39.

had given Saraçoğlu to understand that Bulgaria was a Russian interest which was to be "bolshevised as soon as might be". Without a Russian guarantee, Rumania could not, he said, justify the cession of territory to Bulgaria.<sup>136</sup> The best that could be hoped for now, Gafencu judged, was a neutral bloc including Italy. If there could not be a Balkan bloc, Gafencu quoted King Carole as saying, at least there could be a bloc of neutrals.

Russia, Gafencu said, had been approached in this regard but had not returned a response. The French had also been questioned and had indicated their objection to the inclusion of Italy. The Germans had been evasive but in general agreement. The Italians, Gafencu said, who despite the French reservation had been invited, had been "extremely interested" but were "holding back fearing a possible rebuff or set-back".<sup>137</sup>

On 17 November, Lloyd visited King Carol.<sup>138</sup> "King Carol's first concern" he wrote, "was clearly to convince me of the comparative importance in his eyes of the German as against the Russian danger. France appreciated this much better than England" the King said.<sup>139</sup> But that was not to say that the King too did not appreciate the danger from Russia. Stalin's policy he characterized as the "old Czarist imperialism screened and also

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<sup>136</sup> CC GLLD 20/4 Balkan Diary, Interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Gafencu 15 Nov 1939.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Prince Paul of Hohenzollern-Rumania, King Carol II, (Meuthen: London) 1988.

<sup>139</sup> CC GLLD 20/4 Balkan Tour 11 Nov 1939.

conveyed by Bolshevism".<sup>139</sup>

Lord Lloyd questioned the King on his attitude to his Balkan neighbours. "This led to an out burst of hot criticism of Bulgaria, King Boris, and of the traditional and unchanging Bulgaria treachery". He was willing, said the King, to play for a neutral bloc, but he did not see how this could be achieved given the attitude of the French. The King was in general agreement with British policy, but could not see how the British guarantee could be made effective against Russia unless Turkey underwrote it. Turkey would not do this, he said, and it was in nobody's interest that it should.<sup>140</sup> The next day, Lord Lloyd met again with Gafencu, as had been arranged, to tell him what the King had said. "On the whole", wrote Lord Lloyd, Gafencu was "satisfied".<sup>141</sup>

Lord Lloyd's next stop was in Bulgaria. Here he talked to King Boris on 21 November, and the Bulgarian Prime Minister, M. Koissevanoff, on the twenty-second. Boris spent much of his time abusing his cousin King Carol. Carol, Boris said, was a friend but "*toujours un peu meficient a mon egard*".<sup>142</sup> Plainly, he did not trust his Balkan neighbours. About Russia too, he harboured considerable misgivings. "One does not have impressions about Stalin" he quipped, "one has convictions". Stalin's policy was not

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> CC GLLD 20/6 Bucharest Papers 18 Nov 1939.

<sup>142</sup> CC GLLD 20/6 Bucharest Papers, Lord Lloyd's Interview with the King of Bulgaria 21 November.

new. It was as old as Russian imperialism: "*C'est Pierre le Grand -- en rouge*".<sup>145</sup> Bulgaria, he said, could not participate in a Balkan bloc. It could not risk the chance that this might involve Russia any deeper in Balkan affairs. "Any action", said the King,

on Bulgaria's part which could furnish Russia with the smallest pretext for action, either against Bulgaria, or for intervention in pretended defence of Bulgarian independence or interests, was out of the question. He was sure I would find the same view shared by all the Balkan States.<sup>146</sup>

Only towards Turkey did Boris demonstrate anything but hostility. Lord Lloyd, Boris said, should go to Turkey. The recent mutual withdrawal of troops had an excellent effect, said the King, and confessed that he was "warmly in favour of a using every possible opportunity for making a close friendship with Turkey". Russia, he claimed, was continually trying to embroil the two. It would not succeed in this, said the King, because there was no real difficulty between them.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. The Military Attaché to Bucharest, Colonel Ross, agreed with Boris and considered that the Russian danger had grown acute since the failure of the Russo-Turkish talks in October. In any case, he said, the whole idea of a neutral bloc had only been a poorly considered Rumania effort to gain security against Russia. Bulgaria, Ross judged, would lie low in the future, and would do nothing if not attacked. CC GLLD 20/8 Sofia Papers Ross to Lloyd 20 Nov 1939.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. It is probable that King Boris, at least on this occasion, was playing his cards straight. What he told Lord Lloyd corresponds closely with what he had told M. Cheyssson from the League of Nations earlier. CC GLLD 20/8 Sofia Papers, Conversation with King Boris and M. Cheyssson.

The next day, Lord Lloyd interviewed M. Kiossevanoff.<sup>148</sup> Kiossevanoff said that he personally did not think that a neutral bloc was realistic politics. No truly neutral nation, he said, would ever follow a policy against a great power, nor would it fight in defence of another state. For example, he said, Bulgaria would never fight to prevent Russian invasion of Rumania.<sup>149</sup> Such ideas, Kiossevanoff hinted, were only pie-in-the-sky. Bulgaria for its part, was interested in more practical bilateral arrangements, particularly with the Turks. Bulgaria, finally, he claimed, was not aggressive. It was merely unwilling to accept the status quo imposed at the end of the war.<sup>150</sup>

Whatever he had been told by the Bulgarians, Lord Lloyd was more impressed by the judgement of Colonel Ross, the British Military Attaché in Bucharest. Relations between Bulgaria and all its neighbours, including Turkey, Ross told Lloyd, were bad.<sup>151</sup> Bulgaria did not like the Turks more, it just disliked them less than the others. So unsatisfactory were relations even between these two, particularly in their respective Armies, that while the Bulgarian Military Attaché in Ankara was openly Anti-Turkish, the Turkish Attaché to Sofia had gone him one better by refusing altogether to live in Bulgaria, taking up residence in Edirne

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<sup>148</sup> CC GLLD 20/6 Bucharest Papers, Lord Lloyd's Interview with M. Kiossevanoff 22 Nov 1939.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> CC GLLD 20/8 Sofia Papers, Memorandum on Policy Towards Bulgaria Ross 19 Nov 1939.



instead. In Ross's judgement, there was little chance at present, none before, and probably would be none thereafter, of bringing Bulgaria into a neutral bloc with its neighbours.<sup>152</sup>

Lord Lloyd was next on to Yugoslavia where he interviewed Prince Paul on 24 November.<sup>153</sup> Paul gave Lloyd to understand that he had only been wasting his time in Bulgaria. When asked why this was, Paul said, "that it was a waste of time in as much as one could never believe a word that was said by King Boris or his Government".<sup>154</sup> This was about the most constructive comment Prince Paul had to make. In Prince Paul's defence, it can be said that his uncooperative attitude very probably derived in part from his recent disappointment in the matter of a military mission he had requested from France and Britain. The British had refused point-blank to participate in any mission. Weygand, for his part, had sent one, but Paul had quickly come to the conclusion that France had no serious intentions in the Balkans. The French mission had been accompanied by entirely too much publicity, and had been authorized to offer too few troops.<sup>155</sup> To Prince Paul, it was apparent that the British were interested in talking politics but would never be willing to make concrete dispositions. The French,

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> CC GLLD 20/6 Bucharest Papers, Lord Lloyd's Interview with Prince Paul 24 November 1939. See also, N. Balfour and S. MacKay, Paul of Yugoslavia. Britain's Maligned Friend, (Hugh Hamilton: London) 1980.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

for their part, were in Paul's estimation, more concerned with striking military postures than hard blows at the Germans in the Balkans.

Lord Lloyd's Balkan tour was a considerable disappointment. If nothing else, it revealed just how far away the Balkans were from any kind of bloc at all. "Never", Lord Lloyd wrote his wife from Belgrade,

have I, though I thought I knew Balkan politics well, met with such a tangled skein to unravel. Each place contradicts the next: views and decisions taken in one capital appear impossible in the next one. Nor can one retrace ones steps to re-examine the views which have become so questionable.<sup>156</sup>

The one real chance for some kind of Balkan unity seems to have been the Gafencu-Saraçoğlu initiative in September-October 1939, but that collapsed beyond recall when it became clear just how uncooperative Russia was prepared to be. Disheartened by the results of Lord Lloyd's trip, Halifax wrote in November:

The Balkans had recovered their nerve, but I rather fear that renewed confidence may give some of them leisure to reflect upon their grievances against their neighbours, and it does not look to me as if we should see any firmly united bloc of Balkan nations.<sup>157</sup>

#### **The Balkans after Lloyd:**

In December 1939, the Balkan bloc, such as it was, faced its first test with the Russian demands on Rumania. It failed. Rumania alone, could not resist the Russians. The remainder of the Balkans, reluctant to fight Russia if it would stop with Bessarabia, turned

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<sup>156</sup> C. Adam, The Life of Lord Lloyd, (MacMillan: London) 1948. p. 296.

<sup>157</sup> PRO FO 800/311 Halifax to Lothian 21 Nov 1939.

a blind eye.<sup>158</sup> In this month too, Italy definitely announced, in response to a Rumanian query, that it had no intention of joining a neutral bloc.<sup>159</sup>

The most that could be salvaged from the wreckage of the effectively defunct Balkan neutral bloc was an understanding negotiated by Menemencioğlu, and concluded between Turkey and Bulgaria in January 1940.<sup>160</sup> Bulgaria promised not to attack her neighbours, and vowed that it would defend itself against attack. It also promised that it would consult with Turkey before taking any actions likely to be of importance to the Turks. Turkey, on its part, promised complete exchange of information.<sup>161</sup> By this time, Menemencioğlu considered that "the whole idea of a Balkan neutral bloc . . . was quite impractical".<sup>162</sup>

Much of the foundation of the Turco-Bulgar agreement was laid by Lord Lloyd and the British Ambassador in Sofia, G.W. Rendel. On 23 November 1939, anxious to build on the excellent impression created by Lord Lloyd's visit,<sup>163</sup> Menemencioğlu had effectively

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<sup>158</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 104(39) 5 Dec 1939.

<sup>159</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 117(39) 15 Dec; and, WC 123(39) 27 Dec 1939.

<sup>160</sup> PRO CAB 65/5 WC 16(40) 17 Jan 1940.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> CC GLLD 20/8 Bucharest Papers Rendel to Lord Lloyd 23 Nov 1939.

<sup>163</sup> CC GLLD 20/8 Sofia Papers Rendel to Halifax 24 Nov 1939: "I need . . . only say in the present dispatch that I consider that his [Lloyd's] visit to the country has created a most excellent impression and has been of the utmost value from every point of view". Lloyd was the first English statesman who "had not pointedly

deputized Rendel to act for Turkey in Bulgaria and had instructed him to work for "as rapid and complete [an] improvement in Turco-Bulgarian relations" as could be obtained.<sup>164</sup> But this was a poor survival from the hopes of the early Fall.

Thus, by the end of November 1939, although the Allies had secured the desired formal Alliance with Turkey, it remained unclear exactly what the significance of this alliance would be in the most important theatre in which it could operate -- the Balkans. What was clear, was that there was little chance of effective cooperation between the bickering rivals of the Balkan peninsula and without such cooperation, effective expression of the alliance in the Balkans was impossible.

**Conclusion:**

It is not without significance that the Tripartite treaty, like the earlier Joint Guarantee, derived more from the collapse of the foreign policy of one of the partners than from the success of the other. It was a development which boded ill for the future action of the alliance that the collapse in question -- Turkey's failure to secure a satisfactory relationship with the Soviet Union -- had always been spoken of by the Turks as a *sine qua non* of their full participation in a Tripartite Alliance. And this failure was only one of several. The Tripartite treaty was carried through to completion in the panic produced by the outbreak of war. Yet the

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avoided Bulgaria".

<sup>164</sup> CC GLLD 20/8 Bucharest Papers Rendel to Lord Lloyd 23 Nov 1939.

war which actually broke out, Britain and France against Germany, meant that the most effective theatre in which the Tripartite alliance could operate would be the Balkans; yet all the political constituents of the successful operation of the alliance in the Balkans -- Bulgaria's reconciliation, Balkan consolidation, Russian participation -- were as far away from being achieved as ever. In their rush to get some kind of Treaty, Britain, Turkey and France, papered over any number of cracks each in itself sufficient to bring down the house of the Tripartite Alliance.

Chapter IX -- Menemencioğlu in Paris. Orbay in London  
Point d'Argent, Point de Turques

**The Search for New Credits:**

The first step in the attempt to redirect the Turkish economy away from Germany and to obtain weapons from a politically safe source was the 1938 Credit. Six million pounds for armaments and ten million for industry was not enough. In October 1938, Dr. Aras spoke to Loraine. The Turks, he said, were afraid that war was likely by 1939-1940 and were seeking to strengthen their Air Force and Navy accordingly. A new extension of credit, he said, was necessary to cater for the expanded building programs. Ships and planes were needed, Aras said, and, "such things they [the Turks] must get from England and not from Germany".<sup>1</sup> If there was no war then the Turks would have ordered too much, but if war did come, as the Turks expected, "then future sacrifices would not have been in vain".<sup>2</sup> For the moment, however, Turkey requested extension of credit in *voce dolce*: an excellent thing, since London was not prepared to listen to further requests.

In March 1939, as movement toward the Joint Guarantee began, British money-counters were worrying that the Turks were about to exceed the 1938 credit. L 3,646,000 had been committed to naval contracts and this did not include provision for spare parts or contracted minelayers. While not entirely certain, the Treasury thought that L 1.5 million had been pledged already for Land armaments, and L 228,140 for aircraft. It was almost certain

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<sup>1</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E6412/67/44 Loraine to Halifax 27 Oct 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

therefore, the Treasury concluded, that the credit had been exhausted.<sup>3</sup> The Treasury was determined that there would not be another.<sup>4</sup> In Ankara, Numan Menemencioğlu was beginning to warn that it would be impossible to go further towards a formal political agreement unless a better financial arrangement and more permanent economic accommodation were reached.<sup>5</sup>

An impasse, as much as any, fatal to the operation of the Alliance had become apparent. The Turks were quite sincerely convinced of British strength, of the "unlimited resources or resourcefulness of Britain" and also convinced of their own urgent requirement for credit.<sup>6</sup> The British, meanwhile, were only too conscious that British resources were limited and that every allocation represented a choice. Figures in Pounds and Lira, after all, were not purely abstract: they represented quantities of military hardware and apportionments of raw materials. The Turks, if an important consideration in Britain, were only one of several. In Ankara, however, the Air defences of Istanbul were prioritized rather differently than in London.<sup>7</sup>

By the Spring, the Turks had developed some specific

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<sup>3</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E2140 Cooper to Playfair 22 Mar 1939.

<sup>4</sup> PRO T160/971 Bridges to Phillips 27 Jan 1939.

<sup>5</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 98 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 21 Jun 1939.

<sup>6</sup> Medlicott, p. 269.

<sup>7</sup> See, R.S. Sayers, Financial Policy 1939-1945, (HMSO: London) 1956; and, G.C. Penden, British Rearmament and the Treasury, (Scottish Academic Press: Edinburgh) 1979.

concerns.<sup>8</sup> These were precisely those which the planners for economic warfare had indicated as problems to be solved should the Turkish alliance become active. Turkey feared, with reason, that it was not sufficiently armed to take part in modern warfare, and hoped for an extension of credit for military items.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the Turks believed that if they moved to greater opposition to Germany, the Germans would retaliate with a trade embargo which would deny them access to manufactured goods essential to a sustained war effort. Therefore, if Turkey were to be an active ally, alternate sources of supply would be necessary, and if Turkey were to make some shift towards paying for these supplies, alternate markets for Turkish products would have to be found. Finally, since Turkey would never be able to sell enough to sustain a war effort fed from external sources of supply, and could not count on a sufficient increase in war production to supply itself, it followed that imports of war materials would have to be financed by external credits. In short, if Turkey were to play an active part in an alliance, three things were necessary: war stores, market relief, and arms credits.

The requirement for war stores was all the more desperate because the first result of a public and straight-forward Turkish

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<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 424/283 E4685/43/44 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 29 Jun 1939.

<sup>9</sup> This was also the view of the Attaché staff of both the French and British embassies. The Turkish Army, they warned, was markedly pro-Allied, but hobbled by lack of modern equipment; especially, AA and AT weapons. DDF Series II, Vol XIX no. 44 Ankara to Paris 26 Aug; no. 170 Paris to Ankara 29 Sep; no. 263 London to Paris 31 Sep; and, no. 278 Ankara to Paris 31 Sep 1939.



alignment with the West would be the cancellation of armaments orders placed in Germany, and inherited by the Germans from the Czechs. In 1939, such orders amounted to ninety-three million Lira in military equipment: twenty-eight million for naval armaments, forty-seven million for Land weapons, and eight million for aircraft.<sup>10</sup> Much of this had been essentially "pre-paid" through the blocked Turco-German Clearing.<sup>11</sup> In April, Knatchbull-Hugesson had been apprised by the Turks of their fear that the weapons supply from Germany was about to be cut-off without ordered weapons having been delivered. Britain, it was hoped, would help to provide for Turkey's most pressing requirements.<sup>12</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson could not see how Britain could fail to do so. In April, he warned the Foreign Office that immediately upon the announcement of any guarantee agreement, Germany would cut Turkey off without a Reichmark -- in fact with several tens of millions of Lira stranded in Germany. Turkey would, therefore, require economic assistance and arms.<sup>13</sup> "In the interests of economic warfare" he wrote,

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<sup>10</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 339 Massigli to Bonnet. Total in Pounds Sterling, calculated 5 Lira to the Pound: 18.6 million Pounds.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Of the 93 million, 55 million were covered by the Turco-German Commercial Agreement of 1938. The remaining 40 million was outstanding through the clearing. PRO FO 371/23295 E5489/143/44 Menemencioğlu to Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Aug 1939.

<sup>12</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E2775/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 16 Apr 1939.

<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E2937/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 21 Apr 1939.

"surely a *fortiori* at least arms should be given an ally in war".<sup>14</sup>

In London, the Treasury did not doubt that the Turkish dilemma as described by Knatchbull-Hugesson existed, but it strongly disagreed with the solution he proposed. On 28 April, Waley, at the Treasury, wrote to Baggallay, at the FO, that in the event of war, Germany was likely to impose an embargo of war materials to Turkey.<sup>15</sup> In such an eventuality, he thought, the Turks would begin clamouring for relief. They must be made to understand, in this case, that Britain could not give further credits "without involving ourselves in insuperable difficulties with all our other friends".<sup>16</sup> There must be no doubt in Ankara that there could be no further credits. Shocked at the thought of such economic wickedness, Baggallay minuted: "I should doubt whether Germany would go so far as that".<sup>17</sup> The best the experts could arrange between them was the diversion of two million from the 1938 Industrial Credit to the purchase of war materials, and even then, by "war materials" the Export Credit Department meant material for arms factories rather than weapons.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> PRO CAB 24/288 CP 157(39) Financial and Economic Assistance to Turkey Halifax Jul 1939.

<sup>15</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3172/143/44 Waley to Baggallay 28 Apr 1939.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Baggallay Minute.

<sup>18</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3425/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson from Brassert to FO 9 May 1939.

Later, in May, Weygand came away from Ankara with a list of material which the Turks considered essential at once with the understanding that more demands would follow in war. It was imperative, Knatchbull-Hugesson warned, that if the desired equipment were available some way be found for the Turks to buy it. The financing of arms imports, he judged, "may be a decisive factor in the conclusion of a full-blown alliance".<sup>19</sup> Further, he warned the Cabinet, the Turks probably would seek assistance to support the Lira after the outbreak of war.<sup>20</sup> From the FO, Baggallay warned that nothing more could be done about financial and economic assistance. Knatchbull-Hugesson should, however, continue to push towards a political agreement and Staff Conversations. About the financial side of the Anglo-Turkish relationship, the most reasonable course, in Baggallay's judgement, was to "lay low".<sup>21</sup>

After the Joint Guarantee, when the Turks effectively had committed themselves to war in certain circumstances, Ankara began to call more stridently for the provision of additional financial support by its Western allies. Turkey had reason to expect that Britain would provide such support. The Joint Guarantee had been at least partly based on an implicit understanding that Britain would compensate Turkey for lost trade and assist in minimizing the economic dislocation which must follow the political demarche. The

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<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3349/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 6 May 1939.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Baggallay note 10 May 1939.

Treasury had always resisted this policy and had warned that exchange difficulties would not permit Britain to provide support on the scale the Turks would require without crippling its own rearmament effort.<sup>22</sup> Unless some accommodation could be reached, it was unlikely that the guarantee would ever grow into an alliance.

On 18 May, six days after the signature of the Joint Guarantee, the Treasury turned its jaundiced attention to the problem of Turkish trade in war. Turkey, Waley considered, would probably wish to keep its markets open and to sell its produce. Britain, he informed the Foreign Office, "can enter into no commitments on points of this kind".<sup>23</sup> Having disposed of this matter, he judged that "it is necessary to refer only to strategic matters as they effect economic conditions".<sup>24</sup> This was too much even for Baggallay. "It is essential" he thought, "that we should be able to give the Turkish Government some indication of our willingness to enter into negotiations on these subjects as soon as possible".<sup>25</sup> If political and Staff conversations were not accompanied by some financial discussions, then, Baggallay wrote: "I doubt whether we shall ever get our definitive or even our interim agreement . . . If we make it clear at the beginning that

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<sup>22</sup> Medlicott, p. 270.

<sup>23</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3729/143/44 Waley to Baggallay 18 May 1939.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Baggallay Minute.

Turkey could only have her military supplies in return for cash, the Turkish Government might not start conversations as all".<sup>26</sup> Ashton-Gwatkin, on 19 May, minuted agreement with Baggallay's assessment. "It will be necessary to decide very soon", he wrote, "what Turkey is worth to us in cash, and to decide in principle to support her to that amount. . . *Point d'argent, point de Suisses*".<sup>27</sup> Surely, Bowker returned to Waley at the end of the month, it was not practical politics to tell the Turks just entering negotiations for a war alliance that Britain would do nothing for them financially or in the matter of material assistance. There would be no alliance, he echoed Halifax, unless Britain could provide loans, markets and supplies.<sup>28</sup>

Waley's reply was unequivocal. The Treasury, he wrote, would not consider an extension of credit, would not allow further diversion of the Industrial Credit for military purposes, and, moreover, would insist on the expenditure of that portion remaining, "for schemes likely to improve Turkey's foreign exchange position".<sup>29</sup> If economics and finance were Britain's best weapons, in Treasury hands, they were, at least in consideration of Turkey's case, a buckler of glass and a breastplate of peanut brittle.

The Treasury's attitude is difficult to understand in the face

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Ashton-Gwatkin Minute 19 May 1939.

<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 Bowker to Waley 30 May 1939.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3743/143/44 Waley to Nixon (Export Credits Department) to Baggallay 19 May 1939.

of assurances from the Services, based on direct contact in Ankara with the Turkish military, that "Turkey would be certain to place financial, economic and supply questions in the forefront of the Staff Conversations and would press on strongly for assistance in all the above directions".<sup>30</sup> While Britain would find it difficult to meet Turkey's needs, "This, however, did not avoid the view that under her present obligations Turkey would still be faced with the problem of planning for an early war on her existing resources".<sup>31</sup> Without some shift at a financial accommodation, there would be no alliance at all and the Joint Guarantee was apt to remain a dead letter.

But even so, the Services themselves were dismayed by the length of the Weygand list. The Turks too were dismayed. It had been six weeks since the Joint Guarantee, they complained to Knatchbull-Hugesson in June, and while Staff Conversations and material assistance were vital, there had been no sign of either. There was a "definite impression amounting to a grievance that delay is due to ourselves".<sup>32</sup> London was stung to reply that material could not be shipped until a priority list of requirements had been received. In that case, Ankara, answered warmly, it might have been a good idea for the British to request such a list.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 DCOS 87 DCOS 35th Mtg 19 May 1939.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 168 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 30 Jun 1939.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

### Orbay in London:

Earlier in the month, Britain had invited the Turks to send a representative to London to discuss what might be provided from the Weygand list. General Orbay, the Commander of the Turkish Third Army, left Turkey the same day the invitation arrived as the appointed representative of the Turkish General Staff. He was charged with negotiations aimed at obtaining as much of the Turkish material requirement as possible, and came carrying revised lists.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately for Orbay, the invitation had been premature, and he was left to cool his heels in London while the British and the French coordinated their response to the demands.<sup>35</sup>

From the beginning, it was obvious to London that it could only supply a fraction of the Turkish demands. An interdepartmental technical mission, sitting on 5 June, to determine what could be offered before Orbay arrived, quickly came to this conclusion.<sup>36</sup> The Turks, General Pownall, the DMI&O, reckoned, were likely to be disappointed with the scale of available aid.<sup>37</sup> The only real question remaining was who would give Orbay the bad news.

The technical mission, concerned more with the question of

<sup>34</sup> PRO CAB 54/9 DCOS 135th Mtg 22 Jul 1939.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4152/143/44 Technical Msn 1st Mtg 5 Jun; and, E4232/143/44 Note by Sect 8 Jun 1939.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Bond (edt), Chief of Staff. The Diaries of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall, (Leo Cooper: London) 1972. Vol I, entry for 5 Jun 1939.

supply than of finance, urged that the Turks obtain whatever they could from wherever they could with HMG, if necessary, assisting financially.<sup>38</sup> They also requested that the Turks be pressed to prioritize their list, asking only what was considered most important for the defence of Thrace and the Straits, and for possible operations against the Dodecanese.<sup>39</sup> General Orbay, now in London, was not inclined to prioritize anything, and continued to insist that all the material on the list was urgently needed.<sup>40</sup> The most that he could be brought to admit, was that the most critical shortfalls were modern aircraft, AA and AT weapons and local naval defences.<sup>41</sup>

It fell to the DCOS to determine what could be spared for the Turks from the British rearmament programs. But before they were willing to do this, they wished to know from the Turks what their war role would be. They would then make the amount of equipment supplied commensurate with the importance of Turkey's expected contribution to the common cause.<sup>42</sup> The Turks, on the other hand, were unwilling to discuss theoretical operations before they were certain of the level of support which they could expect. By July, Brigadier-General Lund, DDMI, was reporting from Ankara that news of Orbay's difficulties were hampering any progress in the on-going

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<sup>38</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 38th Mtg 7 June 1939.

<sup>39</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 39th Mtg 27 Jun 1939.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 38th Mtg 7 June 1939.



conversations in Ankara.<sup>43</sup> There was no way around it, wrote Lund. The Turks would not discuss strategy until they had received some weapons.<sup>44</sup> The DCOS finally agreed that discussion of assistance must come first. "Any further Staff Conversations", they concluded, "would be little use until the situation in regards to armaments is cleared up".<sup>45</sup>

Availability, however, was as much a function of what could be financed as what could be produced, and it was not until 28 June that the DCOS were able to plan on a probable British commitment of ten million Pounds in material assistance -- six million available immediately, the remainder after the signature of a political agreement.<sup>46</sup> The Allied Demands Sub-Committee, in possession of the Orbay lists and cognizant of Britain's own priorities, judged that of the six million available immediately, L 3,450,000 should be directed toward defensive naval weapons, L 800,000 toward the purchase of AA weapons,<sup>47</sup> and L 1,750,000 spent on aircraft.<sup>48</sup>

But whatever the inclinations of the Services, regardless as to the availability of weapons and the question of finance, the

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<sup>43</sup> PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 39th Mtg 27 June; and 40th Mtg 14 Jul 1939. See Chapter VII above.

<sup>44</sup> PRO CAB 54/9 DCOS 135 Orbay Conversations 22 Jul 1939.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> PRO AIR 8/259 Mtg of Ministers "Credits for Turkey and Poland" 28 Jun; CAB 54/2 DCOS 43rd Mtg 27 Jul; and, CAB 54/9 DCOS 135 op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> 20 X 3.7" guns.

<sup>48</sup> PRO CAB 54/9 DCOS 135 op. cit. Aircraft = 30 Battles and 14 Hurricanes; pilots to be trained in the UK.

Treasury decreed that nothing could be sent pending conclusion of political and financial agreements. Nor was this the only problem. The sheer scope of the Turkish demands caused something like panic in London. Hore-Belisha had already warned that any diversion of military supply to Turkey would only be at the expense of Britain's own programme.<sup>49</sup> Now, in July, with the presentation of the Orbay lists, it became clear that Turkey wanted much more help than any one had expected. The War Office judged that the total land equipment requested by the Orbay mission would cost 102 million pounds. The Admiralty judged that their portion would total a more moderate 8.5 million; and, the Air Office, nine million pounds.<sup>50</sup>

The General Staff frothed:

The demand for land armaments is believed to cover the complete requirement of more than the whole of the Turkish land forces, and bears no relation to any practical strategical conception of the employment of the Turkish forces in a war in the immediate future. Efforts by the war office to obtain a strategical order of priority for these armaments from the Turks have so far been unavailing.<sup>51</sup>

Turkey, Pownall confided to his diary, seemed "past praying for".<sup>52</sup>

The DCOS judged that the most that could be allowed without

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<sup>49</sup> PRO AIR 8/259 Mtg of Ministers "Credits for Turkey and Poland" 28 Jun 1939.

<sup>50</sup> PRO ADM 116/4196 DCOS 112 Containing AD 12 CID Allied Demands SubCommittee: Exports Credits for Turkey and Poland 28 Jul 1939.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Brian Bond (edt), Chief of Staff, op. cit., Vol I, p. 214, entry for 17 Jul 1939.

interference to Britain's own program would be eight million for naval armaments, L 4,150,000 for land weapons, and L 775,000 for aircraft.<sup>53</sup> The maximum total assistance Britain could provide would be L 12,925,000 "noninterference" armament, L 1,250,000 "interference armament",<sup>54</sup> and a four million Pound Industrial Credit, for a total of 18,175,000 pounds.<sup>55</sup> The priority for material assistance, they judged, should be Dardanelles and AA defence.<sup>56</sup> Ready for early departure, were: 500 mines, 200 21" torpedoes, 350 depth charges with 350 more to follow, twenty 3.7" guns, fifty Fairey Battles with fifty more to follow, fourteen Hurricanes, fifty Magisters, and thirty Blenheims to be dispatched later.<sup>57</sup>

The DCOS need not have been so surprised at the size of Orbay list as they were, indeed, it would have been better had they not expressed their shock so openly because their reaction has often been used as the basis for the charge that the Turks were setting their material requirement deliberately high in order to avoid participation in the war. In fact, the Orbay lists were little more than compendiums of the Turkish 1937 Air and Sea expansion programmes, the equipment requirement for the planned expansion of

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> 3.7" AA guns much desired by the Turks.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> PRO ADM 116/4196 Baggallay to Playfair Jul 1939.

the Turkish Army by ten Divisions,<sup>58</sup> the Weygand list, the Huntzinger offers, and orders placed with Axis nations and withheld. There was very little inexplicable, and nothing sinister about the lists; in fact, they represent the surest possible gauge that Turkey was seeking the means to play its part in the Tripartite Alliance.<sup>59</sup>

The Turks did not look to London for their entire requirement, but they do seem to have expected to receive certain parts of it entirely, or mainly, from the British. Aircraft, AA weapons, heavy Artillery and other material for Dardanelles defence, and naval material, it was generally agreed by Ankara and Paris, were primarily matters of British concern. Basic military equipment, on the other hand -- rifles, ammunition, artillery, AT guns -- could come from either Britain or France.

On the whole, in his conversations with Newall, the CAS, and Pound, the First Sea Lord, Orbay was able to obtain satisfaction. Most major Air types could be supplied, Orbay was promised, in the not too distant future in numbers near those requested by the Turks. Orbay's greatest disappointment at the hands of the RAF was the short-term requirement that the Turks make-do with Battles, Hurricanes and Moranes when the Turks had wanted Blenheims and Spitfires.<sup>60</sup> One of the reasons for the good results achieved in

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<sup>58</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>60</sup> PRO AIR 8/262 Actions Arising from Air Conference; AIR 8/259 Assistance to Turkey 1939 (Prewar); AIR 8/296 Assistance to Turkey; AIR 9/118 Supply of Arms to Foreign Powers 1939; and, the

the Air portion of the conversations, was that none of the Turkish demands were surprises. Elmhirst, in May, had obtained a list of planes required from Colonel Çakmak, the Turkish CAS.<sup>61</sup> On 12 August 1939, as he was preparing to leave London, General Orbay wrote to Newall:

I should like to say how happy I am that the Air Ministry, at so difficult a time, when the international situation is throwing such heavy demands upon your great country, has studied in detail and with just understanding, Turkey's requirements in the common interests, thus rendering valuable assistance.<sup>62</sup>

Annexed to this, was a restatement of Turkey's outstanding Air requirements: fifteen Hurricanes, thirty Spitfires, ten Blenheims, thirty Battles, thirty-five Magisters, fifty trucks, thirty tanker trucks and twelve mobile workshops.<sup>63</sup>

Agreement with the Admiralty was also reached relatively painlessly -- doubtless because much of the Turkish requirement had already been approved under the 1938 credit, also because much of what remained -- mines, depth charges etc. -- was on its way to Turkey soon after Orbay arrived in London on board the Clan Menzies and Lassell. The rapid shipment of much of the material was possible because Orbay had been preceded to London by Captain Enver

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Elmhirst Papers CC. Orbay meeting with Newall 31 Jul: AIR 8/259 Minutes of Meeting between CAS and General Orbay at the Air Ministry 31st July 1939. The Moranes, of course, were to come from the French.

<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 372/23289 E3460 AAA to FO 11 May 1939.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> PRO AIR 8/259 Assistance to Turkey 1939 Orbay to Newall 12 Aug 1939.

with a list of material required for coastal and Straits defence.<sup>64</sup>

One disappointment, however, was the difficulty in obtaining heavy guns for Dardanelles defence. Turkey had made the first approaches regarding the possibility of purchasing 15" guns in December 1937. There was no mystery about Turkish motives. The Italians had recently announced a naval building program in which 35,000 ton Battleships -- Roma and Imperia -- figured prominently.<sup>65</sup> In London, the Admiralty was torn between determination not to handicap its own building program and the desire to do anything it could to aid the Turks to achieve the ability to close the Straits. There were no 15" guns, they said -- advising Vickers not to accept the proffered contract<sup>66</sup> -- but ten 13.5" guns could be had immediately from the recently scrapped Chatham and Crombie.<sup>67</sup> Eventually it was decided that, in fact, two 15" guns could be spared.<sup>68</sup> With this apparently satisfactory solution, for the moment, the problem fell into abeyance pending delivery.

An enduring problem, however, was the distant delivery dates for most naval material. The Turks must be made to understand, the

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<sup>64</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3638/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 17 May 1939.

<sup>65</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E3436 Oliphant to Loraine 10 Jun 1938. Vittorio Veneta and Littoria, sister-ships of this class, had been layed down in 1933 and were scheduled for completion in 1940.

<sup>66</sup> FO 371/20865 E7124/528/44 Phillips to FO May 1938.

<sup>67</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44 G.M Note Dec 1937; and, ADM 116/4494 Adm to Capt Aydınalp 22 Aug 1938.

<sup>68</sup> PRO ADM 116/4494 Adm to Capt Aydınalp 26 Aug 1938.

Admiralty stressed, that Britain's naval armaments industry was already operating at maximum speed, and that their projects had been granted priority over those of the Dominions. More than this, it stressed, could not be done.<sup>69</sup> The Turks must appreciate, the Admiralty emphasized, that the materials they had ordered had to be made and would take time to complete.<sup>70</sup>

For the War Office was reserved most of the shock and surprise. It alone recieved no advanced notice. The Army alone was still virtually unarmed and, at the outbreak of war, possessed equipment sufficient to arm only five of its own Divisions.<sup>71</sup> It did not take long to determine that there was little probability that material assistance on anything like the scale desired could be provided in the foreseeable future.

British inability to provide Land armaments was particularly damaging when the French Army relapsed into angry unhelpfulness after the surrender of Hatay. France had the weapons to equip several Turkeys: the depositions received at the Riom trials demonstrate this beyond possible doubt.<sup>72</sup> In April, Paris had

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<sup>69</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3258/143/44 M.03820/39 Phillips to FO May 1939.

<sup>70</sup> For example: PRO FO 371/23297 E3639/272/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 17 May; and, E4848/272/44 M.016183 Adm to FO May 1939.

<sup>71</sup> Postan, M. British War Production, (HMSO: London) 1952. p. 108.

<sup>72</sup> Charles Serre (edt), Rapport Fait au Nom de la Commission Chargee d'Enqueter Sur Les Evenements Survenus en France de 1933 au 1945, (Assemble Nationale: Paris) 1947. Particularly, depositions of Daladier, and Intendent Bernard. At the Troyes Depot, according to Daladier, the Germans captured full equipment for 30-35

telegraphed Weygand that he could accede to all the Turkish requirements.<sup>73</sup> In August, with the Huntzinger offers fresh in mind, the Turks were contrasting the British attitude very unfavourably with that of France, but in the context of Fall 1939 - Spring 1940, the French were determined that the Turks would get as little as possible from France, and even that, strictly limited to the Huntzinger promises.<sup>74</sup> The French attitude to material assistance was contractual in the extreme. Those weapons they had already promised, they would deliver -- beyond this, they would not go. As Robert Young has observed, "French interest in a Balkan front was as evident as their unwillingness to pay for it": in Turkey's case, this stricture applied with double vigour because of bitterness arising from the Hatay dispute.<sup>75</sup>

Basic military equipment -- rifles, ammunition etc. -- the War Office simply could not supply. While Britain planned to raise fifty-five Divisions throughout the Empire, its war stores contained only 500,000 rifles, and its workshops were only able to produce, between the outbreak of war and the collapse of France,

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Divisions; at Gavranes, 15-20 tons of machine-guns; elsewhere: 1270 25mm ATGs in two depots alone etc.

<sup>73</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3098/143/44 Phipps (Paris) to FO 26 Apr 1939.

<sup>74</sup> The Turkish Military Attaché in Paris complained to General Lelong that "France has already dispatched a considerable amount of war material to Turkey, whereas, so far, we [the British] had done nothing except discuss methods of payment". PRO FO 371/23295 E5517/147/44 Pownall to Oliphant 19 Aug 1939.

<sup>75</sup> R. Young, In Command of France, (Harvard: Cambridge) 1978. p. 234.



56,600 more.<sup>76</sup> Provision of 100,000 for the Turks would have been impossible. Nor was Britain in a position to supply more complex Land weapons systems. One hundred Medium Tanks, for Britain in 1939, was five months production. Orbay's 500 was out of the question.<sup>77</sup> Trucks, Bren carriers, and all the other appurtenances of modern warfare, were simply impossible. The BEF itself had none of these things.<sup>78</sup> Ironside, the CIGS, considered Turkey's requirements to be second only to Britain's own. Turkey, the General Staff considered, "is clearly of the greatest importance".<sup>79</sup> The problem was not will to assist, but ability to assist, and with the best will in the world, the War Office judged that nothing could be done for Turkey much before July 1941.<sup>80</sup> "We are living from hand to mouth" the DCIGS complained, "splitting up the available stock and deliveries as they come forward among the many existing, recently expanded, and new commitments".<sup>81</sup>

By September, the CIGS was facing the annoying prospect that, except on a much reduced scale of equipment, Dominion Divisions

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<sup>76</sup> Postan, p. 109.

<sup>77</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939. The number of tanks required, in any case, was much reduced in subsequent short-lists.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> PRO WO 193/833 Military Missions No. 6 DCIGS to DCOS 11 Sep 1939.

<sup>80</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS(39)106 Bofors Guns for Turkey Ironside Memorandum 31 Oct 1939. See also, H.C. Hillman, "Comparative Strength's of the Great Powers", Survey of International Affairs, "The Eve of War", p. 366-488.

<sup>81</sup> PRO WO 193/811 op. cit., DCIGS to DCOS 11 Sep 1939.

could not be put into the line before the second year of war without reducing the number and equipment of British Divisions. In the Middle East, Imperial Forces were working on an entirely lower equipment scale than normally considered necessary.<sup>82</sup> How much lower? As late as December 1940 British forces in the Middle East had only 57% of the rifles, 47% of the 25 pound guns, 17% of the medium howitzers, and 35% of the AT guns required if they were to be fully operational.<sup>83</sup> Even the BEF, in March 1940, possessed only 38% of the AT guns, 40% of the ammunition, and 36% of the AA guns considered necessary for a European battlefield.<sup>84</sup> The air defence of Alexandria, Britain's most important Mediterranean harbour, was provided by thirty-eight old 3" guns, one four gun battery of 3.7" guns, and another of bofors guns; and of these guns, only the bofors, the 3.7" guns, and fourteen of the 3" guns were British. The others were owned and operated by the Egyptian Army.<sup>85</sup> The Air defences of Britain itself were also highly unsatisfactory. As late as May 1939, there were only 570 heavy AA guns in all of the United Kingdom and most of these were of

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<sup>82</sup> CC HOBE 5/63; and, Ironside Diaries, p. 114-115. Entry for 2 Oct 1939.

<sup>83</sup> PRO WO 193/556 War Material and Equipment State of Readiness of Force in Middle East A.CIGS to D.F(C) DMO&I 9 Dec 1940.

<sup>84</sup> PRO WO 193/147 Strategy #11, British Army Program Limiting Factors 26 Mar 1940.

<sup>85</sup> MGen I.S.O Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East, (HMSO: London) 1954. Vol I, p. 36. These few guns had arrived in Alexandria in early 1938, having been removed from the defences of Gibraltar and Malta. Playfair, p. 36.

obsolescent pattern. This was totally insufficient and represented about half of the number indicated as necessary in Dowding's "Ideal Scheme" of 1937. After Munich, with the acceptance of a large continental commitment, the pressure on AA resources became even more acute because the requirements of the BEF now had to be considered separately.<sup>86</sup> All of this being the case, there was considerable justice in the Army's complaint that it was hardly seemly for the Turks to abuse their British ally for its inability to provide AA and AT guns when it was uncertain that they did not have better Air defences than did the British.<sup>87</sup> Even in January 1941, General Marshal-Cornwall was able to reproach the Turks that it might be better if they were less censorious of the British failure to provide a greater level of AA assistance, having, as they did, better AA defences than possessed by HM forces in North Africa.<sup>88</sup>

To meet the urgent Turkish requirement for AT guns, Britain could do nothing beyond diverting its own share of French

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<sup>86</sup> Chilson, "Rearmament in Britain and France between the Munich Crisis and the Outbreak of War", Survey of International Affairs, "The Eve of War", p. 680-730.

<sup>87</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39) 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>88</sup> PRO ADM 1/11132 Ankara Staff Conference 1941 Minutes 20 Jan 1940. The AA defence of Egypt consisted of 38 X 3" guns; 4 X 3.7" guns; and 4 Bofors guns -- all but the 22 guns at Alexandria manned by Egyptians. Later, 4 X 3.7" guns were diverted from Gibraltar and 8 guns from Malta. Air defence for the Army in the Western Desert was provided by a single battery of 3.7" guns. I.S.O Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East (HMSO: London) 1954, Vol I, p. 36 and 42.

production of 25mm guns to Turkey.<sup>89</sup> AA guns, also, were a terrific problem, but as it seemed probable that the question of the operation of the alliance might hang on this issue, the General Staff considered it essential to do something for the Turks. With the declaration of war, a large number of Bofors guns were frozen, undeliverable, in Sweden by Swedish reluctance to compromise their neutrality. The idea developed that the Turks might be allowed to obtain these where HMG could not. The problem, as usual, was payment. The Swedes insisted on payment in free Sterling. The Turks refused to permit the diversion of money from the gold loan for this purpose. The Treasury refused to consider supplementary credit. In November, however, faced with War Office insistence, Simon gave way, with extreme bad grace, and twenty-four bofors were obtained for the Turks at a cost of 138,000 Pounds -- which Simon vowed, would be charged against the 1939 Credit.<sup>90</sup>

Twenty-four guns were hardly likely to satisfy the Turks. This being the case, the Services began to consider how some 3.7" guns might be made available. After batting the question around London, and finding no easy answer, it was decided that as Turkey was part of Wavell's (GOCME) bailiwick the problem and final decision were his. The General Staff helpfully considered that it might be possible to take some guns from the defences of Aden and Haifa. If Italy did not come in, these ports would not be necessary; if it

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<sup>89</sup> See Annex B below.

<sup>90</sup> PRO CAB 67/2 CP(G)(39)75 Bofors Guns 7 Nov; FO 371/23868 R9928/7378/44 2 Nov; and Letter Chamberlain to Orbay 8 Nov 1939.

did, they would be secondary.<sup>91</sup>

Admiralty reaction to this proposal, as might be expected, was less than promising. "Reduction in the present scale of AA defence", Admiralty House warned, "is at present most undesirable".<sup>92</sup> Even Italian neutrality was no guarantee that the Mediterranean ports would not come under attack. Malta, Haifa, and Alexandria, the Admiralty judged, were all within range of German and Russian aircraft operating from the Balkans.<sup>93</sup> Finally, in February 1940, the Naval Staff was driven to finger the ports to be reduced. Haifa, Godfrey, the DNI, minuted, was not important, and would "probably not be used as a naval base".<sup>94</sup> "Aden at least" judged the DD OPs could be skimmed".<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, there were only twelve guns at each of these ports, so provision of the twenty promised Orbay would not skim but drain their defences. Finally, twelve guns -- eight mobile, and four static -- were provided to Turkey in a general repropportionment of Mediterranean air defence forces. By 1941, it was hoped that the entire Turkish requirement would be met.

Long before this, however, it was obvious that only a small

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<sup>91</sup> PRO COS 81/1 COS Port Defence Subcommittee 3rd Mtg 16 Feb 1940.

<sup>92</sup> PRO ADM 116/4283 Assistance to Turkey in the Event of German and or Russian Aggression, Brief for Ports Defence Committee Meeting 16 Feb 1940.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> PRO ADM 116/4283 D plans note 12 Feb 1940.

<sup>95</sup> PRO ADM 116/4283 DD Ops Minute 14 Feb 1940.

portion of the Turkish requirement for weapons of all types could be met; and, faced with Treasury reluctance and War Office horror, Cabinet feeling was, understandably, at best lukewarm. On 29 June, Halifax told Dr. Aras that Britain would be able to provide another ten million credit for armaments, and that six million of this would be available immediately, and material purchased with it delivered, by the latest, in December 1940.<sup>96</sup> "I trust", he wrote Knatchbull-Hugesson, "that the Turkish Government would realise that it was not a question of what His Majesty's Government would wish to do but what they were able to do. Their [HMG's] problems were very grave, and they had gone as far as they could in the direction of satisfying the needs of the Turkish Government".<sup>97</sup>

Giving Halifax's message to the Turks was not a task that Knatchbull-Hugesson relished. "I am a good deal worried as to the Turkish reaction", he wrote on 1 July: "we say in so many words that with the best will in the world we do not see how we can help".<sup>98</sup> Later that day he saw Saraçoğlu and delivered Halifax's message. Saraçoğlu was obviously disappointed. He informed Knatchbull-Hugesson that before the invasion of Albania it had been his personal inclination to maintain strict neutrality. Now that no longer seemed possible. Orbay had gone to London, he said,

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<sup>96</sup> PRO FO 424/283 E4685/43/44 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 29 Jun; also, DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 169 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 29 Jun 1939.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> PRO CAB 24/288 CP 157(39) Financial and Economic Assistance to Turkey Halifax Jul 1939.

confident that there would be assistance from the West, but now, he chided, "the conversations . . . had dribbled away to nothingness".<sup>99</sup> Turkey would spend what it had on weapons, but that was not likely to be enough. After that, it would lay wide open to economic reprisal from Germany.<sup>100</sup>

Turkey's formal response was no better. Before the Turks would sign a political agreement, Knatchbull-Hugesson informed London, they wanted a thirty-five million Pound armament and industrial credit, some of which would have to be available for purchases in the United States, Belgium and Sweden.<sup>101</sup> They also desired a fifteen million Pound bullion loan to back the Lira, and ten million Pounds to unblock the Clearing and to ensure early delivery of weapons ordered. These loans were to be long-term and low interest. The bullion loan, moreover, was to be serviced with tobacco. Ankara hoped, wrote Knatchbull-Hugesson, that loan service in commodities would assist in the long-term diversion of Turkish trade towards the West.<sup>102</sup>

A worried Halifax informed the Cabinet that "it appears that the Turkish Government were asking for financial assistance on a larger scale than we had contemplated", and even worse, that "the tone of the Turkish demands was somewhat disconcerting, although he

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> US: 15" guns; Belgium: 13" guns; Sweden: Bofors guns.

<sup>102</sup> PRO FO 424/283 E5056/43/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 14 Jul 1939.

doubted if it went so far as to make the conclusion of a political agreement dependent on our conceding their money demands".<sup>103</sup> In fact, as war came nearer, and as it began to look as if it might encompass Turkey, this was exactly what Ankara was doing -- insisting that provision of money and material must precede a political agreement. Halifax, however, mindful that Turkey was a "'key' power" in all Allied war plans, hoped that some shift might be made to meet its demands.<sup>104</sup>

In August, Halifax responded to the Turkish proposal with something less than enthusiasm. The Treasury, he said, had likened Turkish demands to German and Italian blackmail, and while the Turkish demands were still being considered, it was certain at least that the bullion for tobacco deal would not be possible.<sup>105</sup> In France, the reaction was not even so positive. M. Rueff, the Minister of Finance in the Daladier Government, wrote stiffly to Sir. F. Leith-Ross at the Treasury, that in view of the recent cessation of Hatay, it was not for the Turks to ask for additional French support.<sup>106</sup>

#### **The Possibility of Foreign Purchases:**

One possible solution London considered only with extreme

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<sup>103</sup> PRO CAB 23/100 Cab 38(39) 19 Jul 1939.

<sup>104</sup> PRO CAB 23/100 Cab 39(39) 26 Jul 1939.

<sup>105</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R6797/661/67 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 28 Aug 1939.

<sup>106</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 555 Halifax to Campbell (Paris) 4 Aug 1939. This was of a piece with France's continued reluctance to engage in economic diplomacy. See, P. Wandycz, The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances 1926-1936, (Princeton: Princeton), 1988.



reluctance was the conversion of part of either credit for the purchase of weapons outside the United Kingdom. Britain's aversion to this option was strange considering British insistence that the Turks look to every possible source of supply, and even more curious given Halifax's promise in July that the first six million of the 1939 credit would be freely convertible. The question first arose in the matter of the heavy guns for Dardanelles defence. The Turks sought these in Holland, Belgium and the United States and were either unlucky or were defeated by Treasury reluctance to finance the purchase.<sup>107</sup>

In July, the Belgian Chargé in Ankara, offered to see what parts of the Turkish requirement could be obtained from *Fabrique Nationale*. He considered it possible that some land ordinance might be available from this source. Knatchbull-Hugesson passed the suggestion to the FO, but cautioned the Belgian that such a course would not be in accordance with Treasury policy.<sup>108</sup> Colville in London, noted on 27 July, that the Turks, having been acquainted with this proposal, were sounding London on the possibility themselves. "[I] very much doubt" Colville minuted, "whether the answer will be favourable".<sup>109</sup> It was not.

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<sup>107</sup> PRO ADM 116/4394 Fethi Okyar to FO 13 May; FO to Adm 28 May; Phillips to FO 8 June 1939. 15" Krupp guns were available from Holland. FO 371/20865 E449/528/44 M.04079/37 Adm to FO 30 Jul 1937. 11" Krupp 1913 guns were available from Belgium. WO 106/5743 Allied Military Committee 25th Mtg 23 Jan 1940.

<sup>108</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E5310/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 26 Jul 1939.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Colville Minute 27 Jul 1939.

Only after the failure of the Orbay mission, and the outbreak of war, did Treasury reluctance begin to give way before the conviction of the Services and FO that something must be done for the Turks. In October, it seemed possible that some material might be purchased in Spain. The DNI, Rear-Admiral Godfrey, had talked to the Spanish Minister of Marine, Senior Juan March, who had mentioned the possibility. Godfrey instructed the Naval Attaché in Madrid to make informal approaches to ascertain the availability of AT and AA weapons, Artillery, Armour and trucks.<sup>110</sup>

The Naval Attaché replied on 16 October, that the Spaniards did indeed have AA guns, trucks, lots of Artillery, and old AT guns available for sale.<sup>111</sup> The Ambassador in Madrid wrote the next day that more formal advances had met with the answer that the Spanish did not really know as yet what would be for sale as they were only then in the process of sorting and cataloguing the flotsam left by the civil war.<sup>112</sup> On 18 October, the next day, the Naval Attaché talked to the Spanish Minister of War who agreed in principle to a sale, pending Franco's approval. The delay in answering, the Attaché judged, was due not to reluctance, or to anything more politically dangerous than Spanish indolence.<sup>113</sup> On 20 October, London gave Peterson permission to open official

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<sup>110</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 R8827/7378/44 Godfrey to Nichols 13 Oct 1939.

<sup>111</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 Despatch 2021/15 NAM to DNI 16 Oct 1939.

<sup>112</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 R8968/7378 Peterson to FO 17 Oct 1939.

<sup>113</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 Despatch 1218/18 NAM to DNI 18 Oct 1939.

negotiations with Madrid.<sup>114</sup> A week later, however, the Spaniards pulled out. Spain, it was claimed, had "insufficient for its own needs of nearly every type of modern, serviceable equipment".<sup>115</sup> This was only a pretence. On 1 November, Naval Intelligence intercepted a cypher communication between Madrid and Ankara containing an offer to sell the Turks 40mm AA guns, and 75mm, 105mm and 155mm field guns.<sup>116</sup> It may be that there was more reason for the continued pressure from Ankara for a gold loan than stabilization of the Lira. By 7 November, Madrid was notifying London that a representative of the Turkish Government was in Spain attempting to buy military equipment.<sup>117</sup>

By November, approaches were also being made to Italy to purchase AT guns.<sup>118</sup> Feelers were put out in Rome to determine if it would be possible to purchase 800 guns for Turkey.<sup>119</sup> All advances to Italy, however, foundered on Italian reluctance to anger its German ally and suspicions that Turkey was not seeking these weapons for itself, but for its Balkan allies -- in particular for Greece.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 R8968/7378/44 FO to Peterson 20 Oct 1939.

<sup>115</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 R9498/7378/44 Peterson to FO 27 Oct 1939.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., Bowker Minute 1 Nov 1939.

<sup>117</sup> PRO ADM 116/4198 NAM to DNS 7 Nov 1939.

<sup>118</sup> PRO WO 106/7743 Whitby Minute 11 Nov 1939.

<sup>119</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 DMO&P to Whitby 15 Dec 1939.

<sup>120</sup> PRO ADM 1/11132 Ankara Staff Conference Minutes 20 Jan 1941 Statement of General Gündüz, p. 114.

By January 1940, as mobilization gathered speed, Turkish pressure for rifles was becoming acute.<sup>121</sup> Meanwhile, Britain had not enough rifles to arm its own soldiers. In January, 75,000 rifles were purchased for the Turks in Holland. This deal, however, proved abortive due to Treasury opposition. The rifles in question, were of German origin and were new; moreover, they were to be bought in a foreign country with a difficult currency. Quite apart from the cost, the Treasury judged that such a concession "would have repercussions which might be even more serious".<sup>122</sup>

At about the same time, the Turks themselves, located a cache of 150,000 Mausers lying in an Antwerp warehouse. They had been manufactured for Franco, rendered surplus by the end of the civil war before they could be shipped, and had been bought by a Dutch bank.<sup>123</sup> "I need not stress", wrote Stanley, the new War Minister, "the importance that we attach to providing Turkey with equipment so that she shall be in a position to defend herself -- and so our interests in the Middle East . . . The fact that we have been unable to meet a large number of Turkish requests for equipment have already had an adverse psychological effect and refusal to allow this transaction is likely to add to our deflation

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<sup>121</sup> Within the year, Turkey would have 42 Divisions under arms -- 1.5 million men -- and a militia of 2.4 million training in the villages. Meanwhile, only 25,000 of the promised 100,000 rifles had arrived from France. Turkey's appetite for small arms of every description was becoming insatiable. PRO ADM 1/11132 op. cit., Minutes for 20 Jan 1941 statement of General Gündüz, p. 114.

<sup>122</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 Playfair to Marshal-Cornwall 15 Jan 1940.

<sup>123</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 Armament Supplies for Turkey Stanley Memorandum Jan 1940.

in this respect".<sup>124</sup> War Office wishes that these be bought for the Turks foundered again on the rock of Treasury reluctance to part with the necessary free Sterling.<sup>125</sup>

**The Turkish Response:**

Faced with Allied equivocation, the attitude of the Turks began to harden. On 22 July, Huntzinger, then in Ankara to negotiate the military convention, interviewed President İnönü in the company of Massigli and Knatchbull-Hugesson. "İsmet's tone about negotiations with France and ourselves", Knatchbull-Hugesson informed London, "was hard and bitter". "Turkey", said İnönü, was "weaker now than two months ago". They had previously been able to trade produce for arms: now there was neither trade nor arms and all too much produce spoiling in the sun.<sup>126</sup>

Even Dr. Aras was less friendly than he had been. Hitherto he had been the greatest partisan of a Western alignment. By the Spring he was advocating a Balkan neutral bloc. Whatever happened, he told Knatchbull-Hugesson, Turkey would have to harmonize its economic and foreign policies. If Turkey was to be an active ally, then it would have to eliminate German import dependency. If it

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 Military Coordination Committee 8 Feb 1940. Simon judged that 2 million pounds was too much money. The most he would concede was that, if they wished, the Turks could use a portion of their gold to make the purchase.

<sup>126</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VI no. 388 Knatchbull-Hugesson to 22 Jul 1939.

could not do this then it could not be an active ally.<sup>127</sup>

The Turks, however, refused to disclose publicly that the failure to provide adequate assistance was driving a wedge in the Alliance. "Talks with the British and French Governments", the official story went, "ended in a complete understanding, satisfying all the parties concerned".<sup>128</sup> But privately the Turks were enraged by the dismal outcome of the Orbay mission. Soon, fear was added to anger as the course of the German invasion of Poland illustrated beyond question the importance of precisely those weapons which the Turks had most hoped to obtain -- AA and AT guns -- and, moreover, had been least successful in securing. Things might have gone hard with Orbay had he not take the precaution of obtaining promissory notes from each of the British Service Heads to the effect that when the armaments situation improved, Turkey would get more assistance.<sup>129</sup>

On 1 September, as the German onslaught on the unprepared Poles began, Colonel Arnold, MAA, passed an extremely unpleasant hour with General Gündüz. In fairness, it appears that Gündüz was only passing on what had already descended upon him from the Council of State through the Marshal. The General started by expressing his happiness that some supplies had begun to arrive. He feared, however, that the Italians would enter the war and

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<sup>127</sup> DBFP Series 100 Vol VI no. 522 Halifax with Knatchbull-Hugesson 2 Aug 1939.

<sup>128</sup> BIA, Vol XVI, No. 18 (19 Sep 1939), p. 72.

<sup>129</sup> PRO AIR 8/259 Newall to Orbay 9 Aug; and, AAA to Elmhirst 8 Aug 1939.

interrupt passage of those still at sea.

The General then gave us a long, bitter and at times puerile tirade on the subject of Turkey's lack of war material. The Turkish Army, he said, had the finest military spirit in the world. It was well known that one Turkish Division was the equal of two of any other army. But what could supermen do without material.<sup>130</sup>

Germany had stopped deliveries with only 20% of material ordered having arrived. Some German materials, in shipment, had been impounded by the Italians off Sicily.<sup>131</sup> "Business with Germany", Gündüz complained, "had been easy as the Germans took Turkish produce as payment for war material. The British on the other hand were difficult to deal with and stood out for cash, and where could a country like Turkey be expected to find cash".<sup>132</sup> Turkey had forty Divisions of trained men, he said, but weapons enough for only thirty. With Russia now unreliable, he continued, even this source of supply had been cut-off. "I had a strong feeling" wrote Colonel Arnold, "that the question of provision of war materials is acute with the Turkish General Staff, and since they have great influence with the Government it is on this question that the future of the Anglo-Turkish relations must largely depend".<sup>133</sup>

#### **The Treasury:**

Financing of credit remained the chief stumbling-block. On 4

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<sup>130</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 R7379/7378/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Sep 1939.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. Significantly, this interview took place just after Gündüz had debriefed Orbay in regards to his mission to London.

September, M. Kadri Rizan, the Turkish Chargé, forwarded a proposal to the Board of Trade that service of all loans and credits be executed through the Clearing.<sup>134</sup> London refused to consider this suggestion. The Turks, as was usual by this time, warned that there could be no political agreement until their economic and financial concerns were addressed.<sup>135</sup>

Rizan should have known better than to suggest such a thing. On 11 August, Playfair from the Treasury and Baggallay from the FO had paid him a visit. The delivery of war material, and continued financial assistance, they told him, were dependent upon the signature of a political agreement, and even then, they said, material would only be sent if it could be paid for. Moreover, this stricture regarding the delivery of material applied even to equipment already financed under the 1938 Credit.<sup>136</sup> The ten million pound credit agreed with Knatchbull-Hugesson in July, they warned, contrary to the promise, would not be available until a Treaty had been signed.

This arm-twisting came at a time when Knatchbull-Hugesson was warning from Ankara that the materials ordered by the Turks were

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<sup>134</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E6260 4 Sep 1939.

<sup>135</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 No. 393 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 5 Sep 1939.

<sup>136</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5668/143/44 Baggallay Minute 11 Aug 1939. They told Rizan that there was, ready to leave immediately 500 mines, 50 torpedoes, 350 depth charges, 4 X 3.7" guns, search lights, 15 Hurricanes, 10 Blenheims, and 25 Avro Ansons. The cost for all of this was L 950,000. There was L 867,000 remaining in the 1938 credit. The material could be sent only if political agreement were reached.



most urgently required, and if not sent quickly, was best not sent at all -- any possible alliance having been gutted at its inception by Turkish fear and suspicion.<sup>137</sup> In London, Dr. Aras warned Halifax that "at any moment some untoward event might happen in Europe and it was absolutely vital for Turkey that the supplies which she had obtaining in this country be shipped before, rather than after, such a happening".<sup>138</sup> Bowker noted:

there is no doubt that to hold it [arms shipments] up will cause serious exasperation to the Turks. We have had recently various indications of their growing impatience with the delay in the delivery of armaments.<sup>139</sup>

On 15 August, the Army Council reached agreement, on the basis of the Orbay conversations in July,<sup>140</sup> as to what could be spared from British Military requirements. At the Foreign Office, Colville noted: "Everything now depends on whether suitable financial arrangements can be made or alternatively dispensed with".<sup>141</sup> The RAF likewise had determined what was available -- fifteen Hurricanes, and ten Blenheims -- but were prevented by the Treasury from sending them until there was "some form of treaty".<sup>142</sup> Up to this point, Penden's argument -- that the prewar Treasury, when

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<sup>137</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5606/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugenson to FO 7 Aug 1939.

<sup>138</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5602/143/44 Halifax Minute 2 Aug 1939.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Bowker Minute 3 Aug 1939.

<sup>140</sup> See above.

<sup>141</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5706/143/44 MI.1 0152/6910 14 Aug. Colville Minute 15 Aug 1939.

<sup>142</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5557/143/44 Boyle to Baggallay 3 Aug 1939.

most damned, was most often performing the unpopular function of assigning defence priorities in the absence of any other agency to do so -- is a good one and must be taken to cover the Turkish negotiations as well.<sup>143</sup> But after this point, when the Services had determined what could be spared from their own programs for the Turks, Treasury stonewalling quickly becomes inexplicable. It was no longer assigning priorities. The priority had been assigned by those agencies best qualified to do so. The Treasury's rear-guard action was at best puzzling: at worst, the erection of book-keeping into a strategic principle.

The Admiralty went furthest of all the Service Ministries in its attempts to meet the Turkish demands and in its opposition to Treasury tactics. Captain Phillips, the Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), pleaded with Baggallay that some shipment be made. Something more than discussion, and something soon, he judged, was required if there was to be an alliance in more than name.<sup>144</sup> Chatfield wrote to Halifax on behalf of his old Service and the DCOS on 15 August.<sup>145</sup> It was essential, he wrote, that the material promised Orbay be sent, whatever the financial arrangement, before the declaration of war endangered the Mediterranean route. Further, he complained:

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<sup>143</sup> See, G.C. Penden, British Rearmament and the Treasury. 1932-1939. (Scottish Academic Press: Edinburgh) 1979.

<sup>144</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5752/143/44 Phillips to Baggallay 14 Aug 1939.

<sup>145</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5774/143/44 Chatfield to Halifax 15 Aug 1939.

the situation is developing in which none of the deliveries can be made which have been agreed upon and which General Orbay has left this country believing will begin forthwith. The result may be a complete impasse in which the Turks decline to sign the guarantee agreement until the deliveries have begun, while we refuse to begin deliveries until the guarantee agreement is signed.//We find it difficult to exaggerate the serious nature of the strategic possibilities inherent in this situation . . . //[[it is] not impossible that the result may even be to throw them into the arms of Germany, with results upon the whole stature of our nonaggression front which it would be redundant to elaborate.<sup>146</sup>

Finally, he concluded, Turkey was an ally regardless to the state of formal negotiations, and did need the things Orbay had ordered.<sup>147</sup>

On 9 August, Halifax wrote to Simon asking that Treasury permission be given to send the material agreed upon with Orbay. The Turks were in desperate need of it. The British could spare it. It was pointless to run the risks Britain was running by delaying dispatch just to speed the "mechanical process of getting the agreement put into its final stage and signed".<sup>148</sup> Having received no reply, Halifax wrote again in the same vein on 18 August.<sup>149</sup> Simon's reply, when it came on 23 August, was not conciliatory. The details, he wrote, could not wait. The equipment would not be released by the Treasury until the Treaty was signed.<sup>150</sup> Baggallay converted by the pressure of events from his

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 Halifax to Simon 9 Aug 1939.

<sup>149</sup> PRO T 160/972 F16014/3 Halifax to Simon 18 Aug 1939.

<sup>150</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5933/143/44 Simon to Halifax 23 Aug 1939.

previous position, minuted his most emphatic disagreement with the Treasury position.<sup>151</sup> Halifax took up the argument again in the Cabinet on 22 August. The situation was grave, he told the Government. The Tripartite Treaty was ready for signature, but there would be none unless the Turks received some gage of future assistance. "He thought that it was of the utmost importance that we should despatch to Turkey forthwith whatever war material was available, even if the proper procedure had not been complied with".<sup>152</sup>

On 25 August 1939, the Treasury appeared to give in. Playfair telephoned Baggallay that "the situation had deteriorated so much that his previous decision could not be maintained". "The situation is clear now", wrote Baggallay, "and the service departments have a clear run".<sup>153</sup> So he thought. The following day, Playfair called again to retract his permission. It appeared, he said, that the material was not Government property, and therefore, could not be shipped until paid for even though "no actual payments of public money would be required".<sup>154</sup> Simon told the Cabinet, that while "he was anxious to cut out red tape, he thought it was essential to make some arrangement for payment before the goods were dispatched".<sup>155</sup> It was not until the end of the month that

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., Baggallay Minute 23 Aug 1939.

<sup>152</sup> PRO CAB 23/100 Cab 41(39) 22 Aug 1939.

<sup>153</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 Baggallay Minute 25 Aug 1939.

<sup>154</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E6129 Baggallay Minute 30 Aug 1939.

<sup>155</sup> PRO CAB 23/100 Cab 42(39) 24 Aug 1939.

permission was finally given to S.S. Clan Menzies, and Lassell to take on the arms promised to Orbay and sail.<sup>156</sup>

**The 1939 Credit:**

In September, with war no longer threatening but manifest, and with Saraçoğlu preparing for a journey to Moscow, London's reluctance began to evaporate. On 1 September, Halifax authorized Knatchbull-Hugesson to offer to the Turks a ten million Pound credit for armaments with an additional 465 million Franc credit -- five million Pounds Sterling -- from France, with the possibility of a further 100 million Francs in the future. This fifteen million Pounds, with a ten million bullion loan, and two million to unblock the Clearing, was all that was available in the near future. The loan would not be convertible into other currencies. The bullion loan could be paid with tobacco, and the others serviced on the same terms as British Government loans.<sup>157</sup> Halifax, at this point, was moving in considerable advance of the Cabinet. The bullion loan, for instance, was not authorized by the Cabinet until 7 September.<sup>158</sup> Presented with these terms, on 3 September, Menemencioğlu told Knatchbull-Hugesson that these arrangements would not be satisfactory. The Turks wanted the fifteen million in gold for they had requested earlier, and a larger credit for war

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<sup>156</sup> PRO CAB 23/100 Cab 46(39) 30 Aug 1939.

<sup>157</sup> DBFP Series III, Vol VII no. 635 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 1 Sep; no. 661 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 1 Sep 1939. The French portion of the loan would not be a loan per se, because the French would not associate themselves in joint loans, but a bilateral Franco-Turkish arms credit.

<sup>158</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 2(39 4 Sep; 6(39) 6 Sep; and 7(39) 7 Sep 1939.

materials.<sup>159</sup>

Writing six hours after the expiration of the ultimatum to Germany, Captain Godfrey, DNI, unburdened himself to the First Sea Lord. He confessed to having "strong doubt as to whether they [the Turks] will sign this treaty until they have at least obtained more than we have so far offered".<sup>160</sup>

This attitude on the part of a virtual ally on the very day when we had declared war on Germany reflects gravely on either the good faith of the Turkish Government or the skill of our economic diplomacy. Although the former cannot be left entirely out of account, it is upon the latter than the heaviest responsibility appears to rest . . . references to Foreign Office telegrams for May and June and to minutes of the Allied Demands Sub-Committee of the CID for the same period, show that it was established immediately after the conclusion of the Anglo-Turkish and Franco-Turkish pacts that a powerful process of blackmail was going to be indulged in by both British and French authorities.<sup>161</sup>

"Ultimate success" he judged,

in the employment of these tactics had to rest with Turkey. On no occasion does it appear to have been realized that we needed the Turks more than they required us.<sup>162</sup>

Treasury policy, he judged to be short-sighted to the point of blindness. Godfrey concluded: "a policy towards Turkey which continues to be based in the smallest degree on such an attitude of bureaucratic parsimony can be a source of the greatest danger to

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<sup>159</sup> DBFP Series III, no. 661 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 1 Sep 1939.

<sup>160</sup> PRO ADM 1/10211 Anglo-Turkish Relations DNI to 1st Sea Lord 5 Sep 1939.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

the allied cause".<sup>163</sup>

On 5 September, having given the matter further consideration, Godfrey wrote again to Pound. "Briefly" he wrote, the position is that, in the political and economic bargaining which has been going on between the two Governments, the Turkish authorities appear to have acted more generously and with better faith than the British. It would appear essential that the balance be rectified without delay.<sup>164</sup>

The joint guarantees, Godfrey wrote, were the "greatest allied diplomatic success since 1918, and the first signal rebuff to Germany since Herr Hitler came to power".<sup>165</sup> In Godfrey's view, they were rapidly become worthless due to British reluctance to make any shift at effective financial assistance.

The Treasury's recent insistence, that Turkey use up all of the 1938 credit before there could be further financial negotiations could begin, was an extreme example of what Godfrey termed "bureaucratic parsimony". This was even more the case, because the offer of ten million Pounds in July, had been "niggardly", looked more so beside extravagant Turkish expectations, and even this would be reneged upon if the Treasury's stricture was allowed to stand. What was the end of Treasury policy? The ten million Pound credit remained in abeyance, and Britain continued to sink in Turkish estimation. The Turks, Godfrey judged, were being blackmailed and knew it. "Hitherto they do not

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> PRO ADM 1/10211 op. cit., Anglo-Turkish Relations, Views Regarding the Credit Agreement DNI to 1st Sea Lord 5 Sep 1939.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

appear to have made any attempt to blackmail us" he objected, and warned, "which would have been, perhaps, not a very difficult process and one to which they may yet turn".<sup>166</sup>

It was not just that the Turks needed weapons, he argued, that Britain could supply a portion of their requirement, or even that some were packed and waiting for Treasury approval to go. It was that Britain's "moral obligations to Turkey have been strengthened by the continued firmness of the alliance in the face of the Russo-German Pact".<sup>167</sup> Pound agreed to raise the matter with Simon after the next Cabinet.<sup>168</sup>

That same day, 5 September, Halifax instructed Knatchbull-Hugesson to offer the Turks immediately six million Pounds from the ten million credit agreed in July. This money was to be completely convertible. If the Turks proved obdurate, he said, then Knatchbull-Hugesson was authorized to go to ten, or even fifteen million if necessary. The Turks, of course, would be required to sign the Tripartite Treaty forthwith.<sup>169</sup> As directed, Knatchbull-Hugesson made this offer to Saraçoğlu. It was necessary in negotiation, he informed London, that the proposed credit be raised

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> PRO ADM 1/10211 op. cit., Minute DNI to 1st Sea Lord. Pound minute 5 Sep 1939.

<sup>169</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 No. 321 (by Phone) Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 5 Sep 1939.



to ten million pounds -- and even that was only a start.<sup>170</sup>

Even the proposal to service certain of the loans with produce, following the outbreak of war in September, was no longer so obnoxious to London. HMG was ready to consider, the FO informed Knatchbull-Hugesson, the bullion for tobacco proposal.<sup>171</sup> They would even accept, the Treasury said, that the Clearing loan be serviced in Lira.<sup>172</sup> Turkey continued to refuse to budge far from their original demands. The least they would accept would be a twenty-five million credit, freely convertible, an eight million loan to unlock frozen accounts, and fifteen million in bullion.<sup>173</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson reported from Ankara "extreme dissatisfaction" with Britain's insufficient response to the unpromising Turkish economic situation.<sup>174</sup> He also reiterated to Halifax that Turkey's demands for economic, material and technical assistance were justified and if not given due consideration would rebound to wreck the alliance. "The Turk" he wrote, "can be a very good ally: he is never likely to be a good catspaw . . . If he feels that his own ideas are receiving proper consideration in our councils, he will be receptive to our ideas. He much dislikes being

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<sup>170</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E6355/43/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 8 Sep; also, FO 837/1001 Turkey. Economic Relations Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 7 Sep 1939.

<sup>171</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 No. 324 (by phone) FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 6 Sep 1939.

<sup>172</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E6338 Playfair to Cox 5 Sep 1939.

<sup>173</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 16(39) 15 Sep 1939.

<sup>174</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 15(39) 15 Sep 1939.

overridden".<sup>175</sup>

On 17 September, Halifax informed Knatchbull-Hugesson that if Turkey would sign a political agreement immediately, London was prepared to offer it a twenty-five million pound credit for war materials, fifteen million bullion loan, and two million to deblock the clearing with a suspensive clause to be attached to the proposed Tripartite Treaty.<sup>176</sup> HMG could go this high because French purse strings had loosened since the beginning of the month -- perhaps occasioned by the disappearance of an Eastern Front following the collapse of Poland. The French, by 15 September, were signalling their agreement with the British line, and their willingness to participate in joint credits.<sup>177</sup> HMG, for its part, was willing to go this high, Knatchbull-Hugesson considered, because of its tardy realization that a Britain at war, was not a Britain free to haggle with the supplier of any commodity. There would be no problem with the Turks now, he thought. Britain would be willing to consume anything they had to sell.<sup>178</sup>

Knatchbull-Hugesson was wrong on two counts. Britain remained

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<sup>175</sup> PRO CAB 51/11 ME(O)273 Turkey (Mediterranean, Mid East and Near East Measures to Influence Minor Power and Arab States 15 Sep 1939.

<sup>176</sup> PRO FO 424/283 R8281/7278/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 30 Sep; CAB 65/1 WC 19(39) 18 Sep 1939. The 25 million was to come 21 million from the UK and 4 million from France. Britain had increased its share of the allotment by allowing a larger credit for raw materials.

<sup>177</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 16939) 15 Sep 1939.

<sup>178</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 No. 393 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 5 Sep 1939.

reluctant to buy from the Turks, and the Turks, particularly Numan Menemencioğlu, were horrified, worried, and in no mood for compromise. They considered HMG's attitude to assistance either as betrayal or manifestation of weakness. It had always been understood in London, railed the Secretary-General, that alliance equalled risk of war which necessitated military assistance. But apparently, London had forgotten this basic reality:

In particular His Majesty's Government had insisted on previous settlement of financial terms for purchase as if this was more important than possession of Turkey of the material necessary to defend herself and carry out her obligations.<sup>179</sup>

Turkey had been treated, he said "not as any ally but as a customer".<sup>180</sup>

He himself had been left to conclude that either we could not or that we would not supply necessary material; or that we did not consider the South-Eastern front of major importance, although it was the only one where mobile warfare was possible.<sup>181</sup>

"There is much in the Secretary-General's arguments which my French colleague and I find it difficult to rebut although we employ every argument available", Knatchbull-Hugesson informed London. Rebuttal

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<sup>179</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 R7386/7378 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 10 Sep 1939. Menemencioğlu had sympathizers in the Service Ministries. On 25 August, with Europe on the brink of war, the DCOS discovered that negotiations were now hanging mainly on Treasury insistence that the Turkish credit be serviced at 5% for 20 years -- in effect, that it be a commercial rather than Government transaction. In the words of Baggallay, they "blew up, and sent in a report to Lord Chatfield which the latter said he could not put forward as it expressed itself so strongly as to be practically an attack upon the Chancellor". FO 371/23295 Baggallay Minute 25 Aug 1939.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

was particularly difficult as no armaments whatsoever had arrived since the 12 May guarantee. In Ankara, wrote Knatchbull-Hugesson with broad understatement, this had created "a very bad impression".<sup>182</sup>

The Military Attaché was similarly criticized by the Turkish General Staff. The British, they told him, were not acting like statesmen, but like small businessmen. They were not making plans with Turkey for common action, but haggling over the price of Turkey's hire; not possessed of sound judgement but by *pazarlik* -- the morality of the bazaar.<sup>183</sup>

While we cannot discount Turkish shock at the low priority they were assigned by the Anglo-French economic establishment, we should not forget that the Turks had excellent reasons of their own to delay negotiations towards an alliance. It is probable that in September, the Turks wanted time -- time to think, to ascertain German intentions, and to sound the Russians. The financial impasse, while an absolute constraint, was on another level, an excellent excuse to delay political and military negotiations. Neither Turkey's need, nor Turkish anger were shammed; but it is likely that had the financial embroglio not provided a convenient excuse to delay negotiations that another would have been found. In any case, only on 30 September did the S.S. Clan Menzies put into Istanbul, followed shortly thereafter by S.S. Lassell. These ships carried the first consignment of the material ordered from the 1938

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> PRO AIR 8/296 MAA to Van Cutsen 29 Sep 1939.

credit and some material which was to have gone to Poland, later diverted to Turkey. Six months after the joint guarantee, and a month after the declaration of war, the Turks received their first material assistance from Britain.<sup>184</sup>

#### Halifax, Turkey and the Economic War:

Meanwhile, by September, Halifax had moved into a position even further in advance of the Cabinet consensus. If the Alliance were to work, he had come to believe, German economic dominance must be broken. A Turkey dependent upon Germany, was hardly likely to be a Turkey first in the ranks of Germany's enemies, and therefore, he proposed that Britain consider how it might help free Turkey from its economic shackles. The simplest way to do so, he judged, was by buying Turkish produce to the value of the lost German markets. The cost to Britain would be small -- about eight million Pounds -- and the political results might be far reaching. The scheme was received without any enthusiasm by the Cabinet.<sup>185</sup>

Halifax's desire to do something for the Turks was partly motivated by the knowledge of the desperate economic situation faced by Ankara in September 1939. Anticipating conclusion of an alliance, the Turks had taken steps toward trade embargo with Axis nations. By 8 September, all trade with external buyers was

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<sup>184</sup> It was not until 26 September, with the vessels four days out from Istanbul, that they were authorized to proceed to Turkey. Lassell arrived on 30 September. PRO CAB 65/1 WC 28(39) 26 Sep; and, FO 424/283 R8281/7378/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>185</sup> PRO CAB 24/288 CP 157(39) Financial and Economic Assistance to Turkey Jul 1939.

subjected by Ankara to a Government licensing and quota system. In this way, it was hoped, leakages to potential enemies might be halted, particularly through Italy to Germany.<sup>186</sup> When Germany began to withhold crucial requirements and materials deliverable in retaliation, the Turks responded with full embargo of certain vital exports to Germany, most importantly, of chrome.<sup>187</sup> As might have been expected both parties were damaged by this exchange of fire. By January 1940, the Germans were offering to buy chrome at 100% above the inflated British price.<sup>188</sup> Unfortunately for the Turks, being more vulnerable, their situation quickly became more desperate.

By 16 September, the situation had deteriorated enough for the War Cabinet in London to take serious notice. Turkey was obviously moving towards economic prostration and internal disorder.<sup>189</sup> The consuls were reporting that the alliance with the West was being loudly denounced in the provinces. The problem was the loss of German markets just as the harvest was being gathered, worsened by

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<sup>186</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E6355/43/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 8 Sep 1939.

<sup>187</sup> PRO FO 837 Turkey. Chrome. Vol I. 1940 MacDonnel (MEW) to FO 19 Jan 1940.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 17(39) 16 Sep 1939.

the fact that the harvest was the best in recent years.<sup>190</sup> The Commercial Attache wrote that the situation in Izmir and Trabizon was rapidly becoming critical. A bountiful harvest was gathered and spoiling. The West was being widely denounced, and the Government criticized for its policy.<sup>191</sup> Turkish customs officials, he wrote, were showing a "pronounced disinclination . . . to cooperate in the matter of economic control". Economic warfare, he thought, would become a joke unless some means could be found to replace the German market. It was crucial, he judged, "to take every step to effect export of its [Turkey's] surplus commodities to any country".<sup>192</sup>

Faced with this Emergency, the Ministry of Food announced that it would purchase 750,000 Pounds worth of raisins and dried fruit

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<sup>190</sup> PRO FO 837/1001 Turkey. Economic Relations, Commercial Report 1939 Jul 1939.

Crop Forecasts for 1939:

Wheat:	highest since 1928 -- 84,265,000 tons export 200,000
Sultanas:	65,000 tons (average) -- export 60,000 tons
Figs:	40,000 tons -- export 35,000 tons
Hazel Nuts:	good -- 60,000 tons shelled; 350,000 tons unshelled about 35,000 tons avail for export
Cotton	57,000 tons (up from 34,000) -- export 35,000 tons
Olive oil:	to exceed 23,000 tons
Valonea:	60,000 tons (+-5-7,000) all for export
Tobacco:	57,000,000 kilos -- export 40,000 kgs
Mohair:	7,500 tons -- export 7,500 tons
Wool:	27,000 tons -- export 12,000 tons
Beetroot:	500,000 tons (2 X 1938) Sugar = 70-215,000 tons
Gum tragaca:	6000 bags -- all for export
Silk:	800 tons -- most for export

<sup>191</sup> PRO FO 837/1001 Turkey. Economic Relations 1939 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 10 Sep 1939.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

for the Domestic market.<sup>193</sup> Of course, this purchase could not be effected immediately. In Turkey, there was a run on the banks with some reporting withdrawal of 80% of their accounts.<sup>194</sup> By October, things were beginning to quiet -- largely due to the emergency purchase of the fruit by the Ministry of Food, and of 8,000 bails of mohair by the MEW.<sup>195</sup>

Halifax had been correct. Whether willing or not, if Turkey were Britain's ally, active or otherwise, then provision of economic support was less a policy option than a structural necessity; and, without economic support, the question of finance would continue to have a determinant effect on the question of supply.

#### **Financial Negotiations in the Autumn:**

In October, with the pressure to make a political agreement building, negotiations for a financial agreement were renewed with the ante raised by the promise in July to give the Turks a new ten million Pound credit. Do not offer more than ten million, Halifax instructed Knatchbull-Hugesson, though Britain could go as high as fifteen million with five million being diverted from the Industrial Credit of May 1938. The reserve five million, he said,

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<sup>193</sup> PRO FO 837/1001 op. cit., FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 11 Sep; and, 16 Sep 1939.

<sup>194</sup> PRO FO 837/1001 op. cit., Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 15 Sep 1939.

<sup>195</sup> PRO FO 837/1001 op. cit., Economic Report for October 1939 Jordan (Commercial Attaché) to Halifax 11 Nov 1939.



could be used for armament industries, but not for arms purchases.<sup>196</sup> On the basis of this skeleton agreement, the Turks agreed to the signature of the Military Convention and Tripartite Treaty in October.

In November, the Treasury shifted the focus of its attack. Before the Turks got the weapons they would buy with their money, they back-pedalled, the suspensive clause on the Treaty would have to go; moreover, while the bullion loan might have been authorized, the Turks would have to agree to keep the gold in the vaults of the Bank of England, or the Bank of France.<sup>197</sup> Since the suspensive clause initially had been suggested by Halifax as a pledge that financial assistance would, in fact, become material assistance, Treasury insistence in this matter is rather difficult to understand.

The Turks refused to consider either of these conditions. They had always insisted, and continued to insist, that the suspensive clause would not go until they had received sufficient material to guard their frontier in Europe, and that the gold would have to come to Ankara.<sup>198</sup> For some time, it seemed another impasse had been reached. "I think the chief difficulty", wrote Knatchbull-Hugesson in his diary on 19 November, was "with the financial authorities at home, who never seemed to be able to take a large or

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<sup>196</sup> PRO CAB 24/288 CP 157(39) op. cit.

<sup>197</sup> PRO T 177/51 Phillips Treasury Draft Paper 29 Nov; CAB 65/1 WC 26(39) 25 Sep 1939.

<sup>198</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC(39) 25 Sep 1939.

long disinterested view of the problem". He concluded: "they drive one to exasperation".<sup>199</sup>

**Orbay's Second Mission -- October 1939:**

On 23 September, Knatchbull-Hugesson informed London, one expects, rather redundantly, that "Orbay's mission to London had been a bitter disappointment; they [the Turks] now had the example of Poland in front of them; no government could be so foolish as to enter into a war with its defences in the state of those of Turkey's at present".<sup>200</sup> The next day, he informed London that the Turks were sending Orbay back again. It was vital, he thought, that the Turks not be disappointed a second time. Certainly true, Bowker minuted -- booking Orbay into a suite at Claridges.<sup>201</sup>

Shortly before Orbay's departure, he and Gündüz came to pay a visit to Colonel Arnold, the MAA. They appeared very angry, Arnold wrote to General Van Cutsen. Orbay had come home after his previous visit, Gündüz said, with nothing but increased distaste for haggling. The Germans could say, and were saying, they told Arnold, "we told you so"; what was worse, they had. Orbay was going back again, Gündüz announced, and hoped for better success. Arnold warned London of the state of dissatisfaction in the General Staff, and that "a hostile General Staff, who are extremely powerful, can certainly ensure that the neutrality at present so benevolent

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<sup>199</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 19 Nov 1939.

<sup>200</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 E7886 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 23 Sep 1939.

<sup>201</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 R8150/7378/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 28 Sep 1939.

becomes really strict".<sup>202</sup> This time, Orbay did bring with him a list of priorities. Turkey required most urgently: AT guns, AA guns, infantry weapons, twenty field guns, 300 trucks, 75-100 tanks and twelve ferry boats.<sup>203</sup>

In London, the War Cabinet considered that everything possible must be done to help the Turks. They also considered that nothing must be done to upset them until the Tripartite Treaty had been signed, and to this end, decided that the discussions with Orbay were to be dragged out, with no embarrassing disclosures of weakness, until after the Turks had committed themselves. "It is thought that considerable play might be made with the argument that the Turks would not be able to derive value from large quantities of modern war material until they had personal trained in its use".<sup>204</sup> In any case, the Cabinet was accurate that "in no circumstances should a situation of real difficulty be allowed to rise in the conversations with General Orbay until after the Anglo-Turkish Treaty had been actually signed".<sup>205</sup> The COS agreed with the Cabinet line. The Treaty, Ironside wrote, would be signed within a few days of Orbay's arrival and nothing much should be

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<sup>202</sup> PRO AIR 8/296 MAA to Van Cuttsen 29 Sep 1939.

<sup>203</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 Despatch 1745 MAA to WO 27 Sep 1939; and, WO 106/5743 WO to GOCME 13 Jan 1940. Exact amounts: 1000 AT guns; 64 AA guns 9.4mm or 163 guns 40mm; 1000 MMGs; 20 field guns (25 pd); 300 trucks; 75-100 tanks and 12 ferries as noted.

<sup>204</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 War Cabinet 14/26/9; and, Allied Demands Turkey. Visit of General Orbay Note by Sect 2 Oct 1939.

<sup>205</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC32(39) 30 Sep 1939.

admitted until then.<sup>206</sup> The Anglo-French Liaison likewise considered it essential not to annoy the Turks. Orbay's previous visit, with its absence of formal meetings and lack of positive result, had caused bitter disappointment. Here too it was judged that there should be no hint of the real situation -- that the British simply hadn't the weapons, and the French hadn't the will to do much for the Turks. That could wait until after the treaty when there would be the "greatest possible frankness".<sup>207</sup>

On 8 October Orbay met with the British technical mission. Saraçoğlu, he said, was in Moscow, and this meant that the Treaty might have to be delayed to preserve Turkish diplomatic mobility, but it did not follow, he warned, that the question of material assistance could be put off. Marshal Çakmak, he said, would interpret any delay as lack of good will or incompetence: "Delay and procrastination are foreign to the Turkish soldier".<sup>208</sup>

Orbay:

explained that . . . it was improbable that Germany would attack on the Western Front and that the principal danger lay in a combined Russo-German descent on the Balkans. Both British and French Chiefs of Staff had agreed with him as to that and nothing was being done to bring about this agreement. The time to prepare was vital and we were already well into the winter. Neither the Marshal or General Orbay could understand the delay. Either he had failed to make his case clear or the Allies did not trust Turkey or they were so obsessed with the Western Front that they could not regard the allied war problem in a

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<sup>206</sup> PRO CAB 80/3 COS(39)68 Negotiations with the Turkish Mission Ironside Memorandum 8 Oct 1939.

<sup>207</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 MR(J)(39)10 R8356/G Anglo French Liaison. Armaments Order by Turkey.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

large way. He did not think he had failed to make his case. Turkey's actions through 1939 were sure proof of her good faith . . . German and Turkish Ministers had never understood each other and had never cooperated freely in the Great War. It would be terrible if similar misunderstandings of each others vital necessities occurred with the allies.<sup>209</sup>

"Surely" Orbay said, "two immense Empires like France and Britain could somehow produce the necessary anti-tank guns".<sup>210</sup> If not, they could be produced abroad; and Orbay said that he knew from his own experience that they were available abroad -- it was the British Treasury, he said, that closed this source of supply. The means were not lacking, Orbay judged: what was missing was a proper understanding of the time factor.<sup>211</sup> The Germans and Russians, the Turks were quite convinced, would attack South and South-East in the Spring. Material not shipped in time to assist the Turks to repel this attack might as well not be shipped at all.<sup>212</sup>

Faced with Orbay's warnings, the technical mission decided to change its tactics, and when they met with Orbay the next day, were determined that the Turks would be honestly informed of the extent to which their demand could be met, and to promise delivery of items available as soon as possible following the signature of the Treaty.<sup>213</sup> The Cabinet, changing its line, agreed to this

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<sup>209</sup> PRO WO 106/ 5743 Turkish Armaments December 1939-April 1940 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 9 Dec 1939.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid. See also, PRO WO/5743 DMO&P to Whitby 15 Dec; Whitby to DMO&P 17 Dec; and, MAA to WO 15 Dec 1939.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

decision; perhaps because it tended to share Turkish foreboding regarding German and Russian intentions, and considered minimal assistance to the Turks preferable to massive reinforcement of the Middle East.

The stronger the Turks were in Anatolia the longer will it be before a threat to Iraq or the Iranian oilfields can materialize, and consequently the longer will be the warning before it becomes necessary to concentrate forces for the defence of our interests in those areas.<sup>214</sup>

In general though, Orbay's second mission was little more successful than his first. The British finally committed themselves to the provision of limited AA support, to the diversion of the French AT guns, and to the dispatch of a few old field guns, but there was little more they could do. "I wish you to appreciate", General Ironside wrote Çakmak in December, "that British soldiers holding a sector in France are foregoing this equipment in the interests of the Turkish Army. This demonstrates as clearly as possible my desire to assist you in meeting the needs of your army which are fully understood here".<sup>215</sup>

Later in the month, the Prime Minister delivered his somewhat premature post-mortuum on the Orbay conversations to the House. "The Conversations have been conducted in a spirit of frankness and cordiality" he told them: "I am confident that they will lead to useful and practical results".<sup>216</sup> As too often the case, HMG's

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<sup>214</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 Armaments for Turkey Hoare-Belisha Memorandum Dec 1939.

<sup>215</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 Ironside to Çakmak 13 Dec 1939.

<sup>216</sup> Hansard, Commons Vol CCCLII col 1617 26 Oct 1939.

gave the House no more truth than detail.<sup>217</sup>

It is difficult to imagine how Turkey could have fought without the provisions requested by Ankara, indeed, none of the Turkish demands should have surprised London. Britain's own planners for economic war considered essential measures as described by the Turks if Turkey were to play an effective part in the war. The Turks could not fight without weapons, could obtain no weapons without credits, and could not service the credits without market relief. Even less could they take economic measures against Germany, if such measures, while damaging to Germany, were fatal for Turkey. It was, after all, German and not Turkish prostration that economic warfare hoped to achieve. In a perfect alliance Turkey would have aligned itself fully and publicly beside the Western Allies. Britain and France, for their part, would have armed Turkey and accepted redirected Turkish produce in payment for arms provided. All exchange would have been effected through a more comprehensive clearance system, or passed through a barter arrangement equitable to both sides. The Turks could hardly be expected to take full part in an alliance which would end, victory or defeat, in serfdom. This much should have been self-evident. It was precisely this sort of arrangement that Ankara consistently sought after June 1939. It was exactly this sort of arrangement which the Treasury resisted clause by clause, provision by

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<sup>217</sup> See Appendix B for global Western commitments.

provision, ditch to last ditch.<sup>218</sup>

**Menemencioğlu in London and Paris:**

On 20 November, Knatchbull-Hugesson saw Numan Menemencioğlu off to London and Paris to see what he could do to heal what was rapidly becoming the ulcer of the alliance.<sup>219</sup>

Menemencioğlu had an ally in the Labour party in the unlikely shape of Hugh Dalton. By the end of November, Dalton had become convinced that Simon was so bungling financial negotiations as to jeopardize the alliance. On 30 November, he warned the Government:

The Anglo-French Turkish pacts are the most solid fact that has emerged in the Mediterranean area in this last month or two, a solid fact on which less solid bodies might break. I hope that military, economic and financial cooperation between this country and Turkey and between France and Turkey, is now being worked out in detail and that the cold hand of the Treasury is not being laid on hopeful and necessary schemes.<sup>220</sup>

Purchases in Turkey he admonished the House, should not be looked upon solely for their commercial value. Everything bought from Turkey was something that Germany could not buy. Everything counted "two in a division: we win in and the Germans loose it".<sup>221</sup> Moreover, he might have added, the Turks sold it -- rather

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<sup>218</sup> The root of the problem seems to have been, as Medlicott has suggested, that the British were simply not in a position to understand or wage effective economic warfare until the creation of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation (UKCC) in April 1940. W.N. Medlicott, "The Conditions and Prospects 1939", and "The Allied Blockade September 1939-June 1940", Survey of International Affairs, "The War and the Neutrals", p. 1-18; and, W.N. Medlicott, The Economic Blockade, (HMSO: London) 1952. Vol I.

<sup>219</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 20 Nov 1939.

<sup>220</sup> Hansard Commons, Vol CCCLV 30 Nov 1939.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.



important if they were to get market relief and be enabled to pay for the armaments they required. Responding for the Government, R.A. Butler notified the House that Menemencioğlu was even then in London accompanied by the Turkish Ministers of Commerce, Finance and the Director of the central bank.<sup>222</sup> He hoped that "the obstacles may be removed which at present tend to prevent Anglo-Turkish trade from reaching the level that it might and should attain".<sup>223</sup> Dalton, not to be put off, asked for details concerning the Menemencioğlu mission and the status of negotiations. Butler refused to be drawn.<sup>224</sup> Outside the House Dalton was less parliamentary and Butler less loyal. On 20 September Dalton told R.A.B that in his opinion most of the Ministers should be sacked. Simon, he said, should not just be sacked. He should be shot for ruining the negotiations with Poland and now for jeopardizing those with Turkey; worse, he noted with some disgust, Simon "was not even a decent Conservative".<sup>225</sup> "Butler observed, with perfect departmental loyalty, that in the Foreign Office, the view was held that, if any department was losing the war, it was the Treasury".<sup>226</sup>

Menemencioğlu went to Paris and London hoping to negotiate an

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., col 307.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., col 308.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Hugh Dalton, The Fateful Years, (Muller: London) 1957, p. 282.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

agreement calculated to tie all financial matters into one satisfactory bundle. He first proposed that the twenty-five million Pound credit be serviced by Turkish goods -- in particular, that it be serviced with raisins, nuts and figs which were to form the subject of a parallel agreement. HMG would agree, he hoped, to take two million Pounds of dried fruit through the Clearing and apply it to the service of the credit agreements.<sup>227</sup> Of course London refused. In Ankara, Knatchbull-Hugesson back from another stormy interview with Saraçoğlu wrote in his diary that raisins were rapidly becoming a fixed grievance with the Turks.<sup>228</sup>

But by 12 December, even Sir John Simon had been brought to look favourably upon this solution. He had been convinced, one suspects, less by Menemencioğlu's arguments than his own realization that if the Credits could not be serviced in produce then the only option would be to take Lira to be exchanged for Turkish goods.<sup>229</sup> As Simon judged that "Turkey is not likely to be either able or willing to meet the service of this loan in cash", "it was clearly better for us to have the right to buy Turkish goods rather than to be forced to face complete default" through payment in worthless paper.<sup>230</sup> Simon's enlightenment was

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<sup>227</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 112(39) 12 Dec 1939.

<sup>228</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 20 Nov 1939.

<sup>229</sup> PRO CAB 67/3 CP(G)(39)144 Turkey -- Financial Agreements Simon 9 Dec 1939.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. Simon judged, badly as events showed, that with a Government subsidy, Britain would be able to sell 20-25,000 tons of the raisins; 5,000 of the 20,000 tons of nuts, and 3,000 to the 10,000 tons of figs. The rest, he considered would be pure loss. In

simply realization of the basic fact argued by Aras years earlier: if Turkey were not permitted to pay as it could pay then it couldn't pay at all. Simon proposed, however, that as a *quid pro quo* for this "blackmail", Britain insist on keeping the bullion loan in London. If the Turks would not agree to this, then HMG must, he judged, insist on a favourable agreement on Chrome.<sup>231</sup>

In Ankara also there were negative feelings -- though here fear rather than anger was dominant. Saraçoğlu was plainly worried about the course of the Menemencioğlu talks in Paris, and Knatchbull-Hugesson judged that unless "we were able to give M. Saraçoğlu some satisfaction the situation would further deteriorate".<sup>232</sup> By the following day, Knatchbull-Hugesson had been infected by Saraçoğlu's fear. He confessed that he was worried "by the way Numan's conversations are going with London. They don't seem to be able to realize the importance of doing something to help these people regarding the loss of their Germanic markets".<sup>233</sup>

Despite all, by 18 December, agreement had been reached in principle, and, having taken leave of Simon, Menemencioğlu departed for Paris to begin the real bargaining with the professionals of the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) and their French

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fact, the UKCC, charged with undertaking this trade, managed to make a considerable profit on the transaction. Swinton, I Remember, (Hutchison: London) 1949, p. 169.

<sup>231</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 112(39) 12 Dec 1939.

<sup>232</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 11 Dec 1939.

<sup>233</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 12 Dec 1939.

counterparts from the Ministry of Blockade.<sup>234</sup>

Chrome was the item highest on the contraband list supplied by Turkey to Germany. The MEW was determined that economic negotiations would not be complete unless it could be diverted from Germany. From the beginning then, the MEW was in basic agreement with Menemencioğlu who had come to Paris, at least partly, to sell Britain all Turkey's chrome. Given this fundamental accord, the venomous exchange that occurred in Paris is difficult to understand.

The basic conflict came over the terms of the sale. Menemencioğlu initially proposed an agreement for the duration of the war.<sup>235</sup> The British, insisted that agreements with other countries made this impossible, because they could only stop imports from reaching Germany if they were "in a position to stipulate the purpose for which imports of ore shall be used".<sup>236</sup> In other words, Britain could not preempt other sources of ore unless it used the ore so purchased. Thus, Turkish ore, which could be purchased preemptively, would probably be bought but not used. This being the case, Britain had no wish to contract to buy Turkish chrome beyond the point when they ceased to benefit by the purchase. Rather than an indefinite term, the British insisted on the originally proposed two year period for the agreement with an

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<sup>234</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC(118(39) 18 Dec 1939.

<sup>235</sup> PRO FO 837 Turkey. Chrome. Vol I. 1940 MEW to Playfair, Bowker 30 Dec 1939.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

option for a third.<sup>237</sup> As a "sweetener", should the war end quickly, they would agree to guarantee Turkish sales of 200,000 tons of chrome in the first year after the war.<sup>238</sup>

Menemencioğlu proceeded to give even the Treasury lessons in *pazarlık*. He insisted on a raisin and dried fruit agreement, already agreed in principle in London, and while he agreed that the chrome agreement might be limited to two years, he demanded that the dried fruit agreement must also have a duration of two years. When the British and French appeared disposed to quibble, he hardened his position. The dried fruit agreement, he said, must have as its term the duration of hostilities.<sup>239</sup> The British refused to consider this.

The following day, at a meeting in Michael Baume's room, it was agreed that Menemencioğlu's terms be accepted; but by this time, Menemencioğlu had changed his terms. On this occasion, he insisted that the chrome agreement be extended to ten years or until the extinction of the Turkish war debt.<sup>240</sup> From this position he would not be moved. Germany, he said, had been buying 140,000 tons of chrome before the war, and the loss of this market

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.; also, FO 837 op.cit., Turkish Chrome Lintott 27 Dec 1939.

<sup>238</sup> PRO 837 op. cit., Stirling to Lintott (Paris) 1 Jan 1940.

<sup>239</sup> FO 837 op. cit., Turkish Chrome Lintott 27 Dec 1939. Menemencioğlu always linked Chrome and dried fruit, because, he explained, if the Germans were denied Chrome, then they would refuse the raisins.

<sup>240</sup> PRO FO 837 op. cit., Thorley to Bowker 27 Dec; and, Michael Baume (Head of French Delegation) 26 Dec 1939.

was a considerable blow to Turkish commerce; moreover, he said, Turkey was taking a total loss on a large quantity of armaments by its adherence to the Alliance.<sup>241</sup> But what about the dried fruit agreement, asked M. Louise de Merville? The stoppage of trade with the Axis, replied Menemencioğlu, was costing Turkey fifteen million Pounds a year. Credit, he said, must be interlocked with the means to pay, otherwise, repayment became impossible.

Menemencioğlu returned to this last theme on 2 January. The value of the Chrome sent to Britain, he said, should be applied to the service of the 1938 Credit through the Clearing.<sup>242</sup> This the British delegation refused to consider. It would be, they said, an agreement to exchange goods contracted on one basis, and already delivered, for a consideration not thought of when the original contracts were drawn.<sup>243</sup> While no headway was made on this point, Menemencioğlu conceded that the dried fruit agreement might end, if the British desired, after the 1942-1943 growing season.<sup>244</sup> London, however, remained unwilling to admit the linkage of credits and chrome. For service of the credits, they said, only payment through the Clearing as established or sterling would be permitted.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> PRO FO 837 op. cit., Stirling Minute 2 Jan 1940; also, Menemencioğlu to Campbell 31 Dec 1939.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> PRO FO 837/ op. cit., FO to Campbell 3 Jan 1940.

But London was fighting a losing battle. There was precious little difference between agreeing to buy the chrome, and agreeing that the money from the sale be applied to the Clearing for the service of the Credits. On 3 January 1940, agreement was reached in principle -- Menemencioğlu's linkage being conceded -- and on 8 January three agreements were signed: the 1939 Credit agreement, the Chrome Agreement, and the Dried Fruit agreement.<sup>246</sup>

**The 1939 Credit Agreement:**

Turkey would receive an armaments credit for twenty-five million Pounds at 4% p.a, a fifteen million Pound bullion loan in Ankara repayable at 3%, and a two million Pound loan to unblock the Clearing. Britain and France would agree to buy two million Pounds worth of dried fruit for the duration, or until the 1942-43 growing season, whichever came first. The proceeds of the sale of the fruit would be applied to the long term debt through the Clearing. Britain and France agreed to buy a maximum of 250,000 tons of chrome for two years, and Turkey agreed not to sell to anybody else unless Britain and France renounced the right to buy the full amount. Proceeds from the sale of the chrome would be used for debt amortization through the Clearing.<sup>247</sup> Not connected with these agreements, but associated with their success, Turkey would agree to discontinue the suspensive clause in the Tripartite Treaty.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> PRO FO 837 op. cit., Anglo-Turkish Financial and Commercial Agreement Signed in Paris 8 Jan 1940.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> PRO CAB 65/5 WC 7(40) 5 Jan 1940.

On 8 January, the gold which had been promised to the Turks arrived in Ankara and the Turks lifted the suspensive clause.<sup>249</sup>

On 16 January, Lord Stanhope, for the Treasury, informed the House of Lords that negotiations with Menemencioğlu had been concluded and agreement reached -- "evidence of the close collaboration and association in every sphere which after the signature of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance in Angora in October last, [which] His Majesty's Government and the French Government have been able to establish with the Turkish Government".<sup>250</sup> There was virtually no debate in either House. Also on 16 January, Menemencioğlu arrived back in Ankara. Knatchbull-Hugesson judged him to be "thoroughly satisfied with all he had done".<sup>251</sup>

#### **Menemencioğlu and Armaments:**

As has been noted above, however, what the Turks were primarily after in London and Paris was not money but weapons, and the credits and trade negotiations were seen mainly as an organic part of Turkey's weapons acquisition policy. Therefore, while in London in November and December, Menemencioğlu took the opportunity to further harry the British on the question of material assistance. "He was instructed by the Turkish General Staff and the Government", he told Chatfield, "to convey their definite belief

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<sup>249</sup> J.R.M. Butler, Grand Strategy. Vol II. September 1939-June 1941, (HMSO: London) 1957, p. 67. The gold came from the reserves of the defunct Polish government. The Poles were compensated with gold in London.

<sup>250</sup> Hansard Lords, Vol CXV col 302 16 Jan 1940.

<sup>251</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 27 Jan 1940.



that Thrace could not be defended unless the armament she sought were forthcoming". The Turks had observed with interest the agony and collapse of Poland, he warned, and had no wish to go the same way.<sup>252</sup> Chatfield returned that it was not a question of willingness, or even of British supply, but of world supply: there were simply not enough AT guns "in existence to defend the Western Front and Thrace at the same time".<sup>253</sup> Menemencioğlu answered that "to oppose sheer impossibility to the Turkish demands was tantamount to a condemnation of the Turkish Army to a fate likely to be exceedingly sad; and the Turkish Government would probably find it exceedingly difficult, should failure appear to be probable, to engage in a struggle which was all too likely to be of a merciless character".<sup>254</sup> This argument, being sound and generally conceded by London -- the British never claimed that Turks did not need the guns, only that they could not be supplied -- Chatfield could only promise that Britain "would try and overcome what seemed at present impossible".<sup>255</sup>

The British were facing the real possibility that the Turks would refuse to fight under any circumstances unless some shift could be made to meet their requirements. Menemencioğlu warned that Turkey must have 800 AT guns before it would be in a position to

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<sup>252</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS(39)140 Armament Supplies to Turkey 2 Dec 1939.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

waive the suspensive clause.<sup>256</sup> The COS noted with much apprehension that if the Turks insisted on waiting to receive this many guns the delay would be at least twelve months; in which case, the Treaty would be abortive.<sup>257</sup>

To a large extent, it was the impasse on armaments which produced the financial blackmail of the Spring. Menemencioğlu was informed:

HMG while most anxious that the suspensive clause should be brought to an end, regret that it is impossible for them to supply the anti-tank guns for which the Turkish Government were asking. Nevertheless, His Majesty's Government hope that in view of the very great efforts which they have already made regarding the supply of armaments to Turkey, the Turkish Government will agree to bring the suspensive clause to an end, in which case, it will be possible to bring into effect the various financial provisions of the special agreement at the same time.<sup>258</sup>

As we have seen, the suspensive clause was revoked in February 1940; though this had less to do with the amount of material assistance that had been provided than the conclusion of a satisfactory financial arrangement.

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<sup>256</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS(39)145 Implications of the Suspensive Clause of the Anglo-Turkish Treaty 3 Dec 1939. See also, COS(39)146 Review of the Military Policy in the Middle East 5 Dec 1939.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid. A direct approach to Marshal Çakmak was also considered as a method of getting rid of the suspensive clause. Ironside considered that "While appreciating that this would not be our normal procedure it might be advisable for us to adopt it as being more suited to the Marshal's conservative and oriental mentality . . . [the] Turk is very susceptible to conventional politeness and the Marshal to his seniority and standing among European Marshals". Ironside, in fact, did make such an approach, and the 18 pound guns sent to Turkey went as his personal present to the Marshal. PRO CAB 80/6 COS(39)153 Proposed Approach to Marshal Çakmak 3 Dec 1939.

If the amount of equipment promised to Turkey was a considerable reduction from the amount requested, the quantity actually provided represented a further discount. What Turkey had been promised was not what it had asked for; and what it received was not what it had been promised. Appendix C, below, opposes material pledged to material delivered in the first two years of the war. Appendix D, most instructive of all, opposes material delivered by May 1940 (i.e delivered early enough to have been useful) to the Turkish demands. Even a cursory glance at the tables should show that nothing like the Turkish requirement was received in time for the outbreak of shooting war in May 1940. The Turks had asked for equipment for ten Divisions. It may be that they received enough for two. In fact, in terms of Land armaments, İnönü's complaint that Turkey was weakened by the Alliance, was as true in May 1940 as in September 1939. The only concrete expressions of Allied assistance were some minor improvement in the power of the Turkish Air Force -- based on obsolete types -- and some progress in the provision of armaments for the Dardanelles defences.

One last thing needs to be recorded under the rubric 'material assistance'. Much of the material sent to the Turks, the British were embarrassed to discover, arrived in non-servicable condition. There were several reasons for this. One was the British practice of shipping all material of a kind together without reference to associated items. Thus, British guns would arrive in Turkey on one ship, with the vessel carrying the tractors required to move them

some distance behind.<sup>259</sup> Even worse, fragile items, such as range finders, gyroscopes, and vision equipment, arrived in boxes not marked "fragile" (*kolay kırılır*) and were often broken by Turkish dockers.<sup>260</sup>

Another problem with shipped material, was that in the haste to get to the Turks those few things available, items were often shipped incomplete. This was most catastrophically so in the case of the Bristol Blenheims shipped to Turkey in 1939. First of all, these Blenheims did not come with Beaufighter conversion kits. They were Bombers, not Fighters as the Turks had wished. But even worse, on arrival, it was discovered that these aircraft were not even functional Bombers. Eighteen of the thirty lacked bomber seats, bomb racks, and bomb winches. Twenty-eight had neither 250lb or 500lb bomb racks.<sup>261</sup> None of the aircraft had gun turrets, bomb releases, sighting mechanism, machine-gun trigger sets, or oxygen equipments.<sup>262</sup> "It is most illogical and unsatisfactory" noted Colville, "that when, at some sacrifice, we have agreed to provide Blenheim aircraft to the Turks, we should risk making them largely ineffective by refusing to supply part of the essential

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<sup>259</sup> PRO WO 208/1975 Debrief Larden/DDMI(1) Oct 1941, p. 7.

<sup>260</sup> PRO ADM 116/4399 Armaments and Naval Supplies for Turkey MAA to C in C MED 10 Jul; also, WO 208/1972 Lewis Report 1941.

<sup>261</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E3099 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 26 Apr 1939.

<sup>262</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E3097 Aras to Halifax 27 Apr 1939.

equipment".<sup>263</sup> An embarrassed Air Ministry promised that it would remove the missing items from RAF aircraft and send them by rail -- on the Orient Express -- within two weeks.<sup>264</sup> Meanwhile, in Turkey, Qakmak had rebuked his son-in-law, the CAS, for commanding a laughing-stock and was comparing British methods to poor advantage with American and German practice.<sup>265</sup>

#### Conclusion:

In January 1940, finally, the Western Allies had been brought to make a financial arrangement which might, over time, have permitted the Turks to wage war at their side -- ten months after the joint guarantee, five months after the outbreak of war, four months before the possibility of effective cooperation would cease to exist. It is important to note, however, that the cash figures and repayment schedules and schemes agreed upon remained almost entirely abstract in our period due to Allied inability and unwillingness to deliver the weapons which the Turks wished to purchase. Initially, the question of finance had hampered supply; latterly, the problem of supply undermined the agreed financial provisions. In the end, the Service Ministries proved to be as reluctant to part with material as the Treasury had been to part with money. Yet, without adequate provision of material assistance, a financial arrangement to permit purchase, and an economic

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<sup>263</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E2867/86/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 19 Apr; also, E2876/86/44 Baxter to Air Min 24 Apr 1939.

<sup>264</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E3210/86/44 Air Min to FO 29 Apr 1939.

<sup>265</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E3409/86/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 2 May; E3409 Izmir to FO; E3595/86/44 Bowker Minute 17 May 1939.

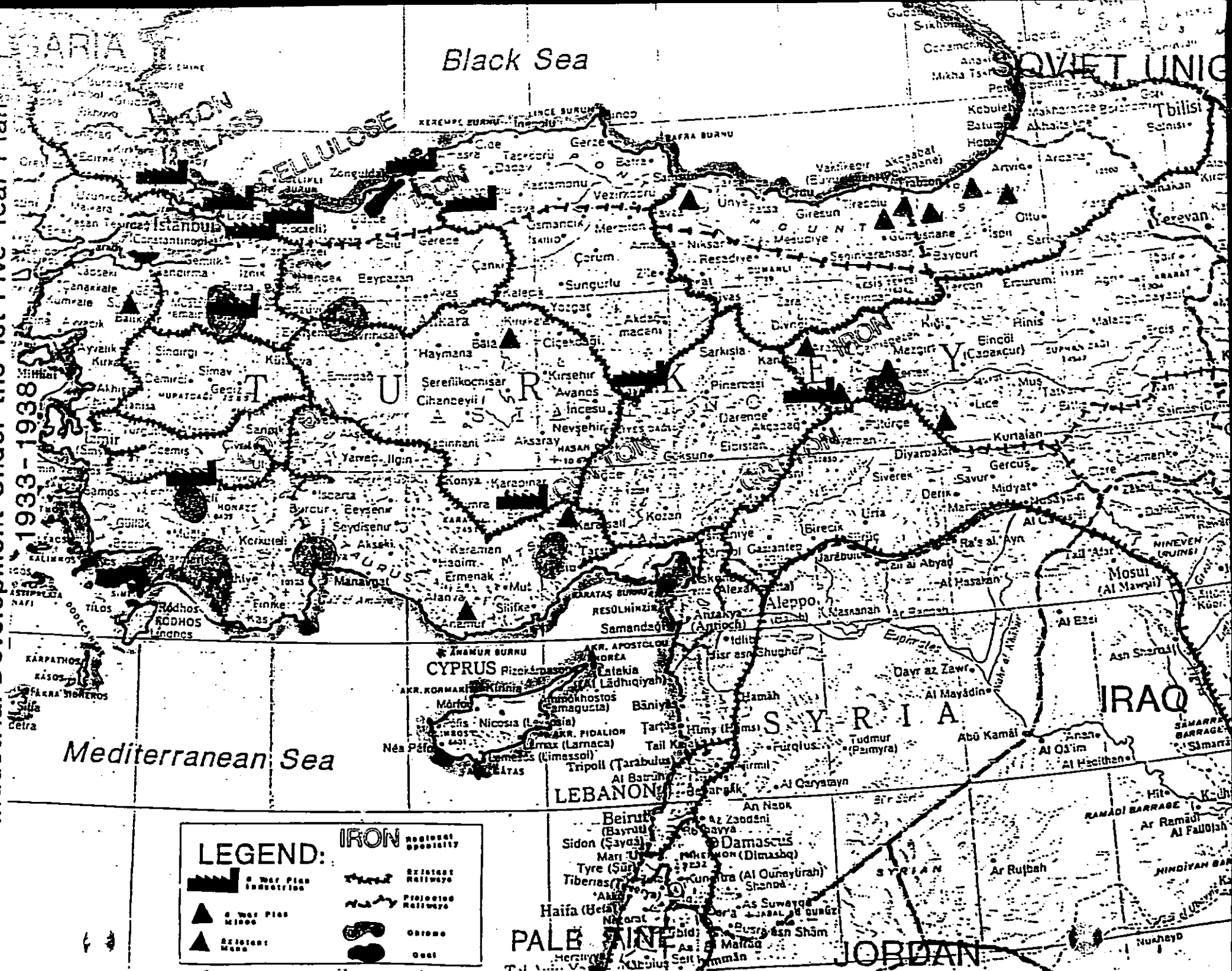
arrangement to finance repayment, the alliance could have been activated only with extreme difficulty whatever the military and political constellation. Without an economic arrangement which would ensure its survival, Turkey could contemplate the prospect of an active alliance with much less than complete sang froid. Without armaments it could not consider entering the war at all. Unfortunately for Britain, while some greater effort at economic assistance may have been possible, provision of military material remained exceedingly difficult beyond the end of our period. Some shift might be made to solve the economic question, but the problem of supply continued to constitute a nearly absolute constraint.

## Chapter X -- Economic and Instructional Assistance

In the following Chapter, certain other types of assistance, not so immediately crucial as financial or material assistance to the operation of the Tripartite Alliance, will be dealt with -- namely, economical assistance broadly defined to include the construction of infrastructure, and instructional assistance. These will be dealt with topically rather than temporally for greater clarity. In general, it will be argued, once again, that Britain's tardy start in the provision of assistance meant that little could be done in the year between the Joint Declaration and the attack on France. While Britain considerably increased the level of its economic and instructional support after the debacle of the Summer, if its aim in doing so was to increase the likelihood of Turkish intervention in the war, then it might as well have spared itself the effort. What might have been provided fruitfully before the war, or in the war's first year, could' only be productive of precious little thereafter.

### **Economic Assistance:**

One of the directions of Kemalism was etatism, or the systematic cultivation of industry by state action. In the 1930s, in a series of five year development plans modeled on those of Russia, this aspect of Turkey's domestic policy became especially





prominent.<sup>1</sup> Large portions of the Russian and German credits were diverted to the creation of indigenous industry in order to make Turkey independent in the production of crucial war materials.<sup>2</sup> After 1939, it became a half-hearted part of British policy to underwrite this effort in order to improve Turkey's exchange position and to reduce the amount of war material which it would be otherwise necessary to divert from British rearmament programs. Industrial support, moreover, was required not only if the Turks were to fight, but if they were to survive the middle-term effects of German economic withdrawal.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately for the prospects of the Alliance, the level of industrial support provided was insufficient given the scale of Turkey's need, and tardy, considering that to be effective it should have preceded rather than followed the outbreak of war. In fact the tardiness goes far

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<sup>1</sup> In May 1932 İnönü and Aras made a trip to the USSR. They hoped to obtain technical and credit assistance, to study Soviet industrialization, and to obtain a loan to assist in the financing of the first Turkish five year plan. The loan, of eight million dollars interest free for twenty years, took the form of a direct transfer of machinery and equipment. See, B. Berberoğlu, Turkey in Crisis, (Zed Books: London) 1982; B. Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, (Oxford: London) 1961. p. 278-279; R. Robinson, The First Turkish Republic, (Harvard: Cambridge) 1963. p. 107-121; A. Bonne, State and Economics in the Middle East, (Kegan Paul: London) 1948, p. 274-283; and, S. Deringil, Turkish Foreign Policy in the Second World War (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1989. p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> It was "a vital economic requirement and national necessity", Celâl Bayer, then Minister of the Economy, explained at a press conference called to mark the inauguration of the first Five Year Plan, "to prepare for the manufacture of our necessary material requirements in order to assure the country's economy in war and peace". "Ekonomi Bakanı Celal Bayer'in, İlk beş yıllık sanayi programı hakkında Gazetecilere demeci", Bayer, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter V.

to explaining the insufficiency. Prior to the outbreak of war, schemes to assist the Turks fell to financial difficulties, and after the outbreak of war, were crowded out by Britain's own needs. What Britain did not provide in peace, it could not in war.

**Turkey's Military Industries:**

Without assistance the Turks could not produce enough to supply their armies in time of war, and, from 1937, began to look to Britain for help. Efforts to get British firms to establish branch plants in Turkey, however, fell to the same reluctance, with its roots in finance, which made it difficult for the Turks to buy arms in Britain. Briefly put, private British firms were not interested in ventures unlikely to be moneymaking. Armaments industries in Turkey were unlikely to be profitable, and the Turkish Government was unable, and HMG unwilling, to assist in making them become so. The Germans, willing and able, were the only answer and Germany quickly built up a position of dominance in Turkey's military industries.

By the Spring of 1938, in compliance with a conclusion of the combined Balkan CDS, Turkey was making strenuous efforts to convince the Bristol Air company to establish an engine plant in Turkey. It was hoped that this plant would be able to service all the Balkan Entente's Air Forces, and in Central Anatolia it would be less vulnerable to air bombardment than anywhere else in the Balkans.<sup>4</sup> In fact the CDS decision simply overlay a previous conclusion of the Turkish General Staff, which, from April 1937,

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<sup>4</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E6757/15/44 Lorraine to Eden 11 Nov 1937.

was sounding the RAF through Elmhirst, the AAA, on the possibility of convincing the Bristol Company to establish an engine factory in Turkey.<sup>5</sup> General Kazim Ozalp, responsible for the subsequent negotiations on the Turkish side, hoped that Bristol might be convinced to set-up and supervise the factory which would operate under license.<sup>6</sup> Bristol, while willing to sell the Turks the license and supervise production, balked at the idea of building a factory.<sup>7</sup> Nor was it happy with the royalty rate the Turks were offering. The Air Ministry too was chary of the idea. It disliked anything likely to result in the removal of scarce skilled labour from its own contracts.<sup>8</sup> Despite this opposition, Major Basri Bilgin, Ozalp's representative in London, seemed about to bring Bristol and the RAF to agreement when the customary financial difficulty scuttled negotiations. The Turks could have the plant if they could pay. They would not be allowed, Bowker noted, to pay from the 1938 credit; therefore, there could be no plant. "It would be desirable", Bowker thought, "to warn the Turks now of the difficulty, lest they continue negotiations under the illusion that they can pay for the factory out of the armaments credit".<sup>9</sup>

The Turks refused to accept this answer and continued to push

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<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E2347/15/44 Elmhirst to Loraine to Eden 8 Apr 1937.

<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E6628/78/44 Loraine to FO 5 Nov 1938.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E6634/78/44 Baggallay Minute 8 Nov 1938.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Bowker Minute 17 Nov 1938.

for the establishment of an aero-engine plant in Turkey. In January, however, they shifted their tactics, and began to make approaches through the British mining firm, Brassert, with which they had excellent relations.<sup>10</sup> This avenue of approach, in fact, had been suggested by Brassert itself. Accordingly, in December 1938, General Duruken wrote to Brassert's London office, and submitted a list of industrial requirements to Imat Remzi, Brassert's regional representative.<sup>11</sup>

Turkey desired, Duruken wrote, to establish an aero-engine plant to produce two-hundred 1000 h.p motors a year, a metal factory, a diesel engine factory with an output of one-hundred units p.a, a sulphuric acid plant, and a supersulphate plant -- all at Zonguldak, a centre of Turkey's military industries.<sup>12</sup> In London, the approach was scarcely noticed enough to constitute rebuff. Colville, at the FO, filed the request with the notation "vague and impractical propositions" on 3 May.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, by the outbreak of war, considerable progress had been made in establishing an indigenous Turkish armaments industry, though mainly with German help. In December 1937,

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<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3090/143/44 Brassert to Department of Overseas Trade 25 Apr 1939. Brassert had charge of the gigantic Karabuk steel plant which it had built, much to the satisfaction of the Turkish Government after being awarded the contract in 1936. For Brassert's earlier relations with Turkey, see FO 1011/38 and 1011/39.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Gen Eyup Duruken to Hopkinson 12 Dec 1939.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Colville Minute 3 May 1939.

Elmhirst, the AAA, received permission to inspect the Turkish military factories. Atatürk himself directed that he was to be shown everything.<sup>14</sup> Lund, the DDMI, followed Elmhirst in July 1939 and left a detailed appreciation of Turkey's military industrial capacity as it existed immediately prior to the war which confirmed Elmhirst's judgements. Lund was accompanied on his trip by General Eyub Duruken, Director General of Military Industry. He toured the factory complex at Kuthuk Yozgat (explosives), Kirikkale (armaments), and the aviation works at Kayseri.<sup>15</sup>

The factories, he noted, were all German built, modern, and contained excellent equipment. Most of the German technicians who had previously presided over operations had been dismissed and the Turks were running the factories without assistance.<sup>16</sup> The problem, Lund quickly saw, was lack of trained personnel. He mentioned this to Duruken. Unfortunately, General Duruken admitted, Turkey did lack trained technicians, and could hardly see how the supply could be increased without outside assistance. It took three years, he stressed, to make a peasant into a good machine-hand.<sup>17</sup> While Turkey wished to open an AA, an AT, an Artillery, and some ammunition factories, Duruken did not see how this would be possible without British help, and assistance in training

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<sup>14</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E7433/15/44 Loraine to Eden 17 Dec 1937.

<sup>15</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 Memorandum on Turkish Factories 28 Jun 1939.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

personnel.<sup>18</sup>

Despite this handicap, Lund noted that Turkish production of rifles was one-hundred a day,<sup>19</sup> of small-arms ammunition (SAA), 200,000 a day, of 75mm ammunition, 1,500 a day, and of 150mm ammunition, 250 a day<sup>20</sup> -- sufficient production, in Lund's judgement, to provide artillery ammunition for the guns of one Division, SAA for three Divisions, and rifles for the entire Army assuming that it was initially armed.<sup>21</sup> Since the Turks had been producing at this level for several years, it followed that a considerable stockpile of ammunition must have been built-up. Morton, the Commercial Attaché, concluded from this that Britain's best course, if the desired end was to permit the Turks to maintain themselves as an ally in war, would be to send technical staff and machines to Turkey to help the Turks sustain and increase their own production.<sup>22</sup> Lund agreed. "I feel strongly" he wrote, "that we would be well-advised to offer the services of capable men who could organize and train the local material which is very raw".<sup>23</sup> Lund was talking to the wind. If anyone was paying attention in London, their vigilance passed without record.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> This gave the Turks a production about half of Britain's own. See, Postan, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 JIC 216 E5207/143/44 18 Jul 1939.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

In any case, by this time, Brassert had managed to insert itself as an integral part of the procedure, and Brassert's Turkish agents had no adequate banking arrangement before January 1940.<sup>24</sup> It was difficult to provide Industrial support to the Turks when the mechanics of financing such support made the process impossibly difficult. The result, inevitably as well as usually, was further delay, in this case, the delay proved long enough to kill any hope of useful assistance.

**The Golçuk Naval Base:**

There were, however, certain important military projects in the construction of which the British were more helpful. In 1937, the Turks announced their intention to build a naval base and repair facility at Golçuk near Ismit. The RN, examining the proposal, judged that such a base would have no significance in British naval strategy. It was 600 miles from the Central Mediterranean and was not likely to be large enough to provide alternate anchorage for the Mediterranean Fleet; furthermore it was in easy range of aircraft operating from Rumania and Russia.<sup>25</sup>

In June of 1939, having requested plans and tenders, the Turks announced that the contract for the Golçuk naval dockyards was to go to a German consortium -- *Gutehoffnung Shutte, Phippe Holzmann*,

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<sup>24</sup> PO FO CAB 80/9 COS(40)290 Balkans and the Middle East. Supply of War Materials to the Balkan States 10 Apr 1940.

<sup>25</sup> PRO FO 371/20863 E13670 M.03168/37 Phillips to FO 2 Jul 1937.

A.G Julius Berger, A.G Siemens Bav-Union.<sup>26</sup> The contract was not a small one. It was valued at 2.3 million Pounds in Europe and 150 million Lira in Turkey over four years.<sup>27</sup> It was also accorded substantial political weight.

There was consternation in Whitehall. G. Crabb, a representative of Gibb and Partners, a British construction firm heavily involved in Middle Eastern projects, was interrogated by the worried officials of the Foreign Office. It was probable, Crabb thought, that the award to a German firm had resulted from insufficient British financial assistance.<sup>28</sup> In fact, for once the Treasury was not at fault. Inquiries in Ankara resulted in the startling -- for Whitehall -- discovery that no British firms had submitted tenders.<sup>29</sup>

While the Foreign Office was considerably troubled by this development, Phillips, by this time translated to DCNS from DNI, and the Treasury found themselves in unaccustomed unity of conviction. It was an excellent thing, judged Phillips, that a German company had been awarded this contract at such a late date because the more technicians and machine-tools imported into Turkey

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<sup>26</sup> PRO ADM 116/4196 Construction of a Naval Base at Golçuk FO to ADM 30 June 1939

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E4107/272/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 27 May 1939.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E5795/272/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 7 Aug 1939.



before the outbreak of war, he thought, the better for Britain.<sup>30</sup> Maybe, thought Phillips, Gibbs and Partners could give some minor technical assistance in order to keep in a British hand.<sup>31</sup> In Phillips' view, the only real advantage of a British contractor building the base would be that this would provide a gage of British goodwill.<sup>32</sup> In February 1940, the German consortium lost the contract and was replaced by a British combination of Brassert, and Messrs Balfour & Beatty.<sup>33</sup>

#### **The Dardanelles Defences:**

With the change of the Straits regime at Montreaux in 1936, the Turks began to give serious consideration to schemes for comprehensive Straits refortification. Initially, it seems to have been the Turkish intention to award the contract for the Dardanelles defences to Krupp. But in February 1938, by direct intervention of Atatürk, the Krupp sketch plans were sent to Britain for tender by British firms.<sup>34</sup> This initiative came at the same time as the inquiries regarding the possible purchase of heavy guns and the surplus armament from the Agincourt and Erin.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 M.05465/39 E4974/272/44 Phillips to FO 12 Jul; and, F 16014/L E5124/272/44 Treasury to FO 7 Jul 1939.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/150 150/8/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 27 Feb; 150/12/40 Ankara to FO 18 Mar; and, Morgan to FO 8 Apr 1940.

<sup>34</sup> Atatürk sent the plans to Britain behind the back of his own Minister of War. PRO FO 371/21930 E383/188/44 Waley (Treasury) to Oliphant 9 Feb 1938.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter IX above.

Eventually, as made excellent sense, the contract for Straits refortification went to the supplier of most of the defensive material -- Vickers Limited.

Heavily involved in this planning of the Dardanelles defences were RN and RM advisors. In the Winter 1939-1940, a British naval delegation toured the Dardanelles and scrutinized plans for the defences of the Bosphorus.<sup>36</sup> Some months later, plans having been finalized, work started on the necessary gun pits etc. under Vickers' supervision. It was most unfortunate that no sooner had these works been completed then the Admiralty decided to retain the big guns for which they were being constructed.<sup>37</sup>

#### **Airfield Construction:**

Airfield construction followed a different, but equally unsatisfactory pattern. If the Western Allies were to cooperate militarily with the Turks, it had always been recognized that much of their contribution would be in the Air; therefore, the preparation of airfields had been a constant concern of Allied planners and a consistent item on the agenda of Staff conferences from the time of the Huntzinger conversations of July 1939. It had also been realized, that if British Air units were to operate in Turkey, hard surfaced runways were essential. The newest types of aircraft, such as the Spitfire, were not sufficiently robust to

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<sup>36</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 C in C Med to Adm 28 Feb 1940.

<sup>37</sup> See PRO ADM 116/4494 COS(40) 101 Mtg 23 Apr 1941; and, ADM 116/4496 -- especially Markham to Cakir Apr; Bowker to Adm 3 Jul; Disposal of the 13.5" Coastal Defence Mountings DNO Memorandum 1 May 1941 Markham to Erdelhun; and, Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 9 Mar 1942.

operate for prolonged periods from unpaved fields, nor could they be provided with dust protection. Hangers also were essential. Spitfires could not be converted for tropical operations.<sup>38</sup>

By February 1940, the airfield survey had been finished. Naci Tinaz, the Minister of Defence, requested Allied assistance to prepare fields for operational use. He pleaded that the Turks had neither the money, the asphalt, nor the engineer specialists to pave so many so quickly. At the time, only four paving specialists were in Turkey: a Shell specialist, working on the Corlu military airport, a French expert, working on the Izmir airport, a Norwegian at Eskisehir, and a German working on the Yesilkoy military, and Ankara civil airports.<sup>39</sup> The division of responsibility eventually agreed upon was that the British would provide the technology and the Turks the labour; off-shore requirements would be financed by Britain, and local materials by Turkey.<sup>40</sup>

At the Aleppo conference in April 1940, the Turks promised to provide the maximum amount of labour and material available for the construction of airfields.<sup>41</sup> The General Staff stressed that these must be completed before the Winter of 1940 if they were to be of

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<sup>38</sup> PRO AIR 8/259 Notes of a Conference held in the CAS Room on 2 June 1939, op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/155 MAA to Air Min 1 Feb 1940.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.; and, PRO FO 2464/195/186 186/30/40 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 4 Apr; 186/30/40 Morgan Minute 11 Apr; 186/33/40 Halifax to Morgan 18 Apr 1940.

<sup>41</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/30/40 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 4 Apr 1940. See Chapter XI below for the Aleppo Conference.

use for the Spring of 1941.<sup>42</sup> On 12 April, Engineers arrived from Egypt and construction began.<sup>43</sup>

By May, little progress had been made. Major R. Bulter, the Engineer-in-Charge of the project, complained to Cairo that construction was not proceeding quickly enough. In Turkey, he wrote, it was the end of the fiscal year and the local public works department had no funds to pay the labourers.<sup>44</sup> Only in July did real progress begin. Saragoğlu admitted that the "stupidity" of the local Department of Public Works treasurer had held up work, and told Knatchbull-Hugesson that the problem would not reoccur in the future.<sup>45</sup> By December 1940, seven important fields were being constructed on this plan.<sup>46</sup> Of course by December 1940, there was little likelihood that they would ever be used by British aircraft.

#### **Provision of Raw Materials:**

The provision of raw and semi-finished materials to feed the infant Turkish Industries and to maintain Turkey's infrastructure proved equally unsatisfactory. Just after the declaration of war, Colonel Arnold, the MAA, had a conversation with General Ahmet Naci

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<sup>42</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/33/40 Halifax to Morgan 18 Apr 1940.

<sup>43</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/34/40 Morgan to FO 19 Apr 1940.

<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/155 Report on Progress of the Work Butler to Engineer in Chief ME May 1940.

<sup>45</sup> PRO FO 195/2464 Saracoglu to Knatchbull-Hugesson 17 Jul 1940.

<sup>46</sup> Just constructed in Dec 1940: Adana, Yesilkoy, Kutahya. Under construction: Balikesir, Bandirma A, Bandirma B, and Cumaovasi. PRO AIR 23/973 Turkish Air Force, op. cit.

Tinaz, the Minister of National Defence. Tinaz told him that regardless of anything else, three things were necessary if Turkey were to play a full part in the Alliance: deliveries of crucial raw materials, petrol, and AT and AA weapons.<sup>47</sup> Only in the provision of the second of these were the British were able to achieve a tolerable success. Indeed, it was one of the chief attraction of the Tripartite alliance for the Turks that Britain could guarantee deliveries by land of oil from its Middle Eastern dependencies. As the scale and nature of Turkey's requirement for economic assistance gradually became clear, it became more and more obvious that certain crucial items could not be supplied in anything like the quantity required.

In May, when Weygand was in Ankara, he received an outline list of the industrial assistance that Turkey would require. Turkey, he was told, would require approximately 50,000 tons of raw materials -- copper, brass, steel, and most especially, petroleum products.<sup>48</sup> These requirements, extensive though they were, were only the beginning of the Turkish demands. With the Orbay lists, came the full details of Turkish requirements in raw materials.<sup>49</sup> London was shocked by the scale of the Turkish demands and detailed experts from the MEW to sit with Turkish authorities to prioritize and reduce the list. By April 1940, most of the Turkish demands had

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<sup>47</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 R7662/7378/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 7 Sep 1939.

<sup>48</sup> PRO CAB 54/9 DCOS 135 op. cit. Annex XII 22 Jul 1939.

<sup>49</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 MF(J)(39)26 R8839/7378/44 13 Oct 1939.

been met. The exceptions, however, were as important as they were rare. Deliveries of Raw materials are summarized in the table below.<sup>50</sup>

Adjusted Turkish Requirements of Raw Materials

Mineral	Agreed Delivery	Arrived by Apr 1940
Antimony	50+ tons	50+ tons
Bismuth	200+ tons	200+ tons
Ferro-Manganese	500+ tons	500+ tons
Glycerine	150+ tons	150+ tons
Shellac	5+ tons	5+ tons
Tin	20+ tons	20+ tons
Red lead	10+ tons	10+ tons
Leather pulley belts	30,000M	8,200M
Steel	130,000 tons requested 30,000 tons promised	500 tons sent <sup>51</sup>

Steel and Iron: on these two shortfalls, even if all else had been well, the alliance might have stumbled. By 1940, Britain's inability to fill anything close to the Turkish demands for steel and iron was resulting in the gradual collapse of the fragile Turkish economy. Trains and trams were ceasing to run due to the dual crunch of no spare parts from Germany, and no steel to make

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<sup>50</sup> Source: PRO CAB 80/9 COS(40)290 op. cit.

<sup>51</sup> Much of this steel was wanted for fortification on the Çakmak line (i.e. Çatalca lines) in Thrace. The War Office considered this an "absurd figure" and could only be induced, in Apr 1940, to promise 30,000 tons, with 2,000 tons immediately for fortification. Most of this was never sent. PRO WO 106/5743 Marshal-Cornwall to Fisher 17 Apr 1940.

them in Turkey.<sup>52</sup> An order for locomotives, for instance, placed in Britain prior to the war was only just being considered in August 1940; in the meantime, the German engines that these were to have replaced slowly fell apart from lack of spare parts.<sup>53</sup> Some relief was achieved by importing scrap metal from the United States, but the shortage remained acute.

**The Turco-German Barter Agreement of 1940:**

By January 1940, Turkey's economic dependency on Germany, as best exemplified by the shortage of spare parts, was beginning to undermine Britain's plans for economic warfare. On 4 January, Britain requested that the Turks stop shipment to Germany of cotton, wool, olive oil, valonea, and mohair.<sup>54</sup> The Turks were in general accord with the British but could not see how they could grant this request given the conditions of the day. They had 70,000 tons of oils excess to their own requirement which would spoil if not exported to Germany; moreover, they had hoped to barter limited amounts of all the listed items to obtain desperately needed spare parts for the railways, drugs, and medical supplies.<sup>55</sup>

The Germans, for their part, were engaged in a contest with the Turks to see which was economically more important to the other. It soon became clear, with the insatiable German thirst for

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<sup>52</sup> PRO FO 837/1018 Turkey Economic Situation General MEW Monthly Report May 1940.

<sup>53</sup> PRO FO 371/25014

<sup>54</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 23/48/39 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 4 Jan 1940.

<sup>55</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Morgan to FO 12 Mar 1940.

oils of all kinds, that it was the Turks who held the whip hand. The upshot was movement toward a Turco-German barter agreement -- chrome, oils and foodstuffs to be exchanged for war materials, steel products and spare parts at premium rates of exchange. In Ankara, Morgan, the Chargé, judged that neither the Germans nor the Turks approached the barter agreement with much love for the other. Both were playing an extremely "wily game" aiming to get the most for the least.<sup>56</sup>

On 18 January, as news of the proposed exchange began to circulate in London, the MEW wired Knatchbull-Hugesson, that it was "perturbed at news of these negotiations".

Our view is that even if [the] Turkish Government have no real obligations to cease exports of goods to Germany which are essential requirements for the latter's war efforts, it is to her advantage to do so in view of her alliance with Germany's enemies.<sup>57</sup>

The protest accomplished nothing. Menemencioğlu replied that it was not a matter of what Turkey wished to do, but what it had to do; also, if the Turks did not sell oils to the Germans, then the Italians would. Germany would not be hurt by the stoppage of trade, Turkey would.<sup>58</sup> The most he would promise was that the Turks would limit their exports to prewar averages.<sup>59</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson agreed with Menemencioğlu. He considered that for purposes of

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. See also, Medlicott, p. 276-277.

<sup>57</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 MEW to Knatchbull-Hugesson 18 Jan 1940.

<sup>58</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 29 Jan 1940.

<sup>59</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Turkish MFA to MEW 11 Jan 1940. See also, Medlicott, p. 276-277.



economic warfare, it was far better for the Turks to dribble supplies to Germany than for Turkish factories to be closed permanently and British factories compelled to supply items to the Turks which they might otherwise have produced for themselves.<sup>60</sup>

By February, having examined the situation more closely, the MEW moved from its position of absolute opposition to Turco-German trade. It had determined that the embargo on wool and cotton was likely to operate naturally in any case due to the need to clothe a much larger Turkish Army. In fact, by February, the Turks had not only placed a total prohibition on the export of wool, but had contracted to import three million bales of Australian wool.<sup>61</sup> Apart from some tanning supplies, and mohair, the only item likely to make its way to Germany in any appreciable quantity was olive oil, and since the Germans could get all of this they wanted from Italy, and since preemptive purchase was not possible on this scale, it was in Britain's interest not to push Turkey into oil embargo, but to encourage the Turks to squeeze the best possible price from Germany.<sup>62</sup> In other words, the MEW was willing to concede Menemencioğlu's position as being in the best interest of the economic war: sharp trade rather than no trade was Britain's best interest. In retrospect, it seemed to Morgan that all along "the Turks have played very fairly with us except when rushed into

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<sup>60</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 27 Jan 1940.

<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 7 Feb 1940.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., also, Morgan minute.

something by the unfortunate Minister of Commerce but this is not likely to happen a second time".<sup>63</sup>

In February, the Turks gave formal notice that it was their intention to barter with the Germans for spare parts.<sup>64</sup> On 24 February, a barter agreement was signed with the Germans. Turkey would export to Germany 2.6 million Lira worth of tobacco, one million of hazelnuts, TL 400,000 of raisins, TL 300,000 of olive oil, TL 100,000 of figs, TL 300,000 of industrial figs, TL 100,000 of oil seed, TL 100,000 of cotton seed, TL 100,000 of sesame seeds, and TL 50,000 of pistachios, in exchange for desperately needed manufactured goods.<sup>65</sup>

In London, while accepting the necessity of this agreement, MEW and FO officials were stung by Turkish charges that the exchange had been made essential by the extremely uncooperative attitude of British official and commercial circles. Menemencioğlu complained that three officials of the Eti Bank recently had been two months in London with a list of crucial Turkish requirements but had been comprehensively rebuffed even though their demands, Menemencioğlu said, had all been within reason, and in most cases,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Chaplin Memorandum 15 Feb; Knatchbull-Hugesson to MEW 24 Feb; Morgan to Chancery Feb; Menemencioğlu to Knatchbull-Hugesson 2 Feb 1940.

<sup>65</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Knatchbull-Hugesson to MEW 24 Feb 1940.

within the bounds previously agreed.<sup>66</sup> The MEW, much annoyed, declared that it was its policy that Turkey would get no tin from Great Britain until a war trade agreement was concluded.<sup>67</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson tried to calm London by drawing attention to the fact that Turkey was trading only very small amounts of listed material with Germany and was not trading with Italy at all.<sup>68</sup>

By March, as the details of the barter agreement began to trickle into Western capitals, it became clear that the Turks were, in fact, resorting to blackmail -- but of Germany not Britain. In exchange for four million Liras in essential goods, the Turks were importing from Germany material valued at twenty million lira. Much of this material was armaments frozen in Germany by the German arms embargo in September. Menemencioğlu assured Knatchbull-Hugesson, having had experience with German business methods, that Germany would deliver everything this time before any of the Turkish materials left for Germany.<sup>69</sup>

Of the twenty million liras worth of manufactured goods to come from Germany, TL 907,755 was for new armaments,<sup>70</sup> TL 777,700

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<sup>66</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Menemencioğlu to Knatchbull-Hugesson 2 Feb; Saracoglu to Knatchbull-Hugesson 6 Mar; Knatchbull-Hugesson to MEW 2 Mar; Knatchbull-Hugesson Minute 50/61/40; and Knatchbull-Hugesson to MEW 6 Mar 1940.

<sup>67</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 120/27/40 J.S Minute 6 Mar 1940.

<sup>68</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Knatchbull-Hugesson to MEW 9 Mar 1940.

<sup>69</sup> PRO FO 195/2463/120 Knatchbull-Hugesson Minute 11 Mar 1940.

<sup>70</sup> 42 X 75mm guns, 52 X 75mm long guns, 20 X 75mm Bochum guns, 23 X Skoda 105mm howitzers, 24 X Skoda heavy howitzers, 40 X Bochum mountain guns, 57 X 32mm AA guns, and, 30 X 105mm mountain howitzers. PRO FO 195/2463/120 120/36/40 Mar 1940.

for aircraft parts, TL 3,000,517 for vehicles and vehicle parts, and TL 7,013,421 for industrial and railroad parts.<sup>71</sup> The actual value of the material promised was considerably greater than the prices listed would indicate because the Turks insisted that pre-war prices be used to value German goods, while Turkish produce to be delivered in exchange would continue to be valued at its inflated wartime prices. In this way, Morgan judged that the Turks were obtaining the material at a 50% discount.<sup>72</sup> The list calmed official London. It was obvious both that Britain could not supply the desired items -- "I do not see", wrote the commercial secretary, "that we can supply anything from this list ourselves"<sup>73</sup> -- and that such a large diversion of German manufactures for such a small leakage in the blockade was desirable in itself.

The Turco-German barter agreement of March 1940, however, illustrated well much that was wrong with the Anglo-Turkish relationship. Whatever its effect, the agreement grew from a conflux of economic problems -- British unwillingness to provide market relief, Britain's inability to provide weapons and manufactured goods, Turkish economic vulnerability -- which between them deprived the Alliance of much of the value it otherwise might have had. That these problems were, by 1940, virtually insoluble, constituted yet another nearly absolute constraint on the operation

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Morgan Minute.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Minute Commercial Secretary.

of the Alliance. Whatever else it might have been, assurance of Turkey's economic survival by sharp trade with the Germans can hardly be described either as victory or the sound basis for an alliance. Industrial assistance, like material assistance, was still in its infancy when the war began in earnest. But as Elmhirst had seen in 1937 and Lund had confirmed in July 1939, to provide for the Turks the means to outfit themselves would have been by far the most efficient use of British resources; assuming, of course, that it was in Britain's interest to activate the alliance. To fail to assist the Turks industrially would be to condemn them, in the long term, to economic destruction. What might have been provided to good effect in 1938, as was the case with so much else, could not be provided later at all.

**Instructional Assistance:**

One of the surest gauges of a nation's alignment is the presence of foreign military personnel as advisors and instructors within its armed forces, and of its own personnel in the schools of another nation. This was particularly the case with Turkey in the 1930s, the recent history of which, attested beyond question, to the degree of influence such penetration could produce. From the middle years of the decade, the Turks consistently, and increasingly, attempted to convince the British to be their patrons and mentors; the British, equally consistently, declined to accept these roles. By 1939, the Turks were requesting a level of instructional assistance which would have permitted the British to erase entirely the legacy of von der Goltz. Unfortunately for the

Alliance, Britain declined to provide for more than a modicum of the Turkish demands. While failure to provide for Turkey's instructional needs was not in itself sufficient to limit the articulation of the alliance, no discussion of assistance can be complete without at least a short examination of this subject, if only because, in the past, this type of assistance had yielded political fruit for the providing power out of all proportion to the effort required to furnish it, and because the Turkish effort to redirect the training and doctrine of its armed Services toward Western models was symptomatic of so much of what the Turks were trying to do at this time.

#### **Air Instruction:**

The first Turkish request for the provision of military instruction came in 1935, when the Turks, at the time considering the purchase of Hawker Furies,<sup>74</sup> requested that six pilots be trained at British Flight Training Schools (FTS).<sup>75</sup> The Foreign Office considered this "the first concrete evidence that we have of the desire of the Turks to turn to us and I think that we should do all we can to ensure that this application is favourably received by the Air Ministry".<sup>76</sup> The Turkish application was forwarded to the RAF with the warning from the Foreign Office that if Britain failed to provide for Turkish needs, the Germans would likely be

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<sup>74</sup> See Chapter V above.

<sup>75</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E6931/188/44 Courtney to Rendel 26 Nov; also, FO 1011/90 Loraine to Wigram 6 Dec 1935.

<sup>76</sup> PRO FO 371/19041 E6641/6641/44 Loraine to FO 11 Nov 1935. Appendix IX attached. Scott-Helm Minute; and, Rendell Minute.

more forthcoming.<sup>77</sup> The proposal, like the project to purchase a large number of Furies, withered before Treasury disapproval. It was not until 1937, in an increasingly hostile world, and with Anglo-Turkish cooperation in the Mediterranean established, that such applications were given serious consideration.

On 16 March 1937, acting in response to a complaint of his Service Attachés that they had nothing to do,<sup>78</sup> Loraine offered them to President Atatürk for whichever employment he might care to put them.<sup>79</sup> Atatürk enthusiastically seized upon this proposal and promised that he would instruct the General Staff to use them as advisors.<sup>80</sup> "The bow I drew somewhat at a venture", Elmhirst informed Eden, "seems to have scored a bull's eye".<sup>81</sup>

The following evening, Elmhirst, the AAA, was dining in the Ankara Palace Hotel when Atatürk entered with his entourage. Noticing Elmhirst at a nearby table, Atatürk sent an Aide to invite Elmhirst to join him. Atatürk told Elmhirst that the General Staff had been directed to make use of his services, and that he would soon be contacted in this regard.<sup>82</sup>

Elmhirst was contacted. A representative of the General Staff

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<sup>77</sup> PRO FO 371/19041 E6641/6641/44 FO to Air Min 14 Nov 1935.

<sup>78</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E1578/315/33 Loraine to Oliphant 12 Mar 1937.

<sup>79</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E1601/315/44 Loraine to FO 16 Mar 1939.

<sup>80</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E1794/315/94 Loraine to FO 20 March 1937.

<sup>81</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1606/315/44 Loraine to Eden 18 Mar 1937.

<sup>82</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E1794/315/94 op. cit., AAA Despatch No. 2 (AAA/1) 18 Mar 1937 enclosed.

visited him on 2 April and told him that Atatürk had not been serious in his acceptance of Loraine's offer. "They gave me to understand", he wrote, "that Atatürk's remarks were only his polite way of speaking".<sup>83</sup>

The following day, Loraine warned İnönü that if the offer were not taken up it would be withdrawn. Three days later, on 7 April, Colonel Hakki, the DMI, Lieutenant Siret, from the Navy, and Captain Seyfi, from the Air Force, came to visit Elmhirst. They told him that it was the Turkish intention to use him as a consultant in the placing of orders in the UK and in technical matters.<sup>84</sup> On this slender basis was founded the subsequent significant intrusion of British Officers into the fabric of the Turkish military establishment; these officers, like their predecessor von der Goltz and von Sanders, introduced as instructors, but acting more often as ex officio members of the Turkish General Staff. As might be expected, prior to the later half of 1940, British penetration was far more significant in the Navy and Air Force than in the Army.<sup>85</sup>

By Summer 1937, the Turks were making approaches to the RAF to obtain the services of two officers as full time instructors at their Air Staff College. This time the Turkish petition was granted

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<sup>83</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E2347/15/44 Elmhirst to Loraine to Eden 8 Apr 1937.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1606/315/44 op. cit. As Loraine saw from the beginning, the RN and the RAF had much to teach their Turkish opposite numbers. The Army, on the other hand, could offer the Turks little.



and, accordingly, in September, Wing Commander Lee and Squadron Leader McKeaver signed contracts at the Turkish Embassy in London for these positions.<sup>86</sup> In many ways, the decision to look to Britain for instruction was natural, given Turkish determination to build its Air Force with British aircraft.

The next step too was natural. Having bought British planes, and accepted British Air tactics, by November 1938, the Turks were making further requests for instructional assistance, and announced that with British help, it was their intention to model their Air Force on the RAF.<sup>87</sup> This development, Loraine judged quite correctly, was obvious and probably inevitable given the employment of Elmhirst by the Turkish General Staff, and the presence of British Air instructors at the Yildiz Staff College.<sup>88</sup>

In July 1938, the Turks requested two officers for their FTS at Eskisehir: one to teach Air tactics, the other to instruct navigation.<sup>89</sup> Loraine judged that it was most important to accede to this request. He stressed that to provide instruction at this level would constitute a real foot in the door at the genesis of the Turkish Air Force.<sup>90</sup> Loraine was quite right. In effect, the Turks were offering Britain the same position *vis-a-vis* their Air

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<sup>86</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E5571/15/44 Eden to Morgan 22 Sep 1937.

<sup>87</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E6434/78/44 Loraine to Cadogan 1 Nov 1938.

<sup>88</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E6623/78/44 Loraine to Halifax 4 Nov 1938.

<sup>89</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E4317/78/44 Morgan to FO 20 Jul; and E4317/78/44 FO to Air Min 28 Jul 1939.

<sup>90</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E4410/78/44 Loraine to FO 11 Jul 1938.

Force that the Germans had long occupied in the Turkish Army. The RAF was not slow to recognize the importance of this development, and determined that officers fit for this employment could be made available from December 1938.<sup>91</sup> This project too, however, met with Treasury disapproval. The Turks kept asking for people, complained the Treasury, and though the Turks payed the salaries of those sent, the pay supplements were hard to defend in Parliament. The "simplest solution", it judged, "is to avoid further applications from Turkey and I suggest that you should, through the Ambassador, take steps towards this end".<sup>92</sup>

But before the Turks could be properly discouraged, they announced further plans to increase the RAF presence in their Air Force. In November, Colonel Çakmak, the CAS, told Elmhirst that it was the Turkish intention to increase the RAF component of pilot training to 50% of the total.<sup>93</sup> To attain this level, three further instructors would be required at the Eskisehir FTS, three more at the Yildiz Staff College, and a technical officer at the MND.<sup>94</sup> If the British could provide these seven officers, Çakmak promised, all the German instructors employed by the Air Force would be discharged. In the Foreign Office, there was unadulterated desire to acquiesce to Turkish wishes. Cadogan minuted: "this seems

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<sup>91</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E4317/78/44 op. cit.

<sup>92</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E6255 Rae (Treasury) to Mounsey (FO) 26 Oct 1938.

<sup>93</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E6623 Lorraine to Halifax 10 Nov 1938. 5/38 (AAA) 1 Nov enclosed.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

to me very important, and we should press it as hard as we can".<sup>95</sup> Oliphant judged: "We must really do our best to avoid losing the chance of obtaining a footing in the Turkish Air Force and weaning it from its present German mentors".<sup>96</sup>

The snag, once more, seemed likely to be Treasury approval. The Turkish approach, Bowker thought, "very gratifying, but [I] fear we are in for difficulties over finance".<sup>97</sup> The RAF too, was anxious to do its best, and by 18 November was able to put forward three nominees to fill part of the Turkish requirement: Wing Commander R. Pyne and Squadron Leader E. Hudleston to go the Yildiz Staff College, and Flight Lieutenant W. King for FTS Eskisehir.<sup>98</sup>

Not until March 1939 could Treasury reluctance to supplement the salaries of even these three be over-ridden and contracts signed. The agreement between them and the Turkish Government was the standard one. They would teach as agreed, wear civilian clothes at all times, sign their name without indication of rank, and refrain from politics and commerce while in Turkey.<sup>99</sup> While these provisions may seem harsh, they derived from the Turkish experience with the Germans prior to the First World War. The Turks wished to avoid the appearance that their own officers were being

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., Cadogan Minute 17 Nov 1938.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., Oliphant Minute 10 Nov 1938.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., Bowker Minute 15 Nov 1938.

<sup>98</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 No. 802905/38/S. 7A E6861/78/44 Air Min to FO 18 Nov 1938.

<sup>99</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E1389/96/44 Air Min to FO Mar 1939.

subordinated to foreigners, and wanted to make it clear that officers engaged were instructors rather than commanders.<sup>100</sup>

Also in March, the Turks approached the RAF regarding the possibility of sending six Turkish pilots to the UK for a six month attachment to the Central Flying School (CFS). Here it was hoped they would receive training as flying instructors and improve their command of English. This request was made both by Colonel Çakmak, through Elmhirst in March,<sup>101</sup> and in London, by Dr. Aras directly to the Foreign Office in April.<sup>102</sup> It was the RAF this time, and not the Treasury, that could not see how this request could be approved. It feared that the Turks would learn secret RAF methods and tactics at the CFS and might, however inadvertently, pass these on to the Germans.<sup>103</sup> Colville, at the FO, worried that the Turks would be annoyed at the lack of confidence, but concluded that perhaps RAF fears were justified.<sup>104</sup> The Turks, however, were not unduly angry, and replied by repeating their earlier request that an armaments officer be seconded to the MND.<sup>105</sup> The RAF had an officer in mind for this employment, but had only previously been

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<sup>100</sup> PRO WO 208/1975 Debrief Larden/DDMI(1) Oct 1941, p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E2006/86/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 11 Mar; No. 18/39 (AAA) 10 Mar enclosed; E2006/86/44 Baxter to Air Min Mar 1939.

<sup>102</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E2862/86/44 Aras to Oliphant 18 Apr; and, E2862/86/44 Baxter to Air Min Apr 1939.

<sup>103</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E4054 Air Min to FO 5 Jun 1939.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., Colville Minute 9 June; also, E4054/86/44 Oliphant to Aras Jun 1939.

<sup>105</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E4312/86/44 Aras to FO 13 Jun 1939.

approached through Air channels and required diplomatic and Treasury approval before he could be sent.<sup>106</sup>

By the middle of May 1939, the Turks were ready to take the next step in the sequence -- pushed one suspects by the logic of the Joint Guarantees and drawn by the satisfactory performance of attached British officers to date. The Turks, in short, had resolved to dismiss all Germans from the Staff College and wanted all instruction to be given by British Officers.<sup>107</sup> It may be also that the Turks were angered by German efforts during the previous year to obtain political concessions in exchange for instruction provided. In response to a Turkish request, in May 1938, that twelve more officers be accepted for attachment to the German Army, for example, the Germans had attempted to extort a declaration that Turkey would remain neutral in a future conflict. When the Turks refused to consider this, it was proposed that Turkey agree not to send its officers to the academies of other countries, particularly Russia, and that it make concessions aimed at raising the status and ensuring the position of the German Military and Naval missions to the Yildiz Academy.<sup>108</sup> Turkey's response, as we have seen, was to propose that Britain replace the Germans in its military instructional establishment. The first hint the British had that this was the Turkish plan came, as usual,

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<sup>106</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E3294/86/44 Air Min to Bowker 4 May 1939.

<sup>107</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 No. 781/A1.1(a) E3655/86/44 Boyle (Air Min) to Baggally FO 16 May 1939.

<sup>108</sup> ASW Vol V, Book I, no. 410, Keller to Weizacker 17 May 1938.

through Air channels. Soundings taken in Ankara revealed that this was, in fact, the Turkish intention, and determined that this resolve originated with no lesser a personage than the Marshal himself.<sup>109</sup>

In Summer 1939, London was formally advised of the Turkish desire to receive a much higher level of instructional assistance. During his first trip to London, in July 1939, General Orbay unfolded far-reaching plans designed to place the instruction of the Turkish Air Force almost entirely in British hands. Turkey desired, he told Newall, three more RAF instructors: one more for Air tactics at FTS Eskisehir, an armaments instructor, and a third for the Mechanics school at the Kayseri aircraft works.<sup>110</sup> It also wanted a considerable number of vacancies on RAF courses: twenty-four at British FTS, four at the CFS, ten at the electronic warfare (EW) school, twenty on the mechanics course at the Bristol Rolls factory, and others to a total of 340 positions.<sup>111</sup> When the revised Orbay list of aircraft requirements arrived in August, it reiterated the request for three additional RAF instructors and raised the number of FTS vacancies requested to fifty-eight.<sup>112</sup>

In Turkey, anticipating RAF rejection, and, one expects,

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> PRO AIR 8/259 Minutes of a Meeting Between the CAS and General Orbay at the Air Ministry on the 31st July 1939 31 Jul 1939.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E5508/86/44 Telecon Elmhirst/Bowker 2 Aug; also, AIR 8/262 APS to DCAS 17 Oct 1939. At the time of the request, there were five RAF instructors in Turkey.

Treasury horror, Elmhirst informed Colonel Çakmak that there was little hope that assistance on this scale would be possible.<sup>113</sup> In 1939, in truth, there was no way that the RAF could have provided assistance to this level without damaging its own programme, and essentially, until 1941, the level of instructional assistance already provided by the RAF established the limit in the provision of Air instruction beyond which London was unwilling to go.

**Naval Instruction and Personnel Assistance:**

The decision to replace all Germans in the Turkish military instructional establishment extended to the German naval personnel at Yildiz, many of whom had been in Turkey since shortly after the First World War. In February 1939, cautious approaches were made to Captain Parker, the NAA, regarding the possible replacement of the three German Captains then teaching at Yildiz. Rear-Admiral Arnauld de la Perriere, a First World War submarine ace, had retired in August 1938, and it was probable that the Turks would also seek a replacement for him. The "matter will have to be delicately handled" Parker warned Godfrey, the DNI, "for above all people the Turks shy like mad if they think something is being pushed upon them. Also they abhor any suggestion of a Mission".<sup>114</sup> By May 1939, the Treasury had been brought to accept, in principle, to pay

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 M.06439/38 E2315/272/44 Adm to FO 27 Mar 1939.

the salary supplements for the necessary instructors.<sup>115</sup> In June, the contracts of the German instructors were not renewed.<sup>116</sup>

By April 1940, excellent relations had been established between the RN and the Turkish Navy. Requests for assistance were numerous and dealt with almost as a matter of routine by both Services. On 15 April, Lieutenant Pennel (RN) arrived in Istanbul to inspect torpedoes at the request of the Turkish Navy.<sup>117</sup> The next day, Commander Cameron (RN) inspected boom defences in the Dardanelles and Bosphorus and at Izmir.<sup>118</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson (RM) had arrived in Turkey, also on 15 April, to advise the Turks on the siting of the guns they had purchased from Britain and on general matters related to harbour and anchorage defence.<sup>119</sup> On 9 May, a party of Naval Surveyors arrived in Turkey to assist the Turks in the hydrographical survey of the Straits then under way.<sup>120</sup> On 11 May, Commander Wolfson (RNVR) arrived in Turkey to assist with the Balkan Intelligence Centre then being established in Istanbul.<sup>121</sup> Slightly later, he was followed by Lieutenant

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<sup>115</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 M.01371/39 E3284/22/44 Treasury to Adm to Baggallay 2 May 1939.

<sup>116</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E4157/272/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Jun 1939.

<sup>117</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/150 150/19/40 NAA to Knatchbull-Hugesson 10 May 1940.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.



Commander Bownen (RNR), sent to Istanbul to assist the Consul General in the disembarkation of road making supplies for the construction of military roads in Thrace.<sup>122</sup>

More than was the case with the RAF, however, RN training assistance focused on bringing Turkish students to Britain for advanced instruction in Naval schools and for service on His Majesty's Ships. In March 1939, the Turks proposed to place three Cadets on the three year advanced course in Greenwich.<sup>123</sup> In April, the Admiralty agreed to this request,<sup>124</sup> and Dr. Aras was so informed through the FO.<sup>125</sup> In June, the Turks named their prospective candidates -- Kemaleddin Bener, and Ata Nutku -- but withdrew their candidacies when it became clear that the training they had received to date would not have allowed them to follow the demanding syllabus.<sup>126</sup>

By Spring 1939, there were four Turkish Naval Officers attending RN technical Schools.<sup>127</sup> In July, Dr. Aras passed a request to the Admiralty that these should remain in Britain for a year and gain experience serving on British ships.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E2546/272/44 Adm to FO 6 Apr 1939.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., and, E1852/272/44 Adm to FO 13 Mar 1939.

<sup>125</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E2546/272/44 FO to Aras 12 Apr 1939.

<sup>126</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E4650/272/44 Aras to FO 27 Jun; and No. CW 12773/39 E5168/272/44 Adm to FO 18 Jul 1939.

<sup>127</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 M.06439/38 E2315/272/44 Adm to FO 27 Mar 1939.

<sup>128</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E5240/272/44 Aras to FO 21 Jul 1939.

Accordingly, the Admiralty agreed that after the completion of their courses, Lieutenant. N. Kosal would serve aboard H.M.S Grenada, Lieutenant Uler on H.M.S Greyhound, Engineer Lieutenant S. Deirsoy on the Sussex, and Lieutenant W. Dagada aboard Maidstone -- all of these vessels forming part of the Mediterranean Fleet.<sup>129</sup> In May, it was agreed that two Turkish Naval Officers would attend the Navy control of contraband (CCB) course and then proceed to Haifa to gain practical experience in the contraband organization there.<sup>130</sup>

#### **Army Instruction and Personnel Assistance:**

The Army also provided some assistance, though in its case, aid was restricted to specialized and technical branches of the Service, and was on a limited scale before the later half of 1940. In December 1939, officers from the foundered Butler mission washed into Turkey and quickly began to drift into military schools.<sup>131</sup> This mission was to have been in partial response to Orbay's request in London for technical assistance.<sup>132</sup> Captain Lander, an Engineer expert on coastal defences,<sup>133</sup> Major Larden, an AA expert, Major Hume, an AT specialist, Major Castle, a signaller,

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<sup>129</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 C.W 14327/39 E5627/272/44 Admiralty to FO 9 Aug; and Carter (Adm) to Cakir Aug 1939.

<sup>130</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/150 150/19/40 NAA to Knatchbull-Hugesson 10 May 1940.

<sup>131</sup> See Chapter XI below.

<sup>132</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 MAA to WO 14 Nov 1939.

<sup>133</sup> Arrived 20 Nov 1939 on special invitation of the Turkish General Staff. PRO WO 106/5742 op. cit, WO to GOCME 22 Sep; and, MAA to GOCME 20 Nov 1939.

cypher expert, Major Hunt, from the Ordnance Corps, and Captain Brinsmead, an Engineer specialist on field defences, were in Turkey by the end of the year and were all eventually employed by the Turks as instructors and informal advisors for the General Staff.<sup>134</sup>

Unlike their RAF and RN counter-parts, however, the soldiers arrived without specific instructions or knowledge as to how they would be employed. For some time, it seemed likely that they would not be used at all; but in the new year British equipment began to arrive in appreciable quantities, and since the Turks had not been at all prepared to receive this material, the soldiers quickly found themselves pressed into service as technical advisors.<sup>135</sup> The Turks' need of their services was all the more acute since the Turkish Army had no AA or AT specializations -- these functions being assumed by an undifferentiated Artillery Corps -- and were altogether without an Ordnance Corps.<sup>136</sup> Individual British Officers soon began to find themselves appointed to instructional positions. Larden, for instance, was appointed to the Gunnery School to conduct AA courses.<sup>137</sup> He was joined there by Captain Lewis (RE) sent from Britain to teach the use of searchlights.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> PRO WO 208/1975 Debrief Larden/DDMI(1) Oct; also, WO 106/5742 MAA to WO 14 Nov 1940.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> PRO WO 208/1972 Lewis Report 1941.

With the exception of a Turkish Military delegation invited to the UK by the Army Council to discuss Civil Defence in July 1939, for the moment, little more was done to help train the Turkish Army.<sup>139</sup> The role of British Army instructors remained marginal until the second half of 1940 when a large number of officers arrived to assist in the teaching of a wide variety of technical specializations.<sup>140</sup>

In January 1940, the Turks gave to General Butler, then in Ankara,<sup>141</sup> a comprehensive list of the type of training assistance they required which would have to be provided in British and French schools.<sup>142</sup> There were presently on course in Germany, Butler was told, 166 Turks -- mainly Engineers, but including three on the three year Staff course. The Turks desired to remove these from Germany and place them in Western schools. In September, in fact, the Turks had withdrawn all Officers on course in Germany, but had sent them back when it became clear that the war, for the moment, would not embrace Turkey.<sup>143</sup> Nevertheless, as the Turks

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<sup>139</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4957/143/44 McGiver (HO) to Colville 8 Jul; and 0152/6419/MI.1 E5198/143/44 WO to FO 12 Jul 1939.

<sup>140</sup> PRO WO 201/1975 op. cit.

<sup>141</sup> See Chapter XI below.

<sup>142</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 Annex VII. Orbay's list had only given numbers of course positions and instructors required. Somewhat earlier, Wavell too had received an indication of the level of support the Turks desired, but in this case, he was told no more than that 200 positions for specialists and technical officers would be required. CAB 54/9 DCOS 135 op. cit. For Butler mission, see chapter below.

<sup>143</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XIX no. 59 Paris to Ankara 27 Sep 1939.

confessed to Butler, the presence of Turkish Officers on course in a country at war with Turkey's allies made them rather uncomfortable, and it would be far preferable, they thought, if these could be absorbed by the training systems of Britain and France.

In addition to the soldiers indicated above as training in Germany, there were also a number of technical personnel -- and more soldiers -- whom the Turkey wished to have trained in the UK. Turkish training desires are summarized in the table below:

**Training Assistance Desired (Outside Turkey)**

Ser	Type of Assistance	Number of Positions
1.	Pilots	200
2.	Misc Specialist Officers	not defined
3.	Communications and Signals Officers	20-40
4.	Armoured Officers/NCOs	200
5.	Intelligence Officers	not defined
6.	Mechanics	50-100
7.	Engineers/Technicians (military specialties)	180
8.	Mechanical Engineers	60
9.	Electricians and Electrical Engineers	16
10.	Metallurgical Engineers	27
11.	Civil Engineers	27

12.	Military Engineers	28
13.	Electrical Technicians	8
14.	Chemical Engineers	27
14.	Metallurgical Workers	8

Unfortunately for the Turks, that portion of their requirement which was military could not be accommodated by a British training system already stretched to account for massive wartime expansion, and much of what remained lay not within the purview of the Armed Services but of the British Council -- only just gearing for war, and in 1940, not able to provide assistance to the level requested. The best that could be done, for the moment, was to help place specific cases.<sup>144</sup> On 10 April 1940, for example, Aras requested that places be obtained for a Turkish mechanic, Sabri Gündüz, at the Austin Motor works where it was hoped he would gain expertise servicing Rolls-Royce aero engines.<sup>145</sup> On 24 April, Aras asked that a position be made available at the Furness shipyard so that a Mr. Nafiz Tozan, a naval architect trained in Germany, might

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<sup>144</sup> It was not until Jan 1941, with the virtually complete withdrawal of German technicians that Britain began to make serious efforts to meet this need. On 23 Jan, Turkey requested immediately 45 technicians to assist in the military factories and on defence projects. Eden considered this to be "of vital importance" and a means of "strengthening our position in Turkey by a form of infiltration". Orme Sargent, in charge of the negotiations, considered the Turkish request to be an "invitation to forestall the Germans at their own game". PRO ADM 116/4743 Technicians for the Turkish Government.

<sup>145</sup> PRO FO 371/25015 R4894/242/44 Morgan to FO 9 Apr 1940.

further his education and gain familiarity with British designs.<sup>146</sup> Until 1941, this was all Britain was prepared, and to a large extent, able to do.

As with most facets of Anglo-Turkish relations in our period, in its requests for instructional assistance, Turkey gave the British important openings, and left Britain free to define the degree to which it would make use of these while understanding that in doing so it was also defining the scope of the Alliance. As was generally the case, the level of British response was neither sufficient for Turkish needs, provided early enough to be useful, nor sufficiently enthusiastic to generate any exceptional reaction from the Turks. In this, the melancholy story of Industrial, material and financial report was simply repeated. It must be said once more however, that the inadequate British response, at least after 1939, derived as much from the inability of an over-stretched Britain to satisfy even its own needs -- let alone those of its allies -- as from unwillingness to provide assistance.

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<sup>146</sup> PRO FO 371/25015 R5536/260/44 Crabbe to Bowker 24 Apr 1940.

## Chapter XI -- Planning Against Germany 1939-1940

Planning for war against Germany in our period passed through three distinct phases. In the first, prior to the acceptance of a Continental Commitment, it was assumed that a war against Germany would involve the British solely as participants in the economic conflict while Britain's continental associates waged the war on Land. In such a conflict, the main role allotted to Turkey by British planners was to act as Britain's Balkan assistant by cooperating in the imposition of Blockade. In the second period, from the acceptance of an Continental Commitment in December 1938 until the outbreak of war, it was most commonly assumed that war, if waged, would be against a Italo-German combination and would involve the dispatch of an Expeditionary Force to the Continent. Turkey's function here, was once again to second Britain in the waging of economic warfare -- against Germany and Italy -- and, in addition, to block Germany's expansion toward the Middle East; to assist in probable operations against the Italian position in the Eastern Mediterranean; and, still a shadowy notion, to participate in potential operations in the Balkans. In the third period, extending from the outbreak of war until May 1940, the Continental Commitment became a reality and it was assumed that war in the Eastern Mediterranean, if the war spread there, would be against Germany alone, or against a German-Russian combination. In this last period, it became necessary for Britain to coordinate its strategy with those of its Allies, France and Turkey. Unfortunately for the prospects of the Alliance, the reality of British regional weakness -- a problem not likely to be quickly addressed due to the



necessity of building an effective force in France -- so clashed with the aspirations of its Allies that no common strategy was possible. If this were not enough, Turkish and French strategy were also discordant with Paris forever arguing for a more audacious policy, and Ankara always reluctant to assume forward obligations without sufficient gages of Allied support. As a final and perhaps fatal calamity, interallied planning was further burdened by lack of consensus regarding the best policy for the Allies to adopt toward Italy. Except for a brief period during the Spring-Summer 1939, Britain continued to insist that no kind of aggressive policy could be pursued against either Germany or Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean without prior assurance of at least Italy's neutrality. Paris, for its part, was much less inclined to view Italy's attitude as being a decisive consideration in the formation of regional strategy and continually contended that acceptance of the possibility of Italian hostility was the opportunity cost for the opening of the crucial second front without which there could be no victory in the conflict against Germany. Ankara tended to share London's caution, but tempered it with a rather gallic determination that if Italy refused to be reconciled, planning and preparation go forward to annihilate it when first hesitation began to give way to malevolence. At the end of the line, in May 1940, if we except the case of operational planning against the Dodecanese Islands, the Allies were no closer to consensus than in May 1939 and had failed to produce a single viable operational plan. Without such consensus, and without such a plan, there could never have

been effective operation of the Alliance against Germany.

**Planning for War Against Germany prior to 1939:**

Prior to 1939, operational planning for war against Germany was restricted geographically to Western Europe. In the initial Staff conversations with France in January 1938, for instance, there was no reference to a possible Mediterranean theatre. Anglo-French thinking was quite clear on this point. Germany was not a Mediterranean power, and so, could not be engaged in the Mediterranean with conventional forces.<sup>1</sup> In a solely continental struggle, the British Army would play an inconsequential part. By March 1937, it was assumed that Germany could field thirty-six Infantry, and three Mobile Divisions immediately; could arm an additional fifteen Divisions per year, while holding twenty-one to thirty-one *Landwehr* Divisions in reserve.<sup>2</sup> The French could have twenty Active, twenty Reserve, one Mechanized, four Cavalry and eight North-African divisions ready within one month.<sup>3</sup> The Italian Army could muster, it was believed, forty Divisions within ten days, raise another ten within thirty days, and twenty more within

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<sup>1</sup> PRO CAB 53/8 COS 228th Mtg 28 Jan 1938.

<sup>2</sup> PRO WO 190/520 Brief Note on the Strength of the Armies in Germany, France and Italy 2 Mar 1937.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

ninety days.<sup>4</sup> The British, in contrast, thirty days after the outbreak of hostilities, would field a single Division with others straggling on to the field at indeterminate intervals, and even these would be without armour, AA guns, or AT capability.<sup>5</sup> There was no continental commitment, because such a commitment was impossible. Two things were assumed from this: firstly, that Britain would have time to raise, arm and train a force before sending it to the Continent; and secondly, that the existing balance of forces would make such a delay possible. Thus, it was supposed that economic factors would have time to operate before the fighting, for Britain, even commenced; and since a war with Germany was bound to be a long one, economic pressure, it was thought, would probably prove decisive as British doctrine asserted

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid; also, PRO CAB 64/14 Rearmament and Foreign Policy C.J.D to CIGS 16 Jun 1936:

Estimate of Land and Air Forces available Summer 1936

Nation	Immediately	6 Months	Air Strength
France	53 Divs (8 NAF)	61 Divs (16 NAF)	1600/2000
Belgium	15 Divs	21 Divs	180/180
USSR	75-95	105-125(west only)	4000/2000
Italy	51	71	1200/1200
Czechs	18 (4 Mech Bdes)	28	400/300
Germany	36-51	40-56	1500/1800
Japan	33	48	500/?

<sup>5</sup> PRO CAB 64/14 Rearmament and Foreign Policy, op. cit. By Dec 1938, as the Palestine problem began to recede, it was hoped that Britain might be able to field 2 Regular and 1 mobile Divisions within 21 days; 2 Regular Divisions within forty days; and 2 more Divisions four months later: 7 Divisions total within 6 months. CAB 53/43 COS 809 State of the Army in Relation to its Role 16 Dec 1938. In practice, a more realistic scale and the one used for Anglo-French combined planning, was 2 Divisions at Z +30 days; 1 more Division at Z +90; and another sometime thereafter. CAB 29/160 AFC(J)4 4rth Mtg 30 Mar 1939. See also, B. Bond, British Military Policy Between the Wars, (Clarendon: Oxford) 1980.

it had been in the First World War.<sup>6</sup> In consideration of Economic warfare London was the dominant partner in the Anglo-French relationship.<sup>7</sup>

How did Turkey fit into such a war? In three ways. The JPC noted that so long as Britain remained as feeble as it was, it would have "no adequate military security against attack except through the cooperation of other powers".<sup>8</sup> Turkey was the only nation between the Carpathians and the Lebanon range, the JPC considered, capable of halting a German advance South East. This being the case, Turkey came to be viewed as a break-water to a potential German advance against Britain's Middle Eastern position -- the defence of which was, by 1937, the second priority of

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<sup>6</sup> "Too much, it is now agreed, was expected of the blockade in the Second World War. The able and patient men who prepared the countries for the titanic and incalculable challenges of modern warfare must be allowed a small irrational quota of mysticism and hope; each country deceives itself as much as its opponents in attributing improbable potentialities to certain of its less understood weapons. Blockade was a familiar enough thing in European warfare; but, adorned and transmorgified with a new name and an ill-defined promise, it had become in 1939 Britain's secret weapon". W. N. Medlicott, The Economic Blockade, (HMSO: London), 1952. Vol I, p. xi. Economic warfare, in British doctrine, included: psychological operations, sabotage, preemption and blockade; in short, everything except "attrition of resources through actual fighting" -- which alone is truly decisive. From February 1938, the economic planners were arguing for the creation of a "Ministry of Economic Warfare" to oversee all aspects of the economic war including: legislative action (aimed at restricting an enemy's commerce), diplomatic action (aimed at control of neutrals), and military action (aimed at indirect attack). Medlicott, p. 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> Medlicott, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> PRO CAB 53/38 COS 717 "Terms of Reference": Planning Against Germany 26 Apr 1938.

imperial defence.<sup>9</sup> After December 1938, when Britain accepted a continental commitment, Turkey's function as breakwater became entirely more significant because in the event of war with Germany there simply would be no British forces available to reinforce the Middle East.<sup>10</sup>

The second way that Turkey fitted into planning against Germany prior to 1939 was as a probable ally in the waging of economic war. It was obvious from recent events, the planners thought, that Turkey's interests "lie with our own" and they looked to Turkey to cooperate in the imposition of blockade -- Britain's best weapon in the absence of effective Land and Air forces.<sup>11</sup>

The German Economy was vulnerable in several respects. Germany was a food importer. It also imported much of its tobacco, timber, wool, rubber, cotton, and wood. Most particularly, it was vulnerable in that it was dependent upon the importation of certain

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<sup>9</sup> "If Great Britain is to intervene in the unlikely event of a German aggression in the immediate future, the first essential is bound up with the integrity of Belgium and Northern France. The second essential is security in the Middle East". PRO CAB 64/14 Rearmament and Foreign Policy, op. cit. See also CAB 53/43 COS 824 Strategic Importance of Egypt and the Arab Countries of the Middle East.

<sup>10</sup> PRO CAB 53/43 COS 811 State of the Army in Relation to the Present International Situation 19 Dec 1938. By 1938 the Government of India had accepted the planned deployment of certain of its forces to Egypt (Heron force), Aden (Hawk force), and the Iranian Oil fields (Scheme P). Forces promised were, however, small and poorly armed. CAB 53/48 COS 895 Plan of Operations (India) 1938 27 Apr 1939. See also, B. Bond, "The Continental Commitment in British Strategy in the 1930s", The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement. W. Mommsen (edt.). (George Allen & Unwin: London) 1983. p. 197-206.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

minerals essential to modern industry: aluminum, asbestos, chrome, copper, iron, lead, nickel, petroleum products, pyrites, tin and zinc.<sup>12</sup> While it might be able to stock-pile some of this material, Germany would be vulnerable in the long term to interdiction and preemption.<sup>13</sup> Many of these materials -- in particular, food, wool, cotton, chrome and copper -- Germany imported in part from Turkey. Others, like petroleum, which Germany imported from Rumania and Russia, could far more easily be interdicted if the RN were allowed into the Black Sea. Turkey, of course, was the gatekeeper of the Black Sea.

The third advantage of a Turkish alliance in the case of war against Germany -- particularly after March 1939 -- was that the Turkish connection, it was thought, might open the door to cooperation with Russia in an area of the world in which Soviet forces could operate. Turkey alone of the minor states of Eastern Europe did not refused to consider cooperation with the Soviets during the crisis following the purported ultimatum to Rumania. The JPC considered that:

It is possible that Russia might participate in a combination of powers to resist German aggression in South-East Europe. In that event, an alliance with Turkey would have the advantage of linking up Russia directly with the allies and thus enable more effective use of our combined economic and military resources.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> PRO CAB 53/44 COS 831(JP) European Appreciation 1939-1940 Part V Appendix II 26 Jan 1939.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 CO 873(JP) Alliance with Turkey and Greece 1 Apr 1939.

The defence of Britain's Middle Eastern position, the economic war, cooperation with Russia: it is hard to resist the conclusion, given these ingredients, that regional strategy in its aspirations derived in the main from the purported lessons of the First World War, and represented as much an attempt to capitalize on the lost opportunities of 1915 as a realistic appraisal of Britain's position in the last years before the war. This fact is not without significance in reference to the further development of British strategy because, while the aspirations persisted, planning to bring them closer to realization served much more to show how the vulnerability of Britain's regional position had increased in the intervening decades since the end of the First World War than how Britain's enduring strategic goals might be achieved.

The Italian dilemma, however, undercut arguments which tended to lead to the conclusion that an aggressive policy in the Balkans would be to Britain's benefit and was symptom, cause, and the single most important ingredient in the malaise which paralysed British regional strategy. While Britain recognized Turkey as a valuable ally against Germany, it was also inclined to bind consideration of an active alliance with Turkey, even in this early period, with the same strategic dilemma in reverse with which the British constrained themselves in planning against Italy. If the Turkish alliance might antagonize Italy, particularly if German hostility were a given, then its price was insupportable given British weakness; that is, the Services tended to assert that a Turkish alliance regardless of its terms could never off-set the

cost of Italian enmity, which such an alliance would, by its nature, necessarily inflame. If Germany were the enemy, then the JPC considered the "overriding consideration is that we should not alienate Italy and if possible we should detach her from the Axis".<sup>15</sup> This last was not due to any preference for fighting the German enemy but was argued from British weakness. Britain could not contemplate war against more than one power and Germany was the most dangerous of its potential enemies. In addition, the planners still very much desired to avoid anything like a new commitment. It was not so much that Turkey was considered in itself as likely to involve onerous commitment, but that Turkey would come with considerable diplomatic baggage; more particularly, an understanding with Turkey would be a commitment, by default, to Greece, and this also was considered likely to awaken Italian suspicion and resentment. Since, in the opinion of the JPC, "an alliance with Greece is more of a commitment than an asset",<sup>16</sup> until the end, the Services balked at any suggestion that Britain should assume obligations extending beyond the Catalca lines;<sup>17</sup> and since an alliance with Turkey would tend to involve acceptance of obligations by default to Greece, even limited commitments to Turkey were viewed by the Services as emergency measures rather than practical strategy.

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<sup>15</sup> PRO CAB 55/3 JPC 245th Mtg 27 Mar 1939 (Composition: Slessor, Danckwerts, Kennedy).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 5



### Planning in 1939:

It was not until Spring 1939, when threats to the peace had obviously given way to prewar crisis, that planning to actually fight Germany in the Balkans began. Such planning commenced immediately after the complex of events resulting in guarantees being extended to Poland, Rumania, Greece and Turkey, and passed through two distinct stages. In the first, it was assumed that Britain would be fighting both Italy and Germany. In the second, after the actual outbreak of war, Britain was confronted with the more difficult case of having to wage war against Germany without antagonizing a neutral Italy. This planning differed from previous in that conventional operations were considered as probable concomitants of economic pressure where previous planning had been for economic warfare alone. The change of basic premise was conditioned not only by an altered strategic perception, but by the fact that British strategy was being made to conform with that of Paris and Ankara -- Britain's new-found allies. It was very well for London to speak of economic and naval pressure, but when the Tripartite Alliance came to have a Land application, as it did in consideration of South-Eastern Europe, Britain became a junior partner.

Initially, the disagreement which later arose between Britain and France as to the proper regional strategy to adopt in the case of war with Germany did not exist. On 30 March 1939, the Anglo-French Committee (AFC) considered Broad Strategic Policy for the

Conduct of the War.<sup>18</sup> They concluded that with Axis preparations for war as advanced as they were, "if war occurred, our enemies would endeavour to exploit their preparedness by a rapid victory".<sup>19</sup> The only way to achieve a rapid victory was through the defeat of either of the Allied principles, and therefore, the most likely Axis attack would aim at rapid decision against either Britain or France. Geography being what it was, such a blow was far more likely to be directed at France than Britain.<sup>20</sup> If France survived, the war would enter a second phase in which economic warfare would prove decisive and Germany would be so weakened by economic pressure that it would collapse before an eventual offensive in the West.<sup>21</sup> In all stages of such a war, Near Eastern or Balkan operations would be distractions and side-shows best avoided unless defensively intended and in response to direct Axis attack. While this remained the guiding British prognosis -- so directly did it follow from basic British perceptions and realities -- in France it was largely displaced by other considerations.

At the Eighth meeting of the Anglo-French committee, on 4 April 1939, after the decision already had been made in principle to extend guarantees to Rumania, Poland and Greece, it was decided that the French delegation should prepare an appreciation to

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<sup>18</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)19 Broad Strategic Policy for the Conduct of the War 30 Mar 1939.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

consider the value of Poland and South East Europe to the Alliance.<sup>22</sup> The document which followed, Military Implications of an Anglo-French Guarantee of Poland and Roumania,<sup>23</sup> gave clear warning that Paris was beginning to dissent from what London continued to think was established strategy.

The French judged that no state in the East would be able to put up much resistance against a determined German attack. Rumania could mobilize twenty-eight Divisions of various descriptions but "the value of the army is extremely low; the human material is poor, and the armaments of varying types".<sup>24</sup> Poland could mobilize a considerable number of Divisions, given time, but had weapons to arm only fifty-four -- and those on an indifferent scale.<sup>25</sup> Against these the Germans were judged capable of sending seventy-seven first line, and twenty-eight to thirty second line Divisions.<sup>26</sup> It was clear that the guaranteed states would require assistance; but neither the British nor the French, geography dictated, could provide assistance without Turkish cooperation. Therefore, the French continued, if the guarantees were to be made good, "it is important that Turkey should be in on our side".<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J) 8th Mtg 4 Apr 1939.

<sup>23</sup> PRO CAB 29/159 ATC 6 Military Implications of an Anglo-French Guarantee of Poland and Roumania 4 Apr 1939.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Unfortunately, the price of Turkish adherence to the Alliance would likely be military support and the assurance of Balkan cohesion. The cost of these, in turn, according to Paris, was certain to be the despatch of an Expeditionary Force to the Balkans, and, in the judgement of Paris, this would be best sent to Salonika. If such a force were not sent soon, and something done to prepare for an eventual Allied movement to the Balkans, the French insisted, there would be no effective alliance with Turkey, no Balkan cohesion, and therefore, no effective assistance to the guaranteed states. Poland would be a lost cause, Rumania would gradually fall into the German orbit, and Turkey would slip into neutrality. If all of this were allowed to happen, Gamelin assured all who would listen, there would be no Eastern Front, and the Germans would turn to France in the Spring 1940 with forces grown considerably superior and with no chance of a second front being created in the East.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the French assessment continued, an Eastern Front was essential if Germany were to be defeated, if, indeed, France were to be preserved; and the price of such a front would necessarily be a deployment to the Balkans -- preferably to Salonika<sup>29</sup> -- as well

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<sup>28</sup> P. Reynaud, la France a Sauve l'Europe, (Flammarion: Paris) 1947. Vol I, p. 594. Proces Verbal of Meeting in the Ministry of War of Service Ministers and Service Chiefs with the Premier.

<sup>29</sup> M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, (Heinemann: London), 1952(1950). p. 11-12. French conceptions in 1939 followed directly from those of the previous decades which had always stressed the importance of a second active front in the East in order to draw off German strength and perhaps avert altogether the requirement to fight in France. See N. Jordan, "The Cut Price War on the Peripheries: The French General Staff, the Rhineland, and Czechoslovakia", Paths to War, R. Overly (edt.), (MacMillan: London) 1989. p. 128-166. See also, PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)76 Note on the

as the active collaboration of Turkey with the West since Turkey not only provided the gateway for provision of assistance to the guaranteed states, but was also the nation which by its nature would determine the attitude of Rumania, Greece, and Bulgaria and thus was the indispensable ingredient in any Balkan combination.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Turkey was a bridge to Russia, and poor as Russo-Western relations might be, in the Balkans and through Turkey, they could join hands.<sup>31</sup> Finally, to sweeten the pot even further, Turkey was, in the doctrine of Paris, the nation the active alliance of which with the West, was most likely to convince Italy to exchange nonbelligerence for true and lasting neutrality<sup>32</sup> by rendering Italy's position in the Mediterranean untenable should it decide to enter the war on the wrong side.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the purpose of Staff Conversations was not to decide how to meet an Italian attack, but how to make it certain that Italy would never dare make an attack.<sup>34</sup> In short, where the French differed in their assessment from London in regards to their Italian policy, was that they expected to ensure Italian neutrality by underlining

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Consequences of the Possible Neutrality of Italy 23 May 1939.

<sup>30</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)80 Note on Eventual Military Cooperation with Turkey 23 May; also, AFC(J)88 Operations in the Eastern Mediterranean Jamet to Pownall 2 Aug 1939.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> PRO CAB 29/159 AFC 22 Franco-British Cooperation in the Mediterranean and North African Areas 22 Apr 1939.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

for the Italians the consequences of potential belligerence. Thus, French thinking came full circle. An aggressive Balkan policy became sufficient cause for itself, in that, by ensuring Italian neutrality, it would permit France to use the fourteen Divisions otherwise frozen in North Africa for Balkan operations<sup>35</sup> -- possibly to provide the nucleus for an offensive against Germany through the Balkans.

The answer for Allied weakness in the West, according to Paris, was a high level of activity in the East. An aggressive policy in the Balkans, Paris insisted, would convince the Italians to remain neutral, encourage the nations of South-Eastern Europe to rally to the Allies, and ensure the final defeat of Germany by providing the Eastern front without which no Allied victory was possible. In effect, the answer to Allied weakness was a policy which sought to shift most of the cost for the defeat of Germany onto a coalition of Eastern allies. French logic moved inexorably through honorable obligation, to self-preservation, to the defeat of the enemy; through defence, to defensive deployment, to offensive preparation, to offensive: it also slashed through all the British dilemmas while running completely counter to the main thrust of British thinking. The touchstone, and prerequisite of such a policy was an effective alliance with Turkey because without it, there would be no Balkan cohesion, no effective cooperation with Russia, and little chance that Italy could be effectively

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<sup>35</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)76 Note on the Consequences of the Possible Neutrality of Italy 23 May 1939.

intimidated.

As if to underline the growing divergence between Britain and France, in April 1939, the JPC made an assessment of its own. It concluded that in the event of a German attack on the Balkans, nothing could be done to halt the Germans short of the Turkish frontier. Here, it was probable, the Turks could hold without aid for some time, perhaps indefinitely -- an excellent thing, since no assistance would be available from Britain until Z +10 to Z +12 months.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the JPC implied, discussion of an Eastern Front based on the Balkan and Little Ententes was a waste of time while Allied relative weakness remained as debilitating as it was.

Thus, by the time negotiations began to go forward toward the Joint Guarantee, the French were beginning to argue that Balkan operations would be the price of an Eastern front and an Eastern front would be a prerequisite for victory in a war against Germany: the British, meanwhile, continuing to assert that they would be in no position to undertake Balkan operations for quite some time. Paris said, you can't win the game if you don't buy a ticket. London countered you can't buy a ticket if you haven't the means. Salonika, General Jamet wrote Pownall in August 1939, "interests us in the highest degree".<sup>37</sup> The British, Pownall might well have answered, were rather more intrigued by the Air defences of the City of London.

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<sup>36</sup> PRO CAB 53/47 COS 878(JP) Alliance with Turkey 15 Apr 1939.

<sup>37</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)88 Operations in the Eastern Mediterranean Jamet to Pownall 2 Aug 1939.

The British General Staff, furthermore, was uncomfortable with the whole idea of a deployment to Salonika. It considered that sixteen Divisions would be required to defend Greece alone against a determined German attack. The Greeks having only ten, the shortfall would have to be made up by the British and French; and they could "not anticipate themselves being able to make any troops available" for such an operation in the foreseeable future.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, if the Army was uncomfortable with the idea of an Expeditionary Force in itself, it was doubly ill at ease with the notion of an Expeditionary Force to Salonika. Kennedy, the DMI&O, was a veteran of the fruitless Salonika campaign of the First World War. Ironside, the CIGS, and Wavell, the GOCME, also had campaigned in the Near East -- the setting for several famous British fiascos. Ironside warned that French intrigues were likely to lead to a "repetition of the unfortunate Salonika expedition of the last war".<sup>39</sup> He was against a Balkan offensive and considered a defensive policy, at the outset, to be the only "sound course".<sup>40</sup> And even more than the Army, the RN disliked the French idea. Chatfield, speaking for the majority at the Admiralty, deprecated the proposed expedition. As early as 26 June 1939, he was writing:

To establish a British force there in time of war would be an embarrassing commitment, over and above the

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<sup>38</sup> PRO WO 193/955 op. cit., MO.1 Maj to MO.1 Col ME 8 Sep 1939.

<sup>39</sup> PRO WO 193/147 op. cit., Ironside 7 Sep 1939.

<sup>40</sup> PRO WO 193/955 Middle East 1 -- Phase I -- Declaration of War to the Collapse of France 29 August 1939-15 June 1940, Notes on a Salonika Campaign CIGS to DCIGS Sep 1939.



difficulties with which we shall already be faced in securing our own territories in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Moreover we still remember the great drain on our resources which the Salonika Expedition constituted in the last war. It required six times as much shipping to maintain our force there as to maintain an equal number of troops on the Western Front.<sup>41</sup>

The French idea, in Chatfield's opinion, was "strategically unsound".<sup>42</sup>

In addition, Italy, distraction or threat, continued to exercise a powerful mesmerizing effect on British planning. If there was to be dispositions to cover the case of Italy's entry into the war, then there would not be sufficient resources to permit a deployment as desired by the French. The forces needed to defend Imperial assets against an Italian attack could not be moved while the Italian attitude remained malevolent; nor, Italy remaining neutral, could they be used to finish Italy quickly. This stricture applied even to the Middle East Reserve upon which were founded British plans for eventual operations in the Near East. The DCIGS instructed the DMO on 1 May 1939, that the "CIGS wishes it understood that until Italy is definitely on our side or against us and the Turkish question is more definite, we do not disperse our Middle East Forces". So slender were imperial resources that Britain could not take the chance of starting "in the wrong direction".<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> PRO CAB 54/10 DCOS 175 Staff Conversations with Turkey 16 Aug 1939, Annex II Chatfield to Eden 26 Jun 1939.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Strategy VII -- The Middle East October 1939-September 1940 DCIGS to DMO 1 May 1939.

Thus, even before the outbreak of war, the divergence of views between Paris, Ankara and London was already well defined, as was the lack of consensus within the British strategic executive. Paris viewed the Balkans as an essential element in its strategy and an Eastern Front based on the Eastern Ententes as a crucial auxiliary should there be war with Germany. London, while recognizing the validity of the French arguments, tended to argue that Balkan weakness made an Eastern Front impossible without Allied assistance and that Allied weakness would simply not permit assistance on the scale required. Within Britain itself, views ranged from the JPC's conviction that an active Balkan theatre might be rather a good idea,<sup>44</sup> to Foreign Office desire that the Balkans, and particularly Turkey, be bound to the Allies, through the insistence of the COS that Turkey be prevented from moving to the Axis,<sup>45</sup> to Cabinet scepticism that much of anything could be done in the foreseeable future. All, however, had difficulty envisaging how, exactly, an aggressive policy could be followed, whatever its attraction, until British strength had increased considerably. The Turks, meanwhile, were left to worry that they would be left hanging by their Western Allies even in the event that the Germans attacked South-East.

#### **Italian Neutrality and Allied Strategy:**

The unlikely case manifested by the actual outbreak of war,

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<sup>44</sup> See Chapter VIII above.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter IX above for the JPC/ COS debate of August 1939.

Italy neutral, and Russia a potential enemy -- and the two related: the chance of war with Italy waning as that of hostilities with Russia waxed -- upset the basic premises upon which prewar strategy had been founded. There would be no "knock-out" blow to Italy, no systematic economic warfare in the Mediterranean aiming at Italian collapse, and probably no Eastern Front at all. British strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean was thrown into a state of flux and began to be pulled in opposite directions. On the one hand, everything that had argued for a cautious policy in the Balkans remained true. British weakness was as debilitating as before and the Balkans remained as risky a gamble and as sticky a morass. To these were added two powerful arguments provided by the logic of the war's outbreak: firstly, the argument that nothing must be done to jeopardize Italian neutrality, in decline since Spring 1939,<sup>46</sup> returned with renewed force because Italy was, contrary to expectation, neutral; and secondly, Russian malevolence increased considerably the threat to the Middle East from the North, and thus Turkey's basic value as an outwork of imperial defence against Germany and/or Russian attack from the North. Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, the JPC believed, would be "at the mercy of Germany and cannot be expected to offer serious resistance to a combination of these two powers". Greece, thoroughly cowed, would likely follow the Turkish line.<sup>47</sup> Turkey was judged to be the only

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter VI above.

<sup>47</sup> PRO CAB 80/3 COS (39)66(JP) Appreciation of the Situation Created by the Russo-German Agreement Oct 1939.

nation in the East capable of a sustained and capable defence against such an attack. Given the state of imperial forces in the Middle East, such a barrier was not to be lightly imperilled. An Eastern front might, as in the First World War, prove an expensive dream; for the British, the Turkish firebreak was comfortable reality.<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, a tendency had begun to develop which favoured a more aggressive policy in the Balkans. The centres of this tendency were the JPC and the Cadogan faction at the Foreign Office. Its analysis took fire from planned increases to imperial strength in the Eastern Mediterranean, from the decision not to send the Fleet to the Far East, from French conceptions, and from the belief that Balkan neutrality, being a German interest, was something to be opposed. As part of its critique, this school recommended a radically different policy towards Italy and was, therefore, not as greatly effected by the dilemmas afflicting British strategy as was the opposition. Italian neutrality, for the forward party, as for the French, was not to be ensured by conciliation but by demonstration of Allied strength. Insofar as Turkey was involved in the Italian question, it was as a potential

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<sup>48</sup> See for example Kennedy's account of Ironside's strategic thinking in September 1939. J. Kennedy, The Business of War, (Hutchison: London) 1957. p. 24-26. While possessed of strong "eastern" tendencies, Ironside insisted that the first priority of British business must be to create a field force fit to fight in Europe in order to complete the French order of Battle. Eventually there would be an offensive in the East, but not until the Allies were ready. At all cost, a disaster must be avoided. In the immediate future, the Allies must only go to Salonika, as the French wanted, if it was essential to maintain a front in the Balkans created by German attack.

threat and base for offensive action against Italy -- held in abeyance by continued Italian neutrality. The difference was basic. The dominant school wished to make clear the price Britain would pay for Italian friendship; the other would leave the Italians to guess what would happen if they ceased to be friendly. For the one, Turkey was one of several gages -- its value all the higher since it was an important ally -- which could be sacrificed to obtain a tolerable relationship with Italy. For the other, Turkey was an important ally part of the value of which was that it represented for the Italians certain probable results of relations ceasing to be cordial. The clash between official policy and this critique, essentially, was the Eden-Chamberlain disagreement once again, and the domestic counter-part of the concurrent disagreement between the British and French High Commands.

On 9 September, the War Cabinet asked the COS point-blank whether it was desirable to preserve Italian neutrality even though the price might be the neutralization of the Balkans. Their answer left no room for misinterpretation and was in complete disagreement with the JPC advice of the month previous.<sup>49</sup> "We have no hesitation" they wrote, "in saying, that at the present time and in present circumstances (a) is preferable from a military point of view".<sup>50</sup> "(a)" was the proposition that the Balkans should be kept

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<sup>49</sup> See Chapter VIII above.

<sup>50</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)15 Balkan Neutrality -- Report 9 Sep 1939 (Composition: Ironside, Pound, Newall)

neutral so long as Italy also remains neutral.<sup>51</sup> "We wish to emphasise however" the report continued, "the importance of ensuring that Turkey will intervene on our side at once if Italy should join Germany, or if the latter country extends her military operations into the Balkans".<sup>52</sup> Based on this recommendation, the War Cabinet concluded, on 14 September, that "a neutral and a *fortiori* friendly Italy seems more valuable to us than a Balkans forced by us into belligerency and the two are almost certainly incompatible".<sup>53</sup> The JPC judgement that a Turkish alliance would out-weigh Italian hostility was replaced by the COS notion that it would be a good idea to sponsor a neutral bloc including all the Balkan nations and led by Italy.<sup>54</sup> In the Spring, taking Italian belligerence for granted, the Services had planned to begin the war with the destruction of the Italian position in the Mediterranean.<sup>55</sup> After September 1939, they scarcely wavered in their conviction that Italy should be kept out of the war if that were possible.<sup>56</sup>

For the French, meanwhile, the Russo-German combination and Italian neutrality did not preclude Balkan operations but made them

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 15(39) 14 Sep 1939.

<sup>54</sup> PRO CAB 55/3 JPC 267th Mtg 11 Aug 1939.

<sup>55</sup> PRO CAB 44/87 The Situation in Egypt June 1940 Maj N. Gibbs, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup> PRO CAB 44/49 The Higher Strategic Direction of the War 1939 -1945 BGen W. Wynter, Vol I, p. 73.

more attractive. The French identified the Balkans as a sore spot for the Italian-German-Russian combination since each had regional interests which it was not willing to compromise and looked upon its allies, as upon the British and French enemies, as regional rivals. To up the ante in the Balkans, Gamelin thought, would be to push the Axis into a position where, in potential, internal conflicts would permit the Allies to decouple Italy or Russia from Germany.<sup>57</sup> Where London saw dangers and commitments, Paris saw opportunities -- opportunities, it must be said, often unrealistic.

The difference in British and French conceptions regarding the possible development of a Balkan Front came into the open at the first meeting of the Supreme War Council at Abbeville on 12 September 1939. Daladier, the French Premier, argued that a force should be dispatched as soon as possible to Salonika or Istanbul in order to meet a possible German thrust toward the Straits and to encourage the Balkan nations to stand-up to Germany. Chamberlain opposed Daladier's suggestion with a volley of negatives. Nothing could be done for Yugoslavia. The maintenance of such a force would be a heavy added strain. Salonika was a poor base for offensive operations. The attitude of Greece, Italy and Turkey to such a deployment could not be taken for granted.<sup>58</sup> Not for the last time, at Abbeville the French provided the possibilities and the British the objections. The French could see the potentialities

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<sup>57</sup> M.G. Gamelin, Servir, (Librairie Plon: Paris) 1947. Vol III, p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, (HMSO: London) 1970. Vol I, p. 23.

only; the British, only the risks and costs. The Turks, meanwhile, languished with no clear picture of Allied strategy.

Subsequent regional planning seldom transcended this basic impasse. The British did not dissent from the French view that an Eastern front was desirable but continued to assert that such a policy would increase the chance of Italian hostility.<sup>59</sup> Chamberlain in particular was anxious not to antagonize Italy. He considered that Mussolini's "perfectly genuine attempt to salvage last minute peace vindicated his hopes that Italy might be moved into a more constructive attitude",<sup>60</sup> and was convinced that any provocative dispositions in the Eastern Mediterranean would only jeopardize the chance of reconciliation with Italy. Moreover, London continued, a high level of Allied activity in the Balkans would not make an Eastern Front more likely, but less so, since by increasing the danger of Italian attack, it would paralyse the Balkan nations rather than encouraging them to a more active policy.<sup>61</sup> In effect, a Balkan policy as espoused by Paris, according to London, would end in a widening of the war without getting the Allies any further toward the defeat of the German enemy while defeating its main purpose -- the consolidation of an effective Balkan alliance aligned with the West. Perversely, one of the greatest fears of HMG as it began to drift toward a more

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<sup>59</sup> PRO CAB 53/50 COS 916 The Consequences of the Possible Neutrality of Italy 30 May 1939.

<sup>60</sup> BR NC 18/1/1116 Neville to Ida Chamberlain 10 Sep 1939.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.



positive Italian policy was the fear that Turkey would object to the neutralization of Italy.<sup>62</sup>

**The Search for an Allied Strategy September-November 1939:**

Paris could not be convinced. On 16 September 1939, Cambon, the French Ambassador, told Halifax that the French were looking to send an Expeditionary Force from the Levant to Salonika.<sup>63</sup> The Polish Front was completely broken, Cambon noted, and something was going to have to be constructed to replace it. Rumania, Paris thought, was likely to be a broken reed from the beginning, and stores sent there wasted. Far better, the French concluded, to concentrate on Turkey as the nucleus of a Balkan coalition and, in the event of a long war, to look towards the opening of a second front as far North as possible. Of course, they added almost as an after thought, such a policy would have to be coordinated with the Italians and take account of Italian actions and perceptions.<sup>64</sup>

The JPC too was considering the possible future conduct of the war; in their case based upon German attack South rather than Allied attack North. With Poland gone, while continuing to think it likely that Hitler would quickly turn West to obtain a rapid decision, they considered it unlikely that Hitler would do so

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<sup>62</sup> PRO FO 371/23297 E6246/297/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 1 Sep 1939 Bowker Minute; also, CAB 65/1 WC 61(39) 26 Oct 1939.

<sup>63</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)34 Position in the Balkans Halifax 16 Sep 1939.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

without first finishing Rumania.<sup>65</sup> Aid to Rumania, they agreed, would be wasted. It was a hopeless case. "Its efficiency for war [was] low"; its army bad; its navy negligible; its Air Force could "barely be regarded as a fighting force of much value". Far better, the JPC echoed Paris, to base plans for a new Oriental front on Turkey because it, at least, could not be "swamped".<sup>66</sup> The JPC concluded, with the concurrence of the COS: "Turkey is the key to the security of our whole position in the Near East and Middle East both against the threat of German aggression through the Balkans and of Italian hostility".<sup>67</sup> A deployment to Salonika, the JPC thought, would be excellent defence against Italian attack but the Air and Naval provision for an Expeditionary Force would be very difficult.<sup>68</sup>

The question of an Expeditionary Force to the Balkans had already been considered by the AFC. Vice-Admiral Odend'hal, the head of the French mission, said that if such a venture were decided upon the French would have available two Divisions to take part.<sup>69</sup> If they could be deployed straight from Beirut by sea,

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<sup>65</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)35(JP) The Possible Future Course of the War 16 Sep 1939.

<sup>66</sup> PRO 80/1 COS (39)37(JP) Position in the Balkans Sep; COS (39)39 Position in the Balkans 16 Sep 1939.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> The French promise of two Divisions was something of a boon-doggle this early in the war. The proposed French Expeditionary Force was to be drawn from the French forces in the Levant. In October 1939 the *Groupeement des Forces Mobiles du Levant*, under the command of General Massiet, comprised two under-

Commander Noiret added, then they were available immediately; if some other method of transport were necessary, then deployment would take some time.<sup>70</sup> Odend'hal conceded that, of course, such an operation would be "dependent upon the full agreement of Greece". Rear-Admiral Chalmers, the head of the British delegation, asked if the French were able to transport their own troops and voiced his doubt that the British would be able to do this for them.<sup>71</sup> Later, Odend'hal returned to the question of transport. France did not have the necessary transports, he said, but perhaps would be able to get assistance from Turkey and Greece.<sup>72</sup>

But by 19 September, pushed by the French, the Allies were giving thought to the form an Expeditionary force should take. The British grudgingly admitted that they might be able to spare two Divisions for such a force, but were not at all certain whether it might not be a better idea to restrict their participation to one Division for Salonika and one to beef-up the garrison of the Suez canal.<sup>73</sup> The British were not happy with the Egyptian defences, and were more willing to default on commitments to their allies

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equipped mixed Brigades, containing between them, five French, three Senegalese and two Syrian Battalions. Later in the month, another Infantry Division, the 86e Nord Africain, arrived from Oran. M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, p. 16; and, Gamelin, Vol III, p. 115.

<sup>70</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)15 15th Mtg 29 Aug 1939.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)16 16th Mtg 31 Aug 1939.

<sup>73</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)40 Position in the Balkans 19 Sep 1939.

than let this item of imperial infrastructure fall into hazard.<sup>74</sup>

At an Anglo-French Committee (AFC) meeting on 24 September, it became obvious once more that French and British strategic conceptions were basically irreconcilable.<sup>75</sup> In accordance with a decision of the Supreme War Council, the British planners composed a document outlining British thinking on the probable future course of the war.<sup>76</sup> When the document, COS 39(35), was presented, the French delegation expressed strong disagreement and promised to answer it with an appreciation of their own.<sup>77</sup> At the next meeting, on 27 September 1939, Gamelin himself dropped his bomb-shell appreciation on the possible future course of the war.<sup>78</sup> He disagreed with the British contention that Germany would probably seek a quick victory in the West. While conceding that an attack in the West was "not so very improbable", he thought it more likely that Germany would attack to the South-East into the Balkans. He advocated the dispatch of a major force to the region to prepare for such an attack, and thought that such a force should

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<sup>74</sup> PRO CAB 80/3 COS (39)60 Scale of Reserves in the Middle East 1 Oct 1939.

<sup>75</sup> PRO WO 193/136 Possible Future Course of the War. Various Commanders' Observations and Appreciations.

<sup>76</sup> PRO WO 193/144 Strategy #8. Supreme War Council Resolutions 8 August 1939-25 April 1940, Anglo French Policy in the Balkans Ironsides.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.; also, PRO CAB 80/2 COS(39)35(JP) op. cit.

<sup>78</sup> PRO CAB 80/3 COS (39)61 Comments on General Gamelin's Observations on our Appreciation of the Possible Course of the War 2 Oct 1939; WO 193/136 Anglo-French Liaison 20th Mtg 25 Sep 1939; and, Gamelin, Vol III, p. 206-220.

be sent regardless of Italian sensibilities; moreover, that it could be maintained there in the face of Italian hostility.<sup>79</sup> The only prerequisite for the dispatch of an Expeditionary Force would be Turkey's active alliance. He considered the "picture of the consequences of Italy's entry into the war such as has been painted by the British Chiefs of Staff . . . perhaps on the gloomy side".<sup>80</sup> To the British planners, Gamelin's appreciation was rankest heresy. They considered him "unlikely to be correct", and doubted that the Germans would attack the Balkans when an attack through Belgium and Holland would pay much higher dividends.<sup>81</sup> The CIGS, General Ironside, was particularly adamant that the German attack, when it came, would come across the Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourg frontiers.<sup>82</sup>

It was a mark of the disarray within the British strategic executive that leading British statesmen -- the same men most disposed to insist on the maintenance of Italian neutrality -- were inclined to accept the prognosis of the French rather than the British Generals. The Army, Neville Chamberlain wrote to his sister, believed that Hitler was certain to attack West.

I cannot take that view myself. I see no possibility of his scoring a major success in the West and surely he must have one to keep up the spirits of his people and

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> PRO WO 193/136 COS (39)61 2 Oct 1939.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., CIGS Memorandum 10 Mar 1940.

encourage neutrals to take his side.<sup>83</sup>

Chamberlain expected that the Germans would attack South-East; indeed, he doubted that the attack under way in Poland would halt short of the Danube. In such a case, he wondered

would Turkey come to our help? I don't feel sure though many assume that she would. If she did I think it likely that Yugoslavia . . . would come in too and that Italy might have to make up her mind what she was going to do. On that I place my hopes and indeed my confidence on the attitude of the Italian King, church and people. I do not believe that they will fight us on behalf of Germany.<sup>84</sup>

When it became obvious that Germany was not going to attack South-East, Chamberlain persisted in rejecting the possibility that Hitler would switch the focus of his attention North-West.<sup>85</sup> Chamberlain's attachment to this position, however, was episodic and he tended to support whichever argument ended in the conclusion that no action was the best action. At the same time that Chamberlain was writing about a German attack South-East as if it were inevitable, he was also writing that he considered that Russia, allied or not, blocked a German advance to the South-East. The Russian move into Poland, he thought, had rendered South-Eastern adventures "far less attractive" to Germany.<sup>86</sup> "In fact", he continued, "I should say that the Germans could not afford to embark on any adventures in South-Eastern Europe with that huge

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<sup>83</sup> BR NC 18/1/1121 Neville to Hilda Chamberlain 17 Sep 1939.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> BR NC 18/1/1122 Neville to Ida Chamberlain 23 Sep 1939.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

army of Russia on their flank".<sup>87</sup>

Halifax was more consistent in rejecting the possibility of an attack in the West with its "narrow and highly fortified front -- difficult to breach; almost impossible to develop sufficient strength to take the offensive".<sup>88</sup> Having weighed the evidence, he considered "that to follow the conventional practice of warfare and pursuing a military offensive against Germany would be the most unwise strategy and policy from every point of view".<sup>89</sup> A wiser strategy, he thought, would be to abstain from all pretence of taking the offensive, and to develop a new technique based upon economic and moral pressure.<sup>90</sup> The only shooting Halifax could foresee would result from a German desperation attack South-East once economic pressure began to tell.<sup>91</sup> Chamberlain and Halifax were not alone in holding this position. Even experienced hands, like Churchill and Hankey, considered it likely that the Germans would continue their attack into the South East.<sup>92</sup>

The Cabinet, however, seems to have missed the logical conclusion of the French argument. The French considered that since

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> PRO FO 800/317 The Need For a New Technique of War in Treating the Present Problem Halifax 8 Sep 1939.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. Lothian, and Sargent at the Foreign Office concurred with Halifax's musings. See Lothian to Halifax 18 Sep; and Sargent's Where is the War Headed?

<sup>91</sup> PRO CAB 800/324 Halifax to Lothian 27 Sep 1939.

<sup>92</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 24(39) 23 Sep 1939.

a German attack was inevitable, immediate preparation was essential; the obvious conclusion being that an forward policy in the Balkans served Allied strategy best. The Cabinet, including Churchill, somehow combined the conviction that the Germans would attack South East with the belief that Italy would be reconciled to the Allies with a cautious Balkan policy.<sup>93</sup> They did this without recourse to the logical razor welded by Paris, and resorted to in heat by the JPC in August, that the Italians would be best reconciled to the West by a demonstration of Allied strength. Instead, the Cabinet fought the dilemma by taking both its horns. They would conciliate Italy and consolidate the Balkans, they concluded, by taking no overt action whatsoever.

In October 1939, the Anglo-French joint planning staff, attempted to reconcile the Services, the War Cabinet and the Gamelin positions in order to produce some common strategy. While all the Balkan nations, they conceded, were "good fighters", none "would be capable of serious resistance to invasion by a first class power". The Balkan nations were not unaware of their relative weakness. Whatever sympathy Rumania, Greece and Yugoslavia might have for the Allied cause, the planners thought, would not outweigh their fear of Germany -- "their fear of Germany is so great that we must expect them to do all in their power to avoid offending Germany unless they are actually attacked".<sup>94</sup> The best the Allies

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<sup>93</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 99(39) 30 Nov 1939.

<sup>94</sup> PRO CAB 80/3 COS (39)63 Military Strategy to be Adopted in the Near East Including in Particular the Balkans AFC 30 Sep 1939.



could do, the AFC judged, would be send the bulk of available aid to Turkey, as the only Balkan nation capable of sustained opposition, continue the build-up of their forces in the Levant, and seek to create a neutral bloc in South-Eastern Europe including Italy.<sup>95</sup> Such a bloc, it was thought, while neutral would serve:

1. To hold and wear out enemy strength away from the Western theatre of war.
2. To prevent Germany from obtaining control of economic resources in the Balkans.
3. To provide strategic cover for Franco-British intervention in the Near East and in particular to close the Mediterranean to enemy ships coming from the Black Sea [i.e Russia].
4. To prepare a theatre of operations with a view to ultimate offensive operations.
5. To furnish visible evidence of our desire to stand by the Franco-British guarantee to Rumania and Greece.<sup>96</sup>

So far, the AFC analysis was entirely Gallic -- moving from Balkan weakness to the preparation of the theatre for an offensive against Germany. The contribution of the British delegation is not difficult to extract, and seems to have consisted mainly of the plea that Allied weakness made the foregoing policy a dangerous and difficult business. The problem, the report continued, was that Russian attack in support of a German offensive was no longer unthinkable. While it was considered probable that Turkey would be able to hold its own against Russian attack -- in the Caucasus or elsewhere -- it was also accepted that "a single-handed war against

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

Germany and the USSR would place us in an impossible strategic position which at best could only end in complete stalemate". At worst, Turkey, a crucial prop of the Allied structure, would be undermined and the Middle East subjected to direct attack from the North.<sup>97</sup> Nor did the planners rule-out Italian hostility. Even in this case, they thought, Turkey would still be able to "put up considerable resistance" to an attack aiming at the Bosphorus and Aegean "provided they receive adequate armaments".<sup>98</sup> In such a case, troops earmarked for Salonika would go instead to Thrace, and while the Turks would have to accept a smaller scale of British assistance -- due to the need to commence operations against Italy's colonial possessions -- the planners considered victory probable. "Time is on our side, and . . . provided Germany cannot get a quick decision in the West, which we regard as most unlikely, she will not get it by an early advance into South East Europe".<sup>99</sup> The AFC compromise satisfied no one because it did nothing but formalize the dilemmas hobbling inter-Allied strategy.

The COS also were hamstrung. On 13 October 1939, the War Cabinet asked them for a report on the possibility of a Mediterranean Detente. Contrary to their previous advice, when considering only the conventional aspects of the question, the COS declared themselves against a detente because it would result in the breakdown of contraband control. With the export drive gaining

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<sup>97</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)35(JP) op. cit.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

strength, and the Germans without exports to play with, the COS considered it essential that the economic war be pushed to the limit and German access to Mediterranean countries be restricted as far as possible. In addition, they thought, a condition upon which the Italians were likely to insist if rapprochement were to be a reality would be a moratorium on the concentration of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. This would be inadmissible, the COS said, because the British would be trading real strength for paper promises.<sup>100</sup> Only about Turkey's utility in the economic war was there little dispute. Economic planners expected that by its active alliance Turkey would be in a position to cut off all of Italy's chrome, half of its tin, barley and rye, and, by closing the Straits, could cut off crucial sources of oil, wheat, and pulse.<sup>101</sup> The effect on Germany would also be substantial. A third of Germany's mohair, chrome, barley, pulse and tobacco would be denied, and the way cleared for contraband enforcement in the Black Sea.<sup>102</sup>

If economic warfare was to be a success, it was generally accepted that economic and financial assistance would have to be afforded the Turks. If Turkey could cut-off Italy from its crucial Black Sea trade, and if it could allow the British through the

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<sup>100</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS (39)84 Possible Detente with Italy 12 Oct 1939.

<sup>101</sup> PRO WO 193/143 op. cit., Annex IV Economic Situation of Turkey as a Belligerent in Alliance with Britain and France and Poland Against Germany and Italy.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.; also MR(J)(40)21 Allied Mil Commission 21 Sep 1939.

Straits to enforce contraband control in the Black Sea -- and these by mere fiat -- it also stood to loose more than 50% of its trade due to Axis retaliation -- and this too, by fiat.<sup>103</sup> Turkey, if it were to contemplate such a step, indeed if it were to survive having taken such a step, would require considerable assistance and military aid. One solution contemplated by the planners, was that Turkey's excess agricultural produce be bought to feed Britain's regional dependencies (Palestine, Iraq, TransJordan, Egypt etc.) following the certain disruption of commerce following the outbreak of war in the Mediterranean.<sup>104</sup> The Treasury, as we have seen, were disposed to admit neither the necessity nor possibility of this step.<sup>105</sup>

It might be, and was, protested that much that was placed under the rubric "economic support for Turkey" would have been classified more properly as preemption. There can be little argument with this. Unfortunately for the prospect of an effective alliance, there was no real program of preventive purchase until July 1941.<sup>106</sup> The problem, as identified by Swinton, head of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation (UKCC) in M 1940 was that in order to pre-empt anything in wartime, it is necessary to pay a

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<sup>103</sup> PRO WO 193/143 Strategy #7. Economic Warfare, DM(39)21 Plan for Economic Warfare Against Germany 1 Sep 1939; and, CAB 53/48 COS 885 Alliance with Turkey -- Report Enclosure II Note by Industrial Intelligence Committee.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., Annex IV.

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter V above.

<sup>106</sup> PRO FO 837/1029 Turkey Preemptions Programme MEW.

premium price, and to do this, the MEW and the UKCC required Treasury permission.<sup>107</sup> The Treasury nearly always said no. "Economic warfare (blockade) is not trade in the commercial sense", Swinton stormed: "it is war. You cannot apply financial conditions as in an ordinary sense". But this is precisely what Britain tried to do in the war's first two years.<sup>108</sup>

The question of Black Sea blockade also proved troubling. In September 1939, the British gave careful consideration to the extension of the blockade of Germany to the Black Sea. A committee under Vice-Admiral Binney was convened to consider the question.<sup>109</sup> In the absence of a CCB near the Straits or in the Black Sea, leakages to Germany had been considerable; in particular, manganese from Poti, oil from Batu, oilseed from the Ukraine, iron ore from Odessa, and metals from Southern Russia had all been arriving in Germany in considerable quantity.<sup>110</sup>

In order "to strangle the trade with the Danube" it was thought essential that a CCB be established at or near Constantinople and that British ships be allowed to operate from it in the Black Sea; failing this that a CCB be set-up at Mudros and

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<sup>107</sup> The UKCC, and its subsidiary, the Anglo-Scottish corporation, were crown corporations established to wage the commercial portion of the economic war.

<sup>108</sup> CC SWNT II 270/5/28 Memorandum on Economic Warfare Swinton 2 May 1940.

<sup>109</sup> PRO ADM 1/9993 Binney Committee. Contraband Control in the Black Sea and General Aid to Turkey.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

ships be passed through the Straits.<sup>111</sup> If a Black Sea blockade were not opposed, it could be made effective, Binney thought, by a Destroyer Flotilla and two Light Cruisers.<sup>112</sup>

The problem of course, was political. Binney judged that the Turks might be able to open the Straits to the British under Article 25 of the Montreaux Convention, which allowed the opening of the Straits to forces proceeding to combat an aggressor nation.<sup>113</sup> At the time of writing, Binney was unfamiliar with the full ramifications of the Russo-German nonaggression pact. Indeed, in his planning, in accordance with COS directives, he assumed that Russia would be a friendly neutral willing to cooperate in the imposition of blockade. Of course, this did not prove to be the case.

In October, uncertain of anything except that his conclusions required extensive revision if they were to be of any use, Binney requested guidance from the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office replied that it was unlikely that the USSR could be counted upon for any cooperation in the altered international environment, moreover that it could be expected to resist the imposition of blockade.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. Article XXV: "Nothing in the present Convention shall prejudice the rights and obligations of Turkey, or of any of the other High Contracting Parties members of the League of Nations, arising out of the Covenant of the League of Nations". Convention (Montreaux) on the Turkish Straits Regime, Hurewitz Vol II, p. 197-203.

It seems desirable to bear in mind that the USSR would be very likely to resist strongly, and in this event the forces required would be out of all proportion to the value of the contraband control.<sup>114</sup>

Captain (RN) Danckwerts, the Director of Plans at the Admiralty, agreed with this judgement and expressed "his firm view that contraband control in the Black Sea is undesirable whilst Turkey and the USSR are neutral and Rumania does not resist German economic demands".<sup>115</sup> This being the case, the Admiralty had to content itself with establishing a floating CCB anchored in the Mediterranean outside of Turkish territorial waters, and no contraband control in the Black Sea whatsoever.<sup>116</sup> Despite the only partial closure of the Dardanelles, however, in November 1939 alone, 186 ships were boarded in the Aegean and eighty-three of these taken under escort.<sup>117</sup>

#### **Salonika Revisited:**

Meanwhile, by October, the idea of an Expeditionary Force to Salonika and/or Thrace was being examined for its utility as a bargaining counter to get the Turks to lower their material demands and to drop the suspensive clause. It was Halifax who first raised this possibility at a meeting of Ministers on 2 October. The Ministers asked the COS to revise:

the instructions to our delegation [to Ankara], with

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., D Plans Minute 16 Oct 1939.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., D EW Minute 20 Oct 1939.

<sup>117</sup> MGen I.S.O Playfair, The Mediterranean and the Middle East, Vol I, p. 46.

particular reference to the question of whether some provisional offer of allied assistance with troops should be made to the Turks if they become involved on our side.<sup>118</sup>

The COS, seeking to slough the responsibility onto the French, decided that Paris should be asked if they could send two Divisions as the core of an Expeditionary Force, and whether they considered that this would "persuade the Turks to drop the suspensive clause of the Treaty".<sup>119</sup>

The French responded that such an Expeditionary Force, in their opinion, and as discussed during the previous month, must be inter-allied in nature with the British supplying the necessary Air, Sea, and AA components. Paris agreed, however, that the offer could "be used as a lever to induce the Turks to sign the Treaty in its present form and to refuse the Soviet demands for its revision".<sup>120</sup> If the British would ante-up their share, Paris concluded, it was ready indeed to pledge two Divisions.

Balkan planning gained momentum through October as the Allies gave further thought to what support they could send to the Turks. In addition to the two Divisions already promised, the French put forward from their Mediterranean Fleet: three Battleships, three 8" Cruisers, three 6" Cruisers, six Destroyers, three Submarines and twelve MTBs.<sup>121</sup> This Squadron would be ready to operate from

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<sup>118</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS (39)73 Allied Demands: Turkey 11 Oct 1939.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS(39)94 Answer -- Assistance to Turkey Against German and/or Russian Aggression 24 Oct 1939.



Izmir, or Izmit as warranted by the scenario. The British, backpedalling from September's shadowy admissions of force availability, refused to promise much without some knowledge of what the case would be and until December, promised nothing at all.

What was the end of all this? Something like strategic paralysis with complete resignation of the initiative to Russia and the Axis powers. The most London could agree, even with itself, was that planning should go forward to meet an attack on Turkey with Turkey's strategic frontier being set somewhere between the Danube and Bulgaria's northern border. It was for the French to attempt to turn consideration of defensive contingencies to offensive use, and for the Turks to ensure that they were neither abandoned by Britain nor pulled into imprudent adventures by the French. The British feared that if they failed to keep up with the French, they would be committed to operations they had no hand in planning, and if they did not take sufficient account of Turkish wishes, they would lose the Turks. The French worried that if they got too far ahead of the British, then they would lose Britain's political and naval support, without which no forward policy would be possible. The Turks fretted that if they showed themselves too active in the Alliance they would face attack from their enemies while not sufficiently prepared, but if they appeared too cautious, they knew well that Britain and France were quite capable of making deals against their interests -- with Italy for instance. The Turks hastened to assure their allies that they need have no qualms regarding Turkish reliability. At the end of September, Saraçoğlu

confided to Massigli, the Germans had made another attempt to get a definite declaration of neutrality from the Turks. Would it not be a good idea, they asked, for the Turks to make a declaration of neutrality to parallel that of Italy? The Germans, Saraçoğlu assured the Frenchman, had not even been dignified by receiving a response from Ankara.<sup>122</sup>

#### **The Question of Command:**

One problem, which to a great extent came to symbolize and subsume the greater strategic dilemmas, and to which the British saw no easy solution, was the question of command. The British refused to concede that French interest outweighed their own in the Eastern Mediterranean and were not anxious to place British forces under a Turkish commander. Weygand, the regional French commander, was too senior to be placed under anybody -- he had been made a Marshal of France; and Çakmak, who was "acutely conscious of his seniority" was expected to "claim supreme command of all forces in Turkey, including the Anglo-French contingent". This, the CIGS thought, "would have to be resisted".<sup>123</sup> Ironside's fear of French pretensions in the Eastern Mediterranean also lay close to the roots of his desire not to permit anything to start regionally until the British had built up their forces sufficiently to be the dominant partner. France, he was determined, would not be allowed to use the British as reinforcements in support of French policy in

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<sup>122</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVIII no. 275 Ankara to Paris 31 Sep 1939.

<sup>123</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS (39)94 op. cit.

an area that was "British". "This is our beat", he stormed to his principle subordinates. In the last war the French had too great a share in the formation of a common regional strategy and "did not do things in a way to suit us".<sup>124</sup>

In fact, Ironside's fears that the French were scheming to obtain supreme command for a French General were not without foundation. General Jamet had written to Pownall on 2 August proposing that the British supply a commander for the Mediterranean theatre -- Egypt, Aden, Syria and Iraq. The French, meanwhile, would name a commander for the Balkan theatre -- Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and possible French, British and Russian contingents.<sup>125</sup> Again, on 26 October 1939, the French delegation to the AFC, proposed that Allied command be divided with the British accepting responsibility for Syria, Iraq, Palestine, TransJordan, Arabia, Yemen, Aden, Egypt, Sudan, Somaliland, and Kenya, and the French supplying a commander for the Balkans.<sup>126</sup> The British, while disposed to accept command responsibility for the Middle East, were also inclined to think, particularly after the promotion of Wavell to full General, that if Supreme Command went to France in Europe, it should go to Britain in the

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<sup>124</sup> J. Kennedy, The Business of War, (Hutchison: London) 1957. p. 40-41.

<sup>125</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)88 Operations in the Eastern Mediterranean 2 Aug 1939.

<sup>126</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS(39)100 Assistance to Turkey Against German and/or Italian Aggression Hollis note 26 Oct 1939.

Mediterranean.<sup>127</sup>

Cairo, on the other hand, saw nothing wrong with the French proposal that a senior French Officer have command in the Balkans and suggested Weygand for the job.<sup>128</sup> Wavell considered that a commander over such a motley force as an interallied army in the Balkans was certain to be would have a coordinating function only; and, therefore, effective command of British troops would remain with the commander of the British contingent.<sup>129</sup> Also, Wavell and Weygand were close friends -- close too in their strategic prescriptions.<sup>130</sup> Weygand simply did not seem as threatening in Cairo as in London.

The commander the French had in mind was indeed septuagenarian General Maxime Weygand. The appointment of Weygand to command in Syria was doubly dangerous in its implications for British policy both because of his seniority and because, after May 1939, Weygand was following an almost independent policy line with little reference to Paris.<sup>131</sup> By 7 September, Ironside was expressing

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<sup>127</sup> PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)296(JP) Military Policy in the Middle East 15 Apr; also, COS (40)185 Assistance to Turkey Against Germany and/or Russian Aggression: The Question of Command 2 Jan 1940.

<sup>128</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)11 Staff Conversations with Greece 6 Sep 1939.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Kennedy, p. 7; and, Collins, p. 211.

<sup>131</sup> PRO CAB 29/159 AFC 19 Procedure for the Second Stage 21 Apr 1939. The French delegation at the AFC gave as French opinion that local matters, like the Turkish alliance, could safely be left to local commanders with the General Headquarters proceeding to questions of long-term significance.

concern regarding Weygand's activities and intentions. He was certain that Weygand had been sent to Beirut "with a definite objective of allowing the French to start some operation in the Balkans".<sup>132</sup> "I wish it to be clear" he continued:

that our strategy in the Middle East must be an Imperial Strategy and it is important that it should not be subordinated to French Command. The Suez canal is the centre of the British Empire. . . I put in this warning because I foresee we may be led into a repetition of the unfortunate Salonika expedition of the late war.<sup>133</sup>

On 13 September, the War Cabinet considered the matter of General Weygand's activities, and how to ensure that he followed the line of policy set in Paris.<sup>134</sup> Halifax promised to keep a close eye on Weygand and to protest any untoward initiatives in Paris.<sup>135</sup>

#### Wavell and Weygand in Ankara:

It was in this context of strategic disagreement and command disarray that Wavell and Weygand journeyed to Ankara to sign the Military Convention in October and to meet with their Turkish opposite number, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak.

On 20 October 1939, the Commanders met for the first time as a trio to attempt to hammer out a common regional strategy.<sup>136</sup> Wavell was assisted at the conference by Colonel Arnold (MAA),

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<sup>132</sup> PRO WO 193/147 Strategy #11. The Major Strategy of the War, British Strategy in the War Ironside 7 Sep 1939.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.; and, Ironside Diaries, p. 104. Entry for 7 Sep 1939.

<sup>134</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 14(39) 12 Sep 1939.

<sup>135</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 14(39) 13 Sep 1939.

<sup>136</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 R318/661/67 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 11 Oct; R81745/7278/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 13 Oct; and, R81745/778/44 FO to Phipps 13 Oct 1939.

Captain (RN) O'Donnel (NAA) and Major Cole, his SO. Assisting Çakmak were the DCDS, General Asim Gündüz, the CAS, Colonel Sefik Çakmak, and the acting DMI, Commander Aziz Ülusan. Weygand came with the French Attaché, Brigadier Voeren, and his SO, Captain Gasser.<sup>137</sup> From the beginning, the tripartite Commanders' conference was little more than a cordial meeting-of-the-minds between Marshals Çakmak and Weygand with Wavell contributing little to the discussion.

Weygand opened the discussion with the question of material. Wavell, while agreeing that this was important, thought that since General Orbay was then in London, the question could be best dealt with there. Çakmak promised that the Turkish General Staff would prepare lists and insisted on the importance of equipping the Turkish Army for any operations in which it might be required to participate.<sup>138</sup> He stressed in particular Turkey's lack of AT and AA weapons. Wavell, and Weygand promised to press their Governments to expedite shipment of Turkish orders.<sup>139</sup>

Weygand next turned to the question of military missions. Since the Military Convention had been initialled two days previously, he wondered if the time had come for a military mission to be sent to Ankara. Çakmak replied "Yes. The same of course

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<sup>137</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 Anglo Turkish Conversations 1939, Minutes of a Conference Between Çakmak, Weygand, and Wavell 20-21 October 1939; and, WO 106/7743 Conversation Marshal Çakmak, and Wavell and Weygand (French Report). WO 208/1969 gives French Attaché's name as "Voisin".

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 op. cit.

applies to the British mission which, I understand is now ready in Cairo".<sup>140</sup> Each mission, it was agreed, should be composed of a Major-General, a General Staff Officer, and two or three other officers to visit troops and establishments.<sup>141</sup>

The next order of business was the question of Russia. "To what extent" Weygand wondered, "are we permitted to take the attitude of Russia into our discussion?" Çakmak answered: "Article one of the treaty allows us to study hypothesis concerning Russia. For instance should Russia attack Turkey, Turkey will fight". Wavell wondered, "If any of the Sa'adabad Pact powers were attacked, would Turkey consider it to be a hostile act?" Çakmak answered, "The Sa'adabad Pact is a political and not a military instrument. It would therefore be necessary for the Turkish Government to consider each case on its merits. Nevertheless Turkey would consider an attack on any of the Sa'adabad Pact Powers as a hostile act".<sup>142</sup>

Weygand mentioned that during the Huntzinger conversations Turkey had pledged itself to defend the Straits against Russian attack. Could Turkey now, alone, defend its Caucasian front against a potentially hostile Russia? Çakmak answered that measures had been taken to meet this threat, but the greatest problem was lack of military material. Normally the answer, he said, would be "yes", but at the present time Turkey was not armed well enough. If Russia

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<sup>140</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 op. cit.; and, WO 106/7743 op. cit.

<sup>141</sup> PRO WO 106/7743 op. cit.

<sup>142</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 op. cit.

were an active enemy, he concluded, present credits would be insufficient and Turkey would require another L 25,000,000 in armaments.<sup>143</sup> Çakmak considered that there were three possibilities open to Russia:

1. She could attack Turkey with the object of seizing the Straits and advancing on the Middle East.
2. She could ignore Turkey and attack Iran; having smashed Iran, could turn on Mosul -- both of these attacks with the object of seizing the oilfields.
3. She could attack Afghanistan with eyes ultimately on India.<sup>144</sup>

Each of these case, Çakmak judged, would involve an attack on a Sa'adabad power. In this event, Çakmak said, Turkey was bound to consultation at least. In general though, he thought this a government question and not properly one for Staff consideration. The Government's attitude, he thought, would "largely boils down to a question of supply".<sup>145</sup>

Raw Materials, Çakmak warned, were another imperative concern for Turkey. There were only raw materials sufficient for three months' production in Turkey. How and where were the Turks to get more? Perhaps, he thought, a barter arrangement would be possible -- chrome and copper for iron etc. In any case, if Turkish industry were to expand to provide for war needs, then Turkey's appetite for raw materials and financial assistance was certain to grow.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.



Weygand next directed attention to his favourite topic -- the region *Balkinique*. This, he thought, was a fit subject for discussion since Turkey already had a fixed role here as a member of the Balkan Pact and under the Military Convention just signed. "Admitting this" he asked, "should we not study plans?" "Italy is neutral" he continued, "but she may not continue to be so. Are we to take it that the Dodecanese is still a question of first importance?" Çakmak answered, that in Turkish eyes, they remained an important consideration.<sup>147</sup>

As the first day's conversation concluded, Weygand asked Çakmak if the Allies could use the straits to supply Rumania. Çakmak answered "yes". . . if Turkey were at war, otherwise no. Çakmak, in return, stressed the importance to Turkey of land communications through Iraq, particularly to assure an adequate and safe supply of oil.<sup>148</sup>

On the second day, the discussion turned more markedly to the Balkans. Weygand announced that it was not the intention of the Allies to start a war in the Balkans, but to forestall one that might start there and to prepare for one prior to its outbreak. "I found it impossible" he said, "to imagine that Germany, held up in the West by the allies and in the North East by Poland, seeking an outlet and supplies, will not turn to the Balkans". German attack, he judged, must come sooner or later, with or without Russian

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

assistance. Çakmak agreed with this assessment.<sup>149</sup> "What about Italy" wondered Wavell: "Do we pre-suppose that she remain neutral?" Neither Weygand nor Çakmak answered.

Çakmak wondered what line the Allies should take with the Sa'adabad powers. Weygand answered: "As I see it the Turkish Government should make a military convention with the Sa'adabad Powers. The Turkish General Staff should then discuss plans with them and later coordinate with Great Britain and France". Wavell strongly concurred and indicated that the Western Allies looked to Ankara to help ensure the security of these others against possible Soviet attack. "Iran is not strong" he emphasized, "and can be over-run quickly. It seems to me that the Turkish Government should take-up the question of Iran as soon as possible".<sup>150</sup>

Weygand again directed attention to the Dodecanese. Such an operation, he thought, could not be successful without Air and Sea dominance, which presupposed adequate bases. Çakmak was quick to agree that it was essential to have Air support if an attack on the Dodecanese were to be launched. He had discussed this question with General Huntzinger, he said. Rhodes was to be attacked first, and Leros second; the others would then "whither on the vine".<sup>151</sup> Wavell, had little to add. For the British, he said, the Dodecanese was a naval problem. He would, he promised, pass Turkish ideas to the RN. Çakmak turned to the question of Air preparations. The

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

British Air Attaché, he said, had already made a tour of landing sites. There had been enough reconnaissance. It was time to get down to preparations and allocations.<sup>152</sup> Wavell did not respond.

Çakmak returned to the subject of Salonika. The Turks, he said, had approached the Greeks and had discovered that they were not keen on the Salonika idea. They considered that the arrival of an Expeditionary Force there would only precipitate Axis attack. Çakmak agreed with the Greek assessment. If the Greeks were given enough material support, he said, an Expeditionary Force would not be necessary.<sup>153</sup> "Only when war is imminent would they [the Greeks] agree to the arrival of Allied forces".

Marshal Çakmak expressed an interest in examining the general question of possible German attack. Weygand said that in his judgement, German invasion would only be possible through Yugoslavia. Once this started, he said, consultations with the Yugoslavs would definitely be required, but even then, might prove fruitless; particularly "if Yugoslavia insists on trying to defend all their frontiers at the same time". In this case, Weygand thought they would "suffer the same fate as the Poles".<sup>154</sup> Çakmak agreed. If the Germans were to attack, he wondered, what sort of Expeditionary Force were the Allies able to send? Weygand thought that a minimum force of three or four Divisions would be required, "otherwise the operation is not worthwhile". He continued: "I

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

understand that the Marshall accepted the establishment of bases in Turkey in principle"? Çakmak answered most emphatically "Yes".<sup>155</sup>

Çakmak turned the discussion towards Bulgaria. "I think", he said, "that the Bulgarians will act against Rumania in the Dobrudja". Weygand rejoined, "You will permit this?" "No" said Çakmak, "We shall attack the Bulgarians in the rear, but Rumania may be attacked by both Russia and Germany". In this case, Weygand said, Rumania would probably be left to Russia while Germany attacked toward Greece and Turkey. In such an eventuality, the Turks could be certain, Weygand assured Çakmak, that the Allies would land in Salonika and move Northwards to Serbia -- Bulgaria having been occupied by Turkey -- to link up with the Rumanians. "We do not want to start war in the Balkans" he reiterated, "but if Germany starts one then the Balkans must be the origin of their defeat".<sup>156</sup>

Weygand continued: if Britain and France went to the aid of Rumania, could they pass troops through the Straits? Across Turkey? In peacetime? Çakmak answered that these were government questions. The question of Rumania, however, was for Army decision. If Bulgaria attacked Rumania, he said, Turkey would attack Bulgaria. If Rumania withdrew, Entente armies would try to hold a front Danube-Dobrudja. This had been decided he stressed, by "big Turkish and Roumanian personalities".<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Çakmak returned to the question of Russia. If Russia came into the war, he said, things would be much different. In general though, he agreed with Weygand that Germany needed a quick decision, and as it could obtain a decision neither in the East nor in the West, it was certain to attack South and South East. Only Russia, he said, could stop such an attack. If the Allies were to do anything at all to meet this attack, he said, then it would be necessary to take troops from the Western Front. Weygand expressed his agreement. "It will come back to the question" he said, "that Germany must attack the Balkans and so it is essential for us to move quickly and forestall them". Çakmak added that in such a case, the maintenance of the Mediterranean route would be essential. If "a steady and continuous stream of material can come to the Balkan countries through the Mediterranean then I am convinced that the Balkan countries can hold their own".<sup>158</sup>

Again Çakmak directed discussion to the matter of Bulgaria. The Germans were no favourites of the Bulgarians, he said -- far from it. The Bulgars remained extremely bitter against Germany for its manipulation of them at Salonika in the First World War. If "the Balkan Powers other than Bulgaria are made strong", he stressed, "it is my view that the Bulgarians will not necessarily again march with the Germans". Weygand responded: "This to me stresses the necessity of making a physical occupation in the Balkans otherwise we may be too late". Çakmak answered: "I agree but perhaps I did not make myself quite clear. It is not a question

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

of effectives . . . but it is a question of means. What we want in the Balkans is more equipment to permit us to resist attacks by tanks and aircraft".<sup>159</sup> If Germany could be held, Çakmak thought it unlikely that Russia would come in. "Therefore given modern material and air forces, we can hold our defensive lines and in my opinion Russia will then do nothing".<sup>160</sup>

The conference concluded with Weygand and Çakmak suggesting that a joint note listing things decided be produced for planning guidance. Wavell disagreed. He considered it "a little early to issue a joint note".<sup>161</sup>

What is most interesting about the Ankara conference for a student of British History is how similar were Turkish and French conceptions, and how little Wavell had to contribute. Wavell's post-conference report was notably laconic.

Two conferences of several hours each took place yesterday between Marshal Fevzi Chakmak, General and myself . . . Turks were quite forthcoming (? as regards) general strategical ideas but detailed plans were left for future discussion by mission.<sup>162</sup>

It is hard to resist the notion that, in October 1939, Wavell was only going through the motions of participation. What is most interesting for a student of Turkish Foreign Policy is how willing to consider joint activity Çakmak was -- particularly given the

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 Turkey: British Military Mission September 1939-January 1940 Wavell to WO 22 Oct 1939.

widespread thesis that Turkey had no intention by this time of engaging in hostilities except in its own defence -- and especially when this is glossed with the undeniable reality that Çakmak, so effusive with his Anglo-French opposite numbers, in consideration of Foreign Policy, exercised an influence second only to that of İnönü himself. What was Turkish policy in 1939? Much depends on the relative weights one accords what Menemencioğlu was saying in Berlin, what Aras was saying in London, and what Çakmak was saying in Ankara. This thesis excepts War Office transcripts of Çakmak's statements as the most reliable evidence. It is notable, however, and was not a good sign for the alliance, that the question of effective and timely assistance loomed so large in all Turkish calculations; particularly in the calculations of a sceptical General Staff.

**Weygand after Ankara:**

One thing the Ankara conference did do: it made obvious beyond possible doubt that Weygand was indeed anxious to start something in the Balkans, and that he was determined to play a large part in whatever he could set going. "Strong Allied action" he was convinced, "was needed in the Balkans" and was not slow to cast himself in the role of allied strong-man.<sup>163</sup> After the Ankara conference, making use of the authority given him by Paris to

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<sup>163</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS(39)134 General Weygand's Activities in the Middle East 25 Nov 1939, Conv MAA/Weygand 1 Sep 1939. Jacques Nobecourt has argued that Weygand's thinking was largely derived from his early training as a cavalryman and, latterly, as a "man of Foch". Une Histoire Politique de l'Armée 1919-1942, (Editions du Seuil: Paris) 1967. p. 217-230.

engage in conversations with the other Balkan nations, Weygand sent officers in mufti to Salonika to work out the details of the proposed deployment, conducted secret negotiations with the Rumanians and the Yugoslavs, and made it obvious that he would not allow qualms about the reactions of Italy or Russia to upset his plans.<sup>164</sup> From Ankara, Knatchbull-Hugesson reported that the French in the Levant were "showing signs of undue activity as regards pressing the Turks for Staff Conversations". Rendell, from Sofia, reported that it was obvious that Weygand was collecting an Army, and that the Bulgars considered it most probable that he would use it. "It seems altogether undesirable" he thought, "that General Weygand should be left to take this rather forward line of his own as regards policy in the Balkans and we feel that something ought to be done to see that he is curbed".<sup>165</sup> The General view of the Balkan Ministers was that Weygand was a wild man, intent upon a policy of his own, and convinced "from the military point of view [that] necessity knows no law, and that if it was militarily desirable to violate the neutrality of a neutral country" that it was good policy to go ahead regardless.<sup>166</sup> Even more horrifying for London, the Attaché staff was reporting that GHQME was playing with similar plans of its own.<sup>167</sup> By November, the Foreign Office was writing to quiet the anxieties of its regional representatives.

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<sup>164</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS(39)134 op. cit.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> PRO FO 195/2461/40 Rendel to Nichols 10 Nov 1939.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.



It promised that it was:

in consultation with military authorities, considering the best method of curbing General Weygand, both on the subject of Staff Conversations and also in regard to his enthusiasm for an "Eastern Front".<sup>168</sup>

The COS, seconding the diplomats, confessed themselves very apprehensive about Weygand's policies; particularly his "far-reaching ideas for staff conversations with various Balkan countries".<sup>169</sup> They continued to advocate keeping the war out of the Balkans as long as possible and doing nothing to upset Italy. In any case, the COS thought, "if war did spread to the Near East, we should restrict our commitments in the Balkans to a minimum".<sup>170</sup> They could see no reason for Weygand's actions, and believed them to be counter to general Allied policy as they thought it had been established at the first meeting of the Supreme War Council on 12 September 1939,<sup>171</sup> and reaffirmed at the second on 22 September. There, as has been seen, the various allied strategic tendencies had led to the compromise resolution that while the possibility of sending forces to Constantinople or Salonika should be examined, neither of these deployments were desirable unless Germany had already attacked -- and then, that Turkey, rather than Salonika should be the focus of Allied

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<sup>168</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 op. cit., Nichols to Knatchbull-Hugesson 24 Nov 1939.

<sup>169</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 95(39) CNS to WC 26 Nov 1939.

<sup>170</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS (39)35 Strategical Situation in South East Europe: General Weygand's Activities 28 Nov 1939.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

assistance.<sup>172</sup> Yet now, the COS protested, here was General Weygand following a policy all his own. They concluded with the admonishment that "we are from the military point of view in no position to undertake any adventures in the Balkans" and warned again that Italian neutrality was still the "overriding consideration".<sup>173</sup> The Foreign Office, they demanded, should lose no time in curbing Weygand through diplomatic channels.<sup>174</sup>

Despite approaches to Paris such as the COS desired, and despite Weygand's promise that he would abide by agreed Allied strategy, it became obvious through November that the French were in fact preparing an Expeditionary Force and contemplating its dispatch before any threat arose in the Balkans or from Russia.<sup>175</sup> "This proposal", the JPC and COS thought, "raises questions of the very highest policy and is quite contrary to our own policy and to the known wishes of the Turkish Government". Many of the aspects of such a deployment would require "intimate staff conversations with the Turks", and were matters of the highest policy.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, the planners were adamant that the French had not considered properly all the ramifications of such a movement:

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 95(39) 26 Nov; also, WC 99(39) 30 Nov 1939.

<sup>175</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS(39)142(JP) [COS (39)143] Anglo-French Policy in the Middle East Nov 1939.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

We feel that the French have been too sanguine as regards the solution of the political complexities of the situation. Moreover, we consider that they have underestimated the difficulties not only of maintaining an Allied Force in the Balkans but also of protecting it from the heavy scale of air attack to which it may be subjected. In our view the premature despatch of an Expeditionary Force to the Balkans would be a most hazardous proceeding.<sup>177</sup>

But the military risks of such a deployment were not what drew the planners hottest fire: that honour was reserved for the political dangers. They considered the despatch of troops to the Balkans before a threat developed to be:

tantamount to an attempt to precipitate war in the Balkans, whereas we have always favoured the maintenance of a neutral Balkan bloc which would be supported by Italy. There is therefore a fundamental divergence of principle between ourselves and the French.<sup>178</sup>

If it were solely a matter of getting rid of the suspensive clause, the planners considered it a much better policy to give the Turks any number of AA and AT guns than to embark on such a hazardous course.

#### Planning Winter 1939-1940:

Against the Weygand policy, Britain's planners opposed their own loose consensus, which, while recognizing the potential benefits of action in the Eastern Mediterranean, was adamant that any action was unlikely and undesirable before Britain's position had been strengthened. In fact, by October, British regional strategy in its highest expression had hardened into the shape it was to hold until the Italian attack on Egypt. Britain wished to

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

"organize in [the] Levant and Egypt ample bases and well equipped Franco-British forces". They wished to establish a "durable Balkan bloc benevolently disposed towards the Allies".<sup>179</sup> They hoped to conciliate Italy and attach it to the Balkan bloc.<sup>180</sup> For the moment, active warfare would be limited to the economic conflict.<sup>181</sup> Planning could proceed to consider the case of an Axis attack, but nothing should be done likely to provoke such an attack until the allies were ready.

The French continued to disagree. On 26 November, the War Cabinet received definite confirmation that the French were anxious to make a joint study of plans for operations in South-Eastern Europe. Over the next week, the War Cabinet reviewed the assessments from the British planners on the Mediterranean and the French plans for operations in the Balkans. It did not take long for it to become obvious that the French were advocating a considerably more forward policy than were the COS.<sup>182</sup> By November, the French were advocating immediate negotiations, plans and deployments. As the French Delegation to the AFC summarized it:

The policy contemplated by the French Government consists in essence in a detailed preparation forthwith of all the stages involved in the despatch of a Franco-British Expeditionary Force to Thrace or Anatolia, in such a manner that this Force can be installed there before any

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<sup>179</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 op. cit., WO to GOCs East 11 Oct 1939.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.; also, WO to GOC Med 11 Oct 1939.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> PRO CAB 80/6 COS(39)147 Policy in the Balkans and Middle East 5 Dec 1939.

German or Russian threat arises in the Balkans.<sup>183</sup>

French haste was fuelled by their belief that the Germans would attack South-East in the Spring -- not 'might' as the British would have it, but 'would' as Ankara also insisted. If Allied dispositions were not finished before the attack, they would never be made and there would be no Eastern Front ready when the German attack came. Never did the French forget that an effective Balkan Entente represented 111 Divisions on the Danube.<sup>184</sup>

On 30 November 1939, the worst British fears were confirmed when the French delegation to the AFC handed them a note proposing a comprehensive change in Allied policy.<sup>185</sup> The French Government, it said, had been considering the strategic problem, and had come to the conclusion that recent Soviet actions and the Tripartite Treaty had entirely changed the situation. Almost anything could happen and it was imperative that the Allies not be taken by surprise. In order to prevent this, it was necessary to make predisposition to counter possible Axis moves South-East in the Spring on 1940. The predisposition the French had most in mind, of course, was the deployment of forces to Salonika and Thrace. The French returned to their thesis that outside of South Eastern Europe there could be no Allied offensive in the coming year.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., French Delegation to AFC to British Delegation (enclosed) 30 Nov 1939.

<sup>184</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 115(39) 12 Dec 1939.

<sup>185</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS (39)43 Possible Intervention in the Balkans 2 Dec 1939.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

To quiet British fears, the French proposed that "only if Italy should join the Allies or give full and concrete assurance of benevolent neutrality could the forces to be used in the Balkans and the Near East be increased, and our objective there correspondingly increased".<sup>187</sup> But even if Italy was hostile, the Expeditionary Force as planned should go to Thrace as soon as possible; if necessary overland through Asia Minor. It was imperative, the French thought, that such a Force be on its way by January 1940 at the latest in order to be in position to face an Axis attack in the Spring.<sup>188</sup> Such an Expeditionary Force, according to the French, must be inter-allied, must be sent soon, and must be strong enough at least to protect the Straits. This being the case, and given prior British admissions of troop availability, the French considered that even if Italy were hostile, the Allies should be able to come up with three Divisions at once, with one or two Anzac, and one or two French Colonial Divisions later. If Italy were neutral, then the French would have available at once five or six Divisions with two or three Tank Battalions; and the British, they thought, would be able to provide one and a half Infantry and an Armoured Division.<sup>189</sup> This small Anglo-French Army, "would be integrated into a Turkish organization [in Thrace] which is already well developed, close knit, coherent, solid, buttressed by natural defensive features, and provided with

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

overland routes of supply".<sup>190</sup> By this time, while not renouncing a possible move to Salonika, the French were considering as an alternate a deployment to Turkish Thrace. Immediately, the French said, negotiations must begin with Turkey aiming to sort out the administrative and logistical details -- timings, use of railways, bases, airfields, camps, harbours, communications etc.<sup>191</sup>

The COS were in fundamental disagreement with the French proposals. While the French were advocating a "forward" policy, they:

on the other hand, have consistently taken the view, to which the French have hitherto also subscribed, that our policy should be to maintain the neutrality of Italy and to avoid any action which would stir the Balkan countries into active intervention on either one side or the other. Nor have we thought it right, from the military point of view, to push Turkey to declare herself too openly at this stage.<sup>192</sup>

They considered that before any Balkan operations were undertaken, it was essential that adequate advanced bases and the planned concentration in Egypt and Palestine be completed first. It was expected that these preparations would take many months, and until they were finished, the COS were insistent that deployment to Thrace was impossible. Even more, the COS continued to question the political wisdom of French policy:

Italy is slowly, but unmistakably, moving in the right direction. Turkey, although nervous of her military position and of her relations with Russia, has so far encouraged us to think that she would come in with us in

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 115(39) 12 Dec 1939.

the event of a serious threat to our joint interests in the Middle East. The other Balkan Powers, although nervous and restless, show no particular desire to enter the war on one side or the other".<sup>193</sup>

Too vigorous a policy, they thought, might jeopardize all of this by over-haste. Even worse, overt military preparations would "cause violent political repercussions in the Balkans and the Middle East".<sup>194</sup> Britain, they thought, should content itself with Staff conversations and should contemplate actual operations only in the event that Turkey were attacked directly, or, if an attack on the Balkans, in the opinion of the Turks, endangered their vital interests directly.<sup>195</sup> Even then, the Turks would have to be made to understand that British support would be limited "to the supply of such material and technical units as we could spare and the despatch of a small token force if the Turks should ask for it".<sup>196</sup>

On the other hand, it cannot be said that the Services were unable to see the attraction, even the necessity of the French conceptions. It was not so much French logic that brought London to this unlovely pass, but the inexorable reality of German strength. The war, London agreed with Paris, would likely begin on a large scale in the Spring of 1940.<sup>197</sup> At that time, if the Germans did

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> PRO CAB 80/6 COS (39)146 Review of Policy in the Middle East 5 Dec 1939.



not attack West, they would have forty Divisions and thirty Air Squadrons to send into the Balkans. The RAF, for once a greater Cassandra than the RN, judged that the Germans would be strong enough to launch this level of attack South-East and attack West. If Germany did attack, the Services conceded, some shift would have to be made to support the Balkan nations. However, where French planning showed a marked tendency to slide into the offensive and operational dimensions, British planning remained mainly contingency and defensive; and even Britain's resolve to assist in Balkan defence declined markedly whenever study revealed the nakedness of the Strategic landscape.

Against attack on the scale expected, the planners judged, Salonika could not be held without twenty to twenty-four Divisions, and Greece in its entirety might become untenable -- at least North of a Euoboean Channel-Gulf of Corinth line. "In any event", they judged, "we consider that any allied force sent to Greece should have a defensive role only, and should not be so large as to prejudice the support we can give Turkey on whom our defensive plans in the Middle East should be based".<sup>198</sup> Even should Italy become hostile, the planners confessed -- adopting the Paris line -- the only changes this would make from dispositions against Germany alone was that it would be necessary to capture the Dodecanese, and the timing of Allied deployment would be slowed, because the "first preoccupation would be to defeat Italy". The general lines of Allied movement when it belatedly began, however,

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

would remain the same. Finally, the planners confessed, adopting Halifax's argument, the successes of Allied economic pressure might make a German attack probable rather than problematical. All of this being the case, they suggested that three Divisions be brought from India to hold Iran and Iraq, that nine Divisions be concentrated in Egypt and Palestine in the Middle East Reserve, and that an African Division be created in Kenya around the KAR in order to prepare for the worst.<sup>199</sup>

**Continued Anglo-French Disharmony -- Winter 1939-1940:**

By December 1939, the French were pressing for the application of political pressure to create a Balkan Front.<sup>200</sup> London, meanwhile, continued to insist that such a course would only scare away Italy. The French, HMG said, might continue their secret staff conversations with the Balkan nations; but they themselves considered that a sincere attempt should be made to associate Italy with such planning and Ciano approached with details of Allied planning.<sup>201</sup> In Rome, Lorraine continued to believe that such an approach would produce only bitter fruit. Mussolini, he wrote, was terrifically angry about contraband control and Ciano continued to refuse to commit Italy in regards to the Balkans.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid. The 1st Aus, 1st NZ, and 1st Cav Divisions were already being concentrated in Palestine as the nucleus of the Middle East Reserve -- the force to go to Thrace should that become necessary.

<sup>200</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 120(39) 20 Dec 1939.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> PRO CAB 53/2 WC 123(39) 27 Dec 1939.

If it were needed, British reluctance to do anything to annoy the Italians was given a fillip by the Russian attack on Finland in December 1939, which raised in acute form one of the paradoxes afflicting Britain's world strategy. While it made it extremely likely that Britain and Russia would soon be in a state of open war, it also made it probable that in the even of such a conflict Britain could count on at least the benevolent neutrality of Italy and Japan. By 8 December, Loraine in Rome, and Halifax in London were reporting that the Italians were enraged by the Russian invasion and were giving serious thought to sending assistance to the Finns.<sup>203</sup> Halifax was quite plainly confused and uncertain of the best course. By January, he was arguing at once that it was essential that the little states of South and Eastern Europe, running scared, be consolidated against Germany and Russia,<sup>204</sup> and that it would be intensely dangerous to adopt a forward policy in South and Eastern Europe because this would be to invite German and Russian attack which might carry the first to the Mediterranean, and the second into the Middle East.<sup>205</sup> French policy, was more straight-forward. Russian actions linked overtly threats the French had always tended to join in their own minds -- the Russian and the German -- and led to the conclusion that Germany might somehow be engaged by opening operations against Russia. Turkish policy, on the other hand, was pushed further in

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<sup>203</sup> PRO FO 800/319 Halifax Memorandum 8 Dec 1939.

<sup>204</sup> PRO FO 800/321 League of Nations Halifax 22 Jan 1940.

<sup>205</sup> PRO FO 800/321 Record of Meeting of Ministers 18 Jan 1940.

the direction of true neutrality by the general increase in international tension and uncertainty.<sup>206</sup> But as we have seen, there was no unity of views and many second thoughts in London, and a consensus, which tended, if French input were extracted, to arrive at the conclusion that Balkan operations were by no means desirable given the conditions of the day. In France, opinion was both more united and more optimistic regarding the prospect of Balkan operations. The Alliance, by default, often came to follow a line set in Paris. French dominance in strategic formulation was underscored by British uncertainty whether the danger represented by Balkan contacts outweighed the peril of not making such contacts. This particular dilemma London solved by tacitly allowing the French to enter into Staff talks with the Balkan nations while insisting that it would not be bound by any conclusions reached.<sup>207</sup> Of course, this policy served only to free London from the necessity of decision and was unlikely, in the long run, to have any happy outcome; particularly if the French took on a commitment HMG could neither afford to support or renounce. In the short run, however, it permitted the Foreign Office to fight the diplomatic war while the Services were left free to build their strength.

On 30 November, in addition to presenting their memoranda, the French delegation requested a meeting on 4 December, in Paris, at

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<sup>206</sup> See further, Chapter XII & XIV below.

<sup>207</sup> PRO CAB 80/1 COS (39)11 Staff Conversations with Greece 6 Sep 1939.

which the joint COS would hammer out the general lines of a common strategy. The COS conditionally agreed to attend at a later date, after the CIGS returned from a visit to the Front, and requested terms of reference from the War Cabinet.<sup>208</sup>

On 3 December, Ironside, still in France, met informally with Gamelin and Weygand. They were full of the benefits to be gained by a movement to the Balkans. Ironside would have none of it. He considered offensive Balkan operations before the Allies were ready to support them adequately to be foolhardy, even immoral. "Here we have", he confided to his diary,

the beginning of a large expeditionary force, obviously to be commanded by a Frenchman, Weygand, and a large commitment for the future. . . . the moment is not now . . . we are not ready and have not the material ready to support our small friends. As in 1914-1918 they may all be annihilated before we can prevent the Germans from getting at them.<sup>209</sup>

On 7 December, preparatory to the approaching contest in Paris, the COS complete, Wavell in tow,<sup>210</sup> met with the War Cabinet to explain their Near Eastern policy.<sup>211</sup> The CAS, Newall, spoke for all Services in stressing that British policy should be based on:

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid.; also, PRO 65/2 WC 100(39) 1 Dec 1939.

<sup>209</sup> Ironside Diaries, p. 170. Entry for 3 Dec 1939.

<sup>210</sup> "Archie Wavell is to conference in the afternoon. He is a dour devil, but a good soldier, with very great imagination. He is all for us preparing in the Middle East. He seems to be imbued with the firm idea that the Germans will come against the Balkans." Ironside Diaries, p. 170-171. Entry for 7 Dec 1939.

<sup>211</sup> The War Cabinet had before it WP(39)148 COS Military Policy MidEast; and WP (39) 149 Memo by COS on Allied Policy.

1. Concentration in the Levant of large Allied forces; and,
2. No early deployment to Turkey.<sup>212</sup>

The French, he complained were advocating far too forward a policy and skating-over administrative problems. Italy, he said, was "slowly moving towards the Allied camp, [and] precipitate action on our part might drive her in the opposite direction".<sup>213</sup> Halifax agreed. He considered that the situation required "delicate handling" rather than the ham-fisted French approach. What would the French do, Chamberlain wondered, if Russia attacked Rumania and the Turks would not underwrite the Allied guarantee? Would they fight Russia too? Chatfield answered that this very probably was their intention since French planning tended to combine the Russian and German threats. Italy, he thought, was unlikely to enter a war against Germany and Russia.<sup>214</sup> It was agreed that the differences between the Allies would be resolved at the next meeting of the Supreme War Council. More importantly, the COS went to Paris with the clear support of their political masters.

On 10-11 December, the joint COS met in Paris at Gamelin's Headquarters. In addition to the COS, Wavell and Weygand also attended the meeting. Much to the surprise of the British COS, who had gone to Paris expecting a fight, the divergence of views seemed to have disappeared. "It is fair to say" they informed the War Cabinet, "that we found ourselves in complete agreement on all

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<sup>212</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 104(39) 5 Dec 1939.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

essentials".<sup>215</sup> Weygand and Wavell did their best but were overborne by the massive disapproval of the British COS and the determination of their French counter-parts to avoid an open rift.<sup>216</sup> The fact was, that Gamelin had side-stepped the important questions entirely by insisting that the Commanders should confine their discussion rigorously to military matters while leaving political questions to the politicians. The opening of a Balkan front, a political question, was not so much discussed and rejected as masked and left for the future.<sup>217</sup>

There would be no movement to the Balkans, it was agreed, unless Italy's benevolent neutrality, at least, had been secured; and not to Salonika unless Greek consent were certain. The French, contrary to expectation:

did not press for the immediate formation of an Eastern front but appeared content with the putting in hand at once of certain preparatory measures and with advocating Staff Conversations with the Balkan countries concerned.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> PRO CAB 80/6 COS (39)163 Balkan Policy. Conversations with the French High Command 22 Dec 1939.

<sup>216</sup> M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, p. 25; and, Kennedy, p. 44. At the end of the meeting only Weygand remained steadfast in his opposition to the agreed policy. Such a policy, he protested, had not a chance of success and was tantamount to renouncing hope of victory. Wavell, more conciliatory, or less sure of his position, was brought to agree that the present position of the Allies in the Eastern Mediterranean did not permit an immediate offensive and that adequate defences would have to be in place before an offense would be possible. He did insist however, that he "was entirely in agreement with the views of General Weygand. He considered our intervention in the Balkans in 1940 as essential". Gamelin, Vol III, p. 212-213.

<sup>217</sup> Gamelin, Vol III, p. 212.

<sup>218</sup> PRO FO 800/322 R11422/G FO to Loraine 14 Dec 1939.

Allied assistance was to follow one of three lines depending on the conditions at the time it was required:

1. Assistance to Turkey in the defence of Thrace;
2. Assistance to Greece in the defence of Salonika; or,
3. Construction of a Front including Yugoslavia and Rumania; "this presupposing the previous settlement of the Bulgarian question".<sup>219</sup>

In present conditions, it was agreed that no more could be done than make preparations for Allied intervention in Thrace and at Salonika. By 'preparations', however, the French made clear that they intended the establishment of bases and the predeployment of supplies.<sup>220</sup> The British disagreed. They thought that preparations for Allied assistance should be made by the Greeks and the Turks themselves. Salonika could not be held and therefore should not, the British stressed, be defended. Allied assistance, they emphasised, should be promised to Turkey but not to Greece.<sup>221</sup>

The French concluded by confessing to their on-going conversations with the Balkan nations. The British reported that

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<sup>219</sup> PRO CAB 80/6 COS (39)163 op. cit.; also, PRO CAB 65/2 WC 115(39) 12 Dec 1939. While the joint COS met, the possibility of a Balkan front was being undercut by British diplomacy. On 11 December, the British formally advised the Rumanians that Britain would not guarantee them against Russia without having been assured first of Turkish readiness and Italian neutrality. Since the Turks were unlikely to give assurance of anything without Britain's prior commitment, and the Italians unlikely to commit to anything, this was tantamount to saying that there would be no guarantee. Butler, Vol I, p. 70.

<sup>220</sup> FO 800/322 R11422/G op. cit.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.



they had been unaware of these, but were not concerned, and did not desire that the conversations become tripartite.<sup>222</sup>

The Joint COS meeting ended with a draft resolution outlining the guidelines which each nation was to follow in the direction of its regional policy:

1. An approach should be made to Italy.<sup>223</sup>
2. Immediate commencement of preparations. "They will take some time to complete; and if they are not begun at once we may find ourselves either unable to intervene when the situation demands it or forced to do so at the risk of a repetition of those administrative failures which have had such disastrous results in the past".
3. France was to continue its contacts but must not enter into full Staff Conversations without the permission of the Supreme War Council.
4. Preparations and concentration were to continue in Palestine and Egypt.
5. Greece and Turkey were to be pressed "into developing port facilities, communications, and aerodromes in Thrace, Anatolia, and at Salonika respectively, and, to accept stores of non military stores such as railroad, road and dock materials at their ports".<sup>224</sup>

The COS could congratulate themselves on having tied Weygand's hands; or so they thought. In fact, they had done nothing of the kind. Only two days after the meeting in Paris, General Pownall, the DMI&O, discussed with Weygand future Mediterranean strategy at

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid. The first, a lie; the second, God's own truth.

<sup>223</sup> Weygand alone dissented from this proposition. He thought it would be a damaging confession of weakness if an approach were made to Italy before preparations were completed.

<sup>224</sup> PRO CAB 80/6 COS (39)163 op. cit.

the home of General Georges at La Ferte. Pownall found Weygand by no means discouraged and as determined as ever to start something in the Balkans.<sup>225</sup> In any case, the apparent conversion of the French to the cautious British policy was at best half-hearted, and probably three-quarters sham. For the French, the only operative portions of the draft memorandum seem to have been those which authorised various preparations to go forward; those that back-pedalled the Salonika operation, or advised caution, were soon forgotten. By the end of December, Gamelin was again pushing for AA and Aircraft to be made available to cover a French deployment to Salonika; was being advised that these "cannot be made available"; and, more caustically, that he should have been clear on this point at the 11 December meeting.<sup>226</sup>

By 20 December, at the fourth meeting of the Supreme War Council, the French politicians had joined the Generals in agitating for joint political pressure to build up a Balkan Front; they joined them too in being admonished by their London colleagues that the most likely result of such a course would be the irredeemable loss of Italy to the Axis.<sup>227</sup> Here, for the first time, Daladier indicated his basic agreement with the Gamelin hypothesis. Germany, he thought, would not attack in the West for

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<sup>225</sup> Brian Bond (edt), Chief of Staff, Vol I, p. 268, entry for 18 Dec 1939.

<sup>226</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS (40)198 Salonika Newall 14 Jan 1940.

<sup>227</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 120(39) 20 Dec 1939

some time, but might well strike elsewhere.<sup>228</sup> The Balkans were a likely place, he thought, for such an attack. But luckily for the Allies, the Balkan nations were showing distinct signs of readiness to cooperate in their joint defence. What were the Allies to do? Daladier denied that, for the moment, it was the French intention to send an Expeditionary Force to Salonika; "that would be premature and might arouse keen opposition in Italy".<sup>229</sup> Instead, political and military preparations for effective cooperation should proceed at the best possible speed. One essential, he thought, would be the predeployment of material and ammunition to Salonika.<sup>230</sup> While Chamberlain did not dispute Daladier's central premises, he admonished him, that aid should not be dispersed all over the Balkans, but concentrated in Turkey -- "the strongest of the four countries in a military sense"; thus also, perhaps, though this was left unstated, avoiding the necessity of going to the Balkans at all and risking Italy's displeasure.<sup>231</sup> Daladier's suggestion that dumps of equipment be pre-established, Chamberlain straight-away dismissed. Since the allies had insufficient material to equip their armies in the field, they most assuredly had no surplus to lay up in the South Balkans.<sup>232</sup> What should not be missed amidst all the protestations of agreement that followed, was

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<sup>228</sup> PRO FO 1011/66 XC188331 South Eastern Europe Dec 1939.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Woodward, Vol I, p. 27.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

that Daladier persisted in speaking of a Balkan bloc to be created against Germany. Chamberlain, on the other hand, continually spoke of the use of a Balkan bloc to neutralize Italy. Despite surface agreement, fundamental conceptions remained as far apart as ever.

In January 1940, Gamelin wrote a new appreciation, on the probable future course of the war: Appreciation of the Possibilities in the Spring 1940 and the Possibility of a Resumption of the Offensive on Our Side.<sup>233</sup> In it, he returned most vigorously to the idea of an attack in the Balkans. A successful offensive in the West, he thought, would require at least 130-140 Divisions given existing German Forces. The British, he noted, would only be able to put into the field, and that by 1941, forty Divisions. The French had 105 Divisions; ninety in France itself. Thus, not until 1941, would the Allies have the strength to mount an offensive against Germany; but by 1941, the German Army was expected to grow to 170-175 Divisions. Gamelin concluded from this that allied weakness made a knock-out in the West impossible. Peripheral war, and an intensification of the economic conflict were the only possible roads to victory;<sup>234</sup> the most promising theatre for both of these -- the Balkans.

Already on 21 December, the COS had instructed the British delegation to the AFC to see exactly where the French stood in

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<sup>233</sup> PRO WO 193/136 op. cit., Gamelin Memorandum Jan 1940.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

regards to the Gamelin resolutions.<sup>235</sup> On 19 January, the French answered that conditions continued to change, and that the ability to make a quick move to South-Eastern Europe was become more crucial with each passing day. If the Germans attacked South-East, Yugoslavia, they thought, would fight, and its resistance would be a matter of months, and not of weeks. If Yugoslavia fought, they continued, the Balkan Entente would probably hold together. Even if Russia attacked, they thought, the Balkan nations might stand together; but in this case, only if they had first received Allied assistance. The despatch of an Expeditionary force would have to be quick if anything at all were to be salvaged. Once Germany was definitely engaged in the Balkans, it was the French aim to hold them there "and to wear down and drain Germany's strength" prior to taking the offensive in the West. It was no longer necessary to worry about Italy. The Russian attack on Finland had guaranteed Italian neutrality.<sup>236</sup> The most that the French were willing to concede was that the bases required would have to be complete before the Expeditionary Force were despatched,<sup>237</sup> and that:

unless Italian neutrality is fully assured, there is no intention on the French side to ask the British to intervene in the Balkans with substantial forces as early as next Spring. It is recognized that, as the Chiefs of

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<sup>235</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS (40)235 Allied Military Policy in the Balkans 13 Feb 1940; also, AIR 9/126 MR(J) (39)66 Balkan Policy. Resolution Prepared by General Gamelin 21 Dec 1939; and, MR(J) (39)57 Possible Intervention in the Balkans.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> PRO AIR 9/126 Discussion by Allied Military Committee on Balkans 1940, Note Concerning Allied Operations in the Balkans French delegation AFC 11 Jan 1940.

Staff themselves point out, British intervention in the initial stage must be limited to action by specialized elements and a symbolic force.<sup>238</sup>

The French concession that Britain need only commit itself, initially, to a token force was cold comfort to London. French dispositions spoke for French intentions more eloquently than their assurances. By the end of January, French preparations to go to the Balkans -- somewhere, anywhere, in the Balkans -- were being pushed rapidly forward. The two Brigades in Syria that had existed at the outbreak of war had swollen to three Infantry Divisions with supporting units.<sup>239</sup> Further reinforcement from France and North Africa were planned prior to the commencement of any Near Eastern operations.<sup>240</sup>

Indeed it is difficult to see how the French could have conformed in good faith to the torturous British policy. Britain insisted, driven by the logic of a hamstrung imperial strategy, that there should be no preparations for a movement to the Near

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., MR(J)(40)5 Balkan Policy. Resolution Prepared by General Gamelin AFC 9 Jan 1940.

<sup>239</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS(40)209 List of French Forces 20 Jan 1940. These Divisions were light Divisions, not in the sense of equipment, but in the sense that each contained only nine battalions of infantry. In addition there was in Syria: 3 Batteries of Horse Artillery; a Battalion of pioneers; 2 Tank Battalions; 2 groupes of 105mm guns; 1 groupe 75mm AA guns; support units; 1 Recce gp (Air); and 1 Obs gp (Air). Support and transport elements remained largely horse-drawn.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. From France would come: 1 Infantry Division; 1 Light Division; 2 Groupes 155 mm long; 1 Groupe 75mm AA; 1 Groupe 105mm long guns; 1 Groupe 105mm mountain guns; 2 MG Battalions; 1 Battalion Pioneers; 1 Battalion Pioneers (bridging and tunneling); 1 Fighter Groupe (air); and, 1 Bomber Groupe (air). From North Africa would come: 4 Tank Battalions; 2 Groupes 155mm short; 40 or 50 oerlikons; and 2 Groups 75mm mountain guns.

East because these would be inflammatory; but also declared that movement to the Near East would be essential in certain cases; and, finally, that no such movement would be possible without prior preparation. In addition, Britain insisted that an expedition to the Balkans could only be mounted with Italian permission, and also insisted that Greek consent was required if the expedition were to go to Salonika; yet, British intelligence confirmed French that Greek consent would never be forthcoming unless the Greeks were certain that the Germans had no intention of attacking.<sup>241</sup> Thus, the constraints Britain was seeking to impose on Allied strategy would necessarily lead to the ludicrous conclusion that no expedition to the Balkans could be mounted without complete Axis connivance; and further, that no preparation was possible until after the occurrence of the case for which it was intended to provide.

Nothing deterred, British strategy continued to move in its accustomed grooves and British strategists refused to recognize changing circumstances as described by the French as being sufficient to necessitate a change in British policy. The JPC continued to opine that "it is essential that Turkey be retained on our side"; also that the Italian attitude might very well be decided by the form of German or Russian intervention in the Balkans; also that it was Britain's best hope to do the "utmost to

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<sup>241</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 op. cit., Hopkinson to Chalmers 25 Sep 1939. The Greeks were "mortally frightened" of the Axis powers. They would give permission to the Allies to come to Salonika, Hopkinson said, only if the Germans were not involved, Italy neutral, and the Greeks in "imminent danger of being attacked".

assist Turkey"; finally that "as regards Greece . . . there is nothing that Britain can do to assist her in the immediate future".<sup>242</sup> British policy: give Turkey limited support and hope for the best.

**The Butler Conversations:**

Meanwhile, liasion and coordination with the Turks continued. The belated fruit of Çakmak's invitation to the Western Allies to send military missions to Turkey, and of Britain's continuing hankering for more intelligence regarding Turkish intentions, infrastructure and capabilities, were the Butler Conversations of December 1939. While the Butler Conversations in time came after the Commanders-in-Chief conference, in origin they preceded it by several months. The Butler Conversations were the pallid result of Loraine's suggestion in the Spring -- accepted by Orbay in July -- that a military mission of some kind come to Ankara.

Halifax, for his part, initially was not well disposed to the idea of a military mission. On 13 September 1939, he informed the War Cabinet that the Turks were pushing Loraine for some kind of military mission. The Foreign Office, Halifax said, was "not disposed to accept the Ambassador's view, at any rate until the Anglo-Turkish Treaty has been signed"; otherwise, he thought, the British would give "too much the appearance of running after the Turks".<sup>243</sup> If the decision were made to send a mission contrary

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<sup>242</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS (40)218(JP) Assistance to Turkey and Greece if Italian Neutrality is not Assured 26 Jan 1940.

<sup>243</sup> PRO CAB 65/1 WC 12(39) 13 Sep 1939.



to his advice, he nominated the ancient and feeble Field Marshall Birdwood as an excellent candidate to lead it.<sup>244</sup> But when it was decided in August to send a mission, it was the WO nominee, Major General S.S. Butler, who got the Cabinet nod.

On 1 September, Butler's terms of reference arrived in Cairo.<sup>245</sup> By this time, driven by the approach of war, London had done a complete volte face and was pressing hard for the acceptance of a fully fledged military mission. Not only London; the French too were anxious to get on with consultations and to establish a permanent Staff in Ankara to facilitate these.<sup>246</sup> The WO considered that the best way to coordinate liaison, instructional and technical assistance, and to give effect to the Orbay requests, would be through the medium of a proper mission.<sup>247</sup>

On 9 November 1939, General Butler received the terms of reference from Wavell for his proposed mission.<sup>248</sup>

The first duty of the British mission to Turkey will be to act as the channel of communication between the Service Ministries in London and the Turkish General Staff with a view to effecting such cooperation as may be necessary between the British and Turkish forces and co-

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 Turkey: British Military Mission September 1939-January 1940 GOCME to WO 19 Sep 1939.

<sup>246</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS (39)133 Anglo-French Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe 25 Nov 1939.

<sup>247</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS (39)97 Despatch of British and French Service Mission to Turkey 24 Oct 1939.

<sup>248</sup> PRO WO 193/833 Mission No. 6. Military Mission to Turkey 11 September 1939-7 October 1939, Instructions for [the] British Military Mission to Turkey on Mobilization 9 Nov 1939.

ordinating the Military Policy of the two countries.<sup>249</sup>

He was to report to the GOCME, AOCME and the C in C Med to whom he would have direct access. In Ankara, he was to try to inspire confidence and to keep the Turks informed of developments in the West. In effect, he was to provide liaison on a grand scale -- much like Wilson at Versailles in the First World War, or Spears in Paris during the Second.<sup>250</sup> Butler was to take to Ankara with him Colonel A. Arnold, GSO.1, Captain G. Sprunt, GSO.3, Major H. Castle, a Cypher Office, twelve other liaison and intelligence officers, and RAF and RN representatives to be named.<sup>251</sup> In fact, Butler did not go to Ankara at this time, nor when he went did he ever discharge the intended functions. Instead, he languished in Cairo and Beirut waiting for permission to proceed while his mission was whittled in purpose to a shadow of the original intention. The French, meanwhile, nothing daunted, got around Turkish reluctance by infiltrating the four members of their proposed mission into Turkey masquerading as members of the Attaché staff. General Voeren, the French Attaché, was to have been head of the French mission, so the subterfuge passed without comment.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid; also, WO 106/5742 op. cit., WO to GOCME 1 Sep 1939. Butler's instructions were a close paraphrase of those Wavell had received on 1 Sep from the WO. In Ankara, however, Butler acted not for the WO but as a deputy of Wavell. WO 106/5742 op. cit., Despatch of British and French Mission to Turkey DMO & I Note.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 Army Council to FO 17 Nov; also, CAB 80/4 COS (39)101 Despatch of British and French Missions to Turkey 27 Oct 1939.

The fact was, that whatever the inclination of the Turkish Army, the Turkish Foreign Ministry was not at all anxious to accept anything bearing the name, function, or connotations of a "mission". "Mission", for the Turks, evoked "bitter memories of [the] hustling German methods" which had been so detested in the First World War.<sup>253</sup> To liaison, reconnaissance and conversations the Turks were not opposed, but they wanted no more Von Der Göltz or von Sanders.<sup>254</sup> Because the British had become set on the notion of a mission, Butler was kept cooling his heels in Cairo and Beirut for several months while his status was debated in London, Cairo and Ankara.<sup>255</sup> Finally, having received discouraging news from Knatchbull-Hugesson regarding the Turkish attitude, the idea of a mission was abandoned altogether.<sup>256</sup> The Secretary to the

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<sup>253</sup> PRO FO 371/23867 R7559/7378/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO Sep 1939.

<sup>254</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS (40)201 Staff Conversations in Turkey Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO to COS 4 Jan 1940.

<sup>255</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 op. cit., WO to GOCME 9 Sep (Butler to stay until Convention signed); Knatchbull-Hugesson to WO 22 Oct (Turks willing to accept small mission); GOCME to WO 24 Oct (Not sending specialists until Butler accepted); Knatchbull-Hugesson to War Cabinet 22 Oct (No mission, just individuals); Knatchbull-Hugesson to War Cabinet 27 Oct 1939 (General Staff wants mission; FO afraid of Soviets); GOCME to WO 29 Oct (no mission just liaison); GOCME to MAA 30 Oct (Butler not to go); GOCME to WO (Butler to go 19 Nov); MAA to WO (Butler not wanted); WO to GOCME (Butler not wanted); WO to Butler (do not go until sanctioned by MAA); Butler to WO (wants to go); MAA to WO (Çakmak wants Butler); FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson (GHQME trying to hustle Turks into Staff conversations); DCOS mtg Nov 39 (Butler not to go); COS decision 14 Dec (Butler to go unofficially); and, finally, GOCME to WO 24 Dec (Turks do want Butler. Should go officially).

<sup>256</sup> PRO CAB 80/6 COS (39)162 Staff Conversations with Turkey Note by Secretary 12 Dec 1939. Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 29 Nov 1939.

COS noted gloomily that the Turks had "pronounced themselves very decidedly against a mission owing to their anxiety not to upset the Soviets".<sup>257</sup>

In truth, it seems more likely that the reports that the Turks, and especially the Turkish Army, were anxious for formal contact were not exaggerated; indeed, as early as October, as we have seen, the Marshal himself expressed a willingness to receive British and French missions as soon as they could be sent. Military sources continued to indicate throughout the debate that the Turks were "ready and even anxious for discussions of military cooperation".<sup>258</sup> It seems equally certain, however, that the Foreign Ministry objection to the designation and character "mission" were unfeigned. The impression one received in the end had more to say about the nature of the Turks consulted than of Turkish foreign policy.

By December, in the heat generated by an increasingly inimical international environment, Turkish reluctance began to melt. London was informed on 11 December that there were no longer objections to the mission and that Butler should proceed to Turkey post-haste.<sup>259</sup> By this time, Butler's "mission" had been reduced in scope to a one-time fact-finding trip. Most of the members of the

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 Despatch 6407 GOCME to WO 24 Dec 1939. The Army, it seems certain, had no particular objection even to the idea of a "mission". It was Saraçoğlu at the Foreign Ministry who seems to have choked on the idea. Ibid., Knatchbull-Bugesson to War Cabinet 27 Oct 1939.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

effectively defunct mission had already drifted into Cairo as individuals and joined the Attaché staff there.<sup>260</sup> Butler carried with him to Ankara a long list of questions and information on the Germans and Italians which he planned to exchange for intelligence on the Soviets.<sup>261</sup> He arrived in Ankara at the end of December in civilian clothes, with a civilian passport, and posing as a personal guest of the British Ambassador. His arrival was not reported. The Turks had been careful to suppress mention of it in the press.<sup>262</sup>

On 30 December, Butler was received by Marshal Çakmak and General Gündüz.<sup>263</sup> Çakmak questioned Butler about future Staff Conversations. Butler told him that, unfortunately, Wavell had to await instructions from London on this matter and London was uncertain how to proceed. Since there was no more to be said on this head, and since little had changed since the Ankara conference, the Marshal settled down for an afternoon of his "favourite theme": Russia's evil intentions.<sup>264</sup> The real meat of the Butler Conversations was the exchange of information between the British and Turks in the form of a series of written questions

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid. Sprunt joined the Embassy as Assistant MAA. He was followed shortly by Major D. Brown, and Captain Harman arriving to take part in the new "Balkan Intelligence Centre" then being established.

<sup>261</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 and M.13/5695/2 op. cit.

<sup>262</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 GOCME to WO 29 Oct 1939.

<sup>263</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS (40)201 op. cit., MAA to Knatchbull-Hugesson 2 Jan 1940.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

from RAF HQME and M.I3 in Cairo.

Specifically, M.I3 wanted information from the Turks on a number of matters connected with possible operations and concerning interallied cooperation. The RAF, for its part, was concerned with the logistical dimension of possible Air operations based in Anatolia. The following charts indicate the question from Cairo and the answers Butler received in Ankara. The first chart displays M.13 questions, the second, RAF concerns. The accompanying map indicates airfields identified by the Turks in the course of the exchange of information as available for projected allied operations.

M.I3 ME Questions to Turkish General Staff Dec 1940

Questions	Answers
<p>1. Defences. Particularly, Dardanelles, Izmir and Marmoras -- both before and after material ordered had arrived. Could the British visit these? Could plans of harbour defences be obtained?</p>	<p>The defence of the Dardanelles was vital. No defence of Thrace would be possible if it were compromised. Izmir and Marmoras were essentially undefended. Harbour defences were compromised by failure of long ordered artillery to arrive from Germany. Of twelve 240mm guns, two; of twelve 210mm guns, none; and of twenty 150mm guns, only one had been delivered. These guns were particularly desired because their range would reach to the Dodecanese from the mainland. The Turks requested aid in preparing plans for harbour defences. More detailed information they promised, would be available once operations had been decided upon.</p>
<p>2. Airfields. Could these be visited by Air Staff?</p>	<p>Yes. Corlu, Yesilkoy, Lulenburgaz, Pirarbic, Ipsala, Eskisehir, Katahya, Izmir, Balikesir, Alasehir, Ayen, and Antalya had all been visited by the AAA and were available for operations. These airfields, however, required work, and the Turks looked to the British to help them with this.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>3. Turkish mobilization. Would it be finished on Z +18 days? Where would mobilized forces be deployed. When would the mobilization of Thrace tasked units be completed? When would Turkey be ready to attack Bulgaria?</p>	<p>Z +18 had been the mobilization standard set by the Balkan Pact. All Turkish reserves would be in mobilization centres by Z +10 but would not be ready for operations until Z +25 to Z +33. Until then, the Regular Army would be sufficient. Turkey would be ready to move within six weeks.</p>
<p>4. Mobilization plans. What force would be kept on the Russian, Iranian, and Iraq frontiers and what retained for internal security?</p>	<p>Fortress troops, IX, VII Corps and a Reserve Corps would be retained in Eastern Anatolia.</p>
<p>5. Equipment. Did Turkey have enough to equip 40-42 Divisions? Could it equip its Reserves?</p>	<p>No. There was sufficient equipment of most types for thirty Divisions only. Weapons, particularly Air, AA and AT weapons were urgently required.</p>
<p>6. Russia. Would it provide arms?</p>	<p>Uncertain. "But owing to the friendship between Turkey and the USSR, it is hoped that on the outbreak of war, the later would come to Turkey's aid and that this would be mutual".</p>



Questions	Answers
7. Dodecanese. What was the state of Turkish planning?	Preconditions of any attack were British Air and Sea assistance, and the availability of landing craft. In general, the General Staff envisaged a night assault by two Mountain Divisions presently training for the operation in SW Anatolia. Such an attack could be supported by bombardment from the area of Bodrum.
8. What assistance in Units was required to help hold Thrace and to secure Salonika?	Turkey would desire British Armoured units for Thrace and Artillery for the Dardanelles. Aviation units of all kinds were wanted.
9. Italy. What would its reaction be? What would Greece do? What would the Turks do for the Greeks? For the Yugoslavs?	Italy would attempt to overawe Bulgaria to force it into an attack on Salonika or Thrace. "Were Italy to attack Greece, with or without Bulgaria, the Turks would come to Greece's assistance according to the terms of the Balkan Entente".
10. Albania. Would its capture be necessary before the grand advance from the Southern Balkans began?	No. An attack North from Salonika would have its right flank secured by a parallel Turkish advance from Thrace and its left by the RN in the Adriatic.
11. Details of Armed Forces. Complete details should be exchanged.	"Will be given after the signature of a military convention". In the meantime, the AAA would be given everything required for planning.
12. Airfields and support. What is required, and what is available?	See below for answers to RAF questions.

Questions	Answers
13. Student and technical aid. What is required?	There were a large number of students, military and civil, which Turkey wished to redirect to British or French schools. <sup>265</sup>
14. Communications. There should be a full exchange.	Information to follow.
15. "If Bulgaria becomes a member of the Balkan Entente and therefore is fighting on our side, would Turkey envisage sending material assistance to the defence of either an outer front (Rumania-North Yugoslavia) or an intermediate front (Rumania-Western Bulgaria)?"	Turkey favoured an intermediate front in such a case.

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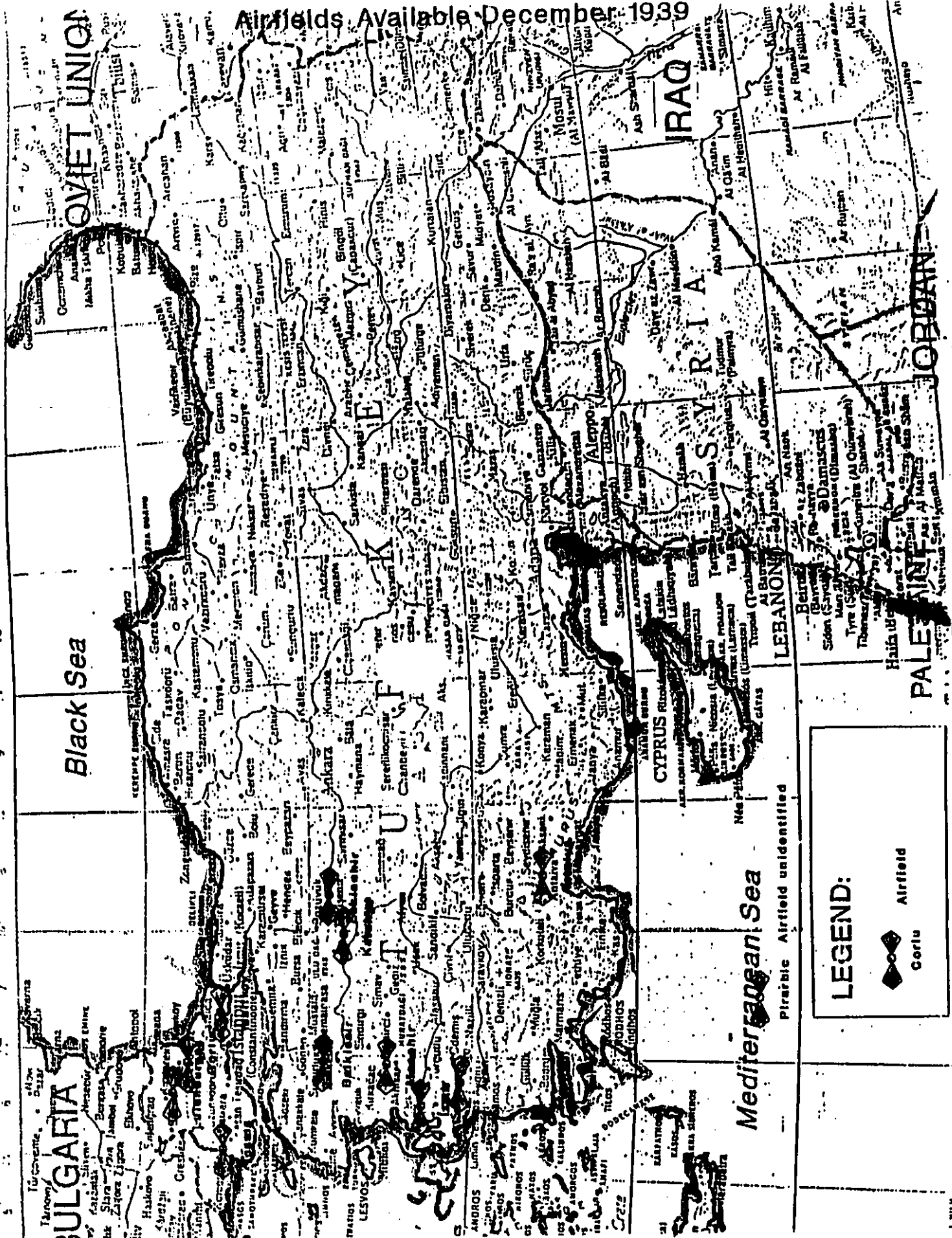
<sup>265</sup> See Chapter X above.

RAF Questions to Turkish General Staff Dec 1939

Questions	Answers
1. "What will be the role of the Turkish Air Forces in the event of hostilities?"	To support the Turkish Army, particularly in the defence of Thrace.
2. What Aerodromes and landing grounds would be available for the British Air Forces?	Corlu, Yesilkoy, Lulenburgaz, Pirarbic, Ipsala, Eskishehir, Katakya, Izmir, Balkiesir, Alasehir, Ayen, and Antalya.
3. What Aerodromes and landing grounds were good for night flying?	The AAA had seen them all.
4. "What Turkish AA defence will be allotted to aerodromes and landing grounds allotted to the British Air Forces?"	Provided guns and lights could be obtained, they would be willing to accept this responsibility.
5. What workshop facilities were available?	None. Turks were trying to order these themselves.
6. What radio, radar, and DF finding facilities were available?	No details.
7. Meteorological?	No details.
8. Bombs and Munitions. Could the British get them locally?	No. Turks did not have sufficient supply for themselves.
9. Fuel. Could it be obtained locally?	No. Turks did not have sufficient supply for themselves.
10. Food. Could it be obtained locally?	Yes.
11. Maps. Could the Turks supply them?	Yes.
12. Aircraft. What had been ordered from other countries?	From Germany: 60 Fighters, 8 Bombers, and 15 Trainers. From the United States: 50 Trainers. <sup>266</sup>

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.; and, Appendix A, Table two.

# Airfields Available December 1939



LEGEND:

 Airfield  
 Corlu

Piræbic Airfield unidentified

Mediterranean Sea

ANDROS  
 NIKOSIA  
 LARNACA  
 PAPHOS  
 LIMASSOL  
 HERAKLION  
 ATHENS  
 SALONICA  
 SOFIA  
 BULGARIA

CYPRUS  
 RIFA  
 LEBANON  
 BEIRUT  
 HAIFA  
 SYDON  
 TYRE  
 DAMASCUS  
 HAMA  
 LEBANON

SYRIA  
 LEBANON  
 BEIRUT  
 HAIFA  
 SYDON  
 TYRE  
 DAMASCUS  
 HAMA  
 LEBANON

IRAQ  
 BAGHDAD  
 MOSUL  
 ERBIL  
 KUT  
 SAMARRA  
 BASRA  
 IRAQ

TURKEY  
 ANKARA  
 ISTANBUL  
 SAMSAT  
 ERZURUM  
 VAN  
 DIYARBAKIR  
 ADANA  
 ANTALYA  
 ISKENDERUN  
 TRAPZUS  
 ERZURUM  
 VAN  
 DIYARBAKIR  
 ADANA  
 ANTALYA  
 ISKENDERUN  
 TRAPZUS  
 TURKEY

SOVIET UNION  
 MOSCOW  
 Leningrad  
 Kiev  
 Minsk  
 Smolensk  
 Vologda  
 Yaroslavl  
 Kostroma  
 Ivanovo  
 Gorky  
 Nizhny Novgorod  
 Penza  
 Samara  
 Orenburg  
 Chelyabinsk  
 Krasnodar  
 Stavropol  
 Grozny  
 Vladikavkaz  
 Tbilisi  
 Batumi  
 Sukhumi  
 Abkhazeti  
 Georgia  
 Armenia  
 Azerbaijan  
 Transcaucasia  
 Caucasus  
 Soviet Union

Black Sea

The thing most striking about the responses to Butler's questions, as with the earlier Commanders' Conference in Ankara, was the candour of the Turkish answers, and the impression thus given that the question and level of Turkey's participation in the Alliance was entirely dependent upon the degree of support which it received; further, that there were few cases in which it would not actively participated provided that the assistance provided was commensurate with the perilousness of the case.

At 3:30 p.m. on 19 January, Butler appeared before the CIGS, DCIGS, DMO, and DMI in Ironside's London office.<sup>267</sup> Butler reported that he had been well received by Marshal Çakmak who had agreed to fuller Staff talks, and to further reconnaissance of airbases. Marshal Çakmak, Butler said, had stressed that he believed that the Russians were likely to "make a drive towards Iran" in the Spring, and "was convinced that sooner or later he would be in against the Russians".<sup>268</sup>

The CIGS questioned Butler regarding Turkey's reaction to the Finnish war. Butler answered that Saraçoğlu believed that the war "was sabotaging Russia". In the Spring, he thought, Russia and Germany would, by mutual consent, withdraw their Divisions from Poland and look for easy prey elsewhere.<sup>269</sup>

Was there any chance, the CIGS wondered, of getting a real

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<sup>267</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 op. cit., Notes of a Meeting Held in CIGS Office 19 Jan 1940.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

mission into Turkey? Butler thought that there was none unless the danger to Turkey became considerably more acute than it was at present.<sup>270</sup>

What did the Turks think of the French, the CIGS asked? Turkey, Butler answered, did not trust the French and was willing to tell the British things that it kept from them. It considered the French too closely involved in Near Eastern politics, due to their precarious position in Syria, to be truly trustworthy.<sup>271</sup>

The Butler debrief ended on a pessimistic note -- the nagging question of material assistance. The Turks, Butler emphasised, considered this question to be of crucial importance and were unhappy with the level of support they had been receiving. On 21 January, the Butler "mission" was disbanded and its final report forwarded to the War Office.<sup>272</sup>

#### **The Balkan Intelligence Centre:**

A lasting legacy of the Butler "mission" was the Balkan Intelligence Centre established in Ankara to collate all Balkan intelligence for GHQME in Cairo. On 19 November 1939, the Attachés in Ankara, Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Rome and Cairo were instructed to pass all their intelligence to Ankara which would forward a collective report to Cairo and to the liaison mission in

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> PRO WO 106/5742 op. cit., Despatch 1400 GOCME to MAA 21 Jan 1940.

Beirut.<sup>273</sup> General Arnold, MAA, and an ex-officio member of the Butler mission, was to command this centre. It was staffed, very largely, by other officers rendered redundant by the collapse of the mission.<sup>274</sup> Arnold reported directly to Wavell, and, by default, assumed the functions that were to have been Butler's.<sup>275</sup> By the end of November, the "Arnold" section was up and operating and was received with considerable suspicion by its Turkish hosts.<sup>276</sup> The chief significance of the centre was that it represented a signpost on the road towards increasing autonomy for GHQME which operated more and more as an independent entity without reference to London.

#### Cairo and Operational Planning:

A further signpost on this road was the decision reached on 14 January 1940, that the general outline having been established, regional strategy could safely devolve to the local commanders -- Wavell and Weygand. Wavell, like his friend Weygand, was a good deal more "forward" than his superiors and henceforward began to play a much more independent game in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>277</sup> The first fruit of the decision to devolve

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., WO to GHQME 3 Dec; WO to MAA 3 Dec; MAA to GOCME 6 Dec 1939.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., DDMO to DDMI 22 Dec 1939.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., Despatch 6407 GOCME to WO 24 Dec 1939.

<sup>277</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS (40)196 Assistance to Turkey. Conversations with French Commanders CIGS 14 Jan 1940; and, MGen R. Collins, Lord Wavell (1883-1941). A Military Biography, (Hodder & Stoughton: London) 1947. p. 195-231. Weygand had been appointed C

responsibility for regional planning was the visit of General Butler from GHQME to Ankara at the end of December 1939; the second was the visit of Wavell and Weygand to Ankara in February 1940.<sup>278</sup> At this second meeting a strategy was agreed upon which London would have viewed with considerable alarm. In truth, it would be fair to say that by January 1940, with the decision to place planning power in Wavell's hands with his own JIB and JPC at Alexandria, in most of its details, London's Mediterranean Strategy mattered little more than what was decided in Cairo.<sup>279</sup> By January, the British were well on the road to accepting the "Superman" concept;<sup>280</sup> and the proto-superman, Wavell, was well on his way to accepting a Balkan commitment. It is probable that

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in C ME in August 1939. Previously, Ironside, afterwards CIGS, had been Commander designate while acting as GOC Gibraltar.

<sup>278</sup> See Chapter XII below.

<sup>279</sup> Cairo had long had its own JPC, but it was unusual in that after June 1939 it was allowed to form its own JIB. The Cairo JIB received reports from the Service Attachés in the Balkan nations and from the Balkan Intelligence Centre established in Constantinople. PRO CAB 54/2 DCOS 39th Mtg 27 June 1939.

<sup>280</sup> PRO CAB 53/10 COS 278th Mtg 2 Mar 1939. At this meeting, Newall proposed that since the defence of the Middle East was one problem, it would be logical that the regional AOC be paralleled by a regional GOC and NOC. Gort opposed this notion. He thought that Britain's regional allies would be offended. But the appointment of Wavell as GOCME in April 1939, and consolidation which placed most of the regional naval forces under the C in C Med went a long way towards Newall's suggestion. By 1941, the logic of the process was carried through to its conclusion: Britain, it was argued, should have one supreme commander in this theatre, paralleled by a Resident Minister able to coordinate all non-military agencies. By June 1941, Lampson the Minister Resident in Cairo was begging Eden to send out a "superman" to order the chaotic British command structure in the Middle East. PRO FO 954/5 Lampson to Eden 7 Jun 1941.



Wavell's isolation from London's dilemmas was more responsible for his more aggressive policy than any personal inclination; that is, GHQME could be more forward than London because its strategy was less contaminated by the necessity to plan for contradictory contingencies. One reason that it has been insufficiently appreciated that Wavell was well in advance of London was exactly because his headquarters had developed a certain autonomy. Liaison with the Turks, by January, had passed almost entirely into Wavell's hands as local commander and was affected through his JIB in Cairo and the Balkan Intelligence Centre in Ankara.<sup>281</sup> A critical feature of these organizations was that, contrary to the usual practice, they included no Foreign Office (S.I.S) presence due to jurisdictional in-fighting.<sup>282</sup> Thus, many of the documents relevant to Anglo-Turkish relations after December 1939 were never included in FO files and have only recently become available in Military and Intelligence collections. Previous researchers could not miss what they could never have found.

It is ironic that Britain first began to move to a command and strategic posture which would permit Balkan operations in response to a possible German attack just as the Germans were excluding this case from their own planning. On 6 January, General Jodl, at OKW,

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<sup>281</sup> PRO CAB 29/16 AFC(J) 8th Mtg 4 Apr and AFC(J) 35th Mtg 21 Apr; CAB 16/209 SAC 6th Mtg 17 Apr; CAB 2/9 CID 363rd Mtg Jun; CAB 4/30 CID 1556B 27 Jun; Cab 65/2 WM(39)108 8 Dec; CAB 66/3 WD(39)150 8 Dec 1939; CAB 65/5 WM(40)41 14 Feb 1940; CAB 66/3 WP(40)47 14 Feb; JIC 4th Mtg 22 Sep 1939, (39)13 Mtg 1 Dec, (40)5th Mtg 16 Feb 1940; (40)53rd Mtg 5 May; and (40)69 Mtg 16 May.

<sup>282</sup> See also, F. H. Hinsley, British Intelligence in the Second World War, (HMSO: London) 1979.

produced his memorandum on "Policy and the War Effort in the East" which advocated planning for joint German-Soviet action in the Middle East and Central Asia against Britain.<sup>283</sup> Hitler disliked the idea and, by April, had rejected the possibility of adopting a peripheral strategy.<sup>284</sup>

Meanwhile, Cairo made use of its newfound autonomy to begin planning for a contingency excluded by Britain's enemies. What was it planning? In three words, it was planning "Tiger" and "Leopard" which together made "Bear". "Tiger" was the plan to deploy quickly a small Armoured and Artillery force as the vanguard deployment for "Leopard" -- a scheme to despatch an Armoured and an Infantry Division from the Middle East to Thrace.<sup>285</sup> In general, Cairo thought that it would be able to provide:

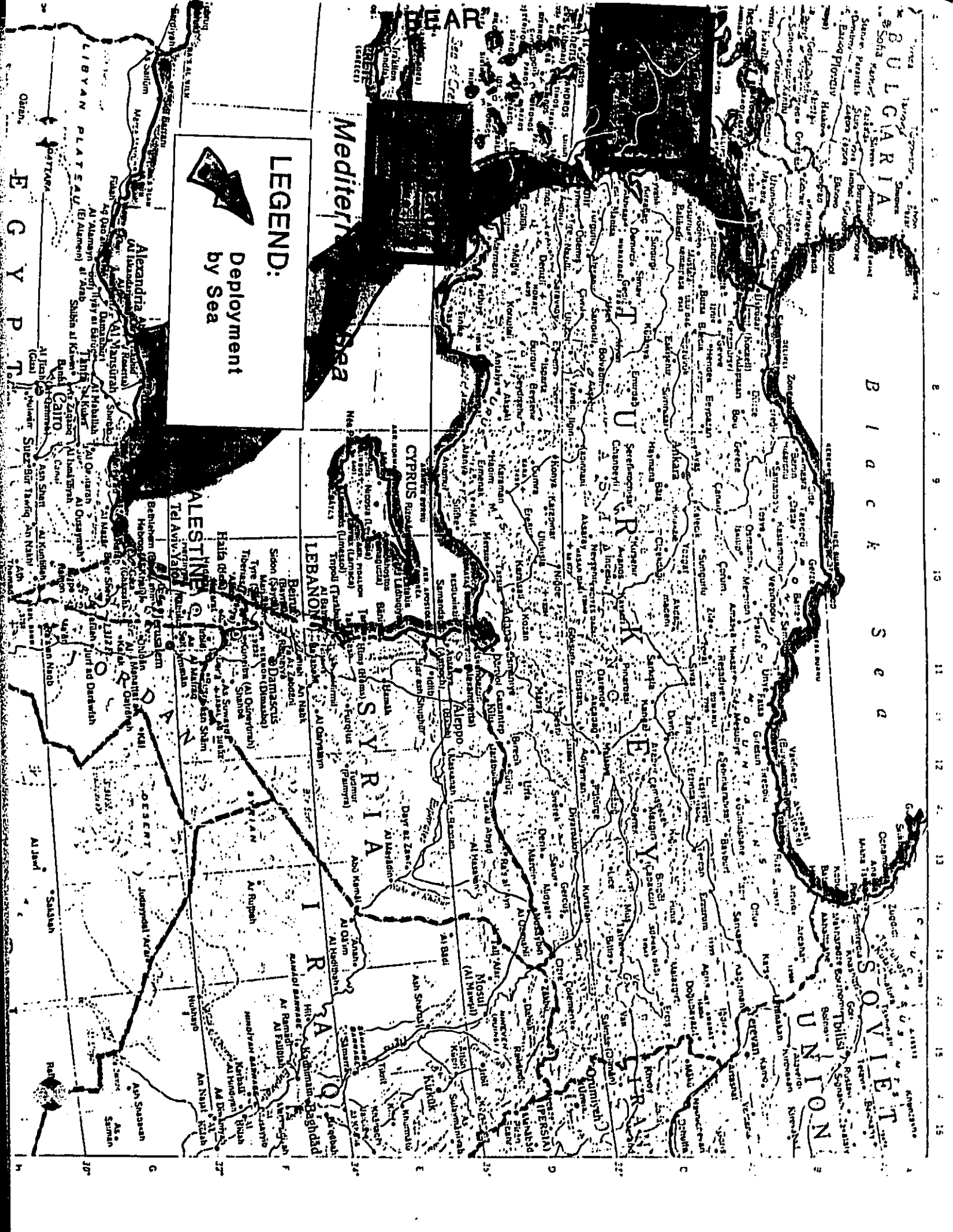
1. "Tiger": at Z +1 or 2 months. Composition: one Field Regiment RA, one Medium Regiment RA, one AT Regiment RA, and one or two Armoured Battalions from Egypt; with,

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<sup>283</sup> DGFP Series D, Vol VIII no. 514, Jodl Memorandum 6 Jan 1940. See also, M. Hauner, India in Axis Strategy, (Klett Cotta: Stuttgart) 1981. p. 176-181.

<sup>284</sup> DGFP Series D, Vol IX no. 46, 4 Apr 1940. Jodl sought to return to discussion of this case in June 1940, but was directed instead, by Hitler, to plan for the invasion of Russia. Britain was to be brought low by elimination of possible Allies -- by extinction of hope -- rather than by direct attack. DGFP Series D, Vol X, p. 370-374.

<sup>285</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS (39)94 op. cit. "Tiger" was to be composed of 1 Field Regiment RA; 1 Medium Regiment RA; 1 AT Regiment RA; and 1 or 2 Tank Battalions.



LEGEND:

Deployment  
by Sea

Mediterranean Sea

B I A C K S E A

S O V I E T U N I O N

S Y R I A

LEBANON

PALESTINE

CYPRUS

T U R K Y

B U L G A R I A

L I B Y A N P L A T E A U

E G Y P T

2. "Leopard": the remainder of an Armoured, and one Infantry Division after the development of adequate bases.<sup>286</sup>

If there was no war with Russia, and if the situation in Palestine remained relatively quiet, Wavell judged that he had to have sufficient forces for "Bear" and to ensure the security of the Middle East through the retention of two Brigades for internal security in Palestine, and one Division for the Defence of Egypt.<sup>287</sup>

Apprised of "Bear", planners in London thought that in the event of a true emergency, another four Divisions, then training for embarkation to France, could be diverted to the Near East. The problem of Balkan deployment being "infinitely greater", however, it would be a matter of some months before any substantial reinforcement could arrive from Britain.<sup>288</sup> If there was war with Russia, India would be available as a source of supplies and troops, although the fact that it might be engaged directly made it difficult to say what quantities of either could be moved to the Near East. In any case, London undercut its contribution with the insistence that before any Expeditionary Force could be deployed, Air, Sea and Land bases would have to be prepared.

A consistent problem indentified in planning for all these

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<sup>286</sup> CAB 80/7 Assistance Which Might be Given to Turkey Against German and/or Russian Aggression if Italian Neutrality is Assured Dec 1939.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> CAB 80/7 Assistance Which Might be Given to Turkey Against German and/or Russian Aggression if Italian Neutrality is Assured Dec 1939.

290 PRO CAB 53/48 COS 895 op. cit.

291 Ibid. There were fewer Squadrons available against Russia because the others were slated to go to India.

there were sufficient aerodromes, it was judged that Air deployment could be completed in Z +2 to Z +10 days.<sup>292</sup>.

Logistical considerations, however, even more than the lack of Air support and anti-aircraft capability, continued to constrain Allied planners, and it was in consideration of some of the more outstanding of these that members of the three General Staffs met in Ankara on 20 January 1940 to produce a list of items to be discussed by the Staffs in place in Ankara, and at future conferences.<sup>293</sup> The first order of business was the matter of railways potentially available for Allied deployment to Thrace. The Turks granted permission for the Allies to use the Aleppo-Smyrna, Smyrna-Banderma, Kaiserie-Ankara and Ankara-Hayder Pasha lines. In effect, they granted the French a clear run both to Thrace and to the Eastern Frontier, and to the British a rail thoroughfare for the movement of "Leopard" from Izmir to Thrace.<sup>294</sup> In truth though, it is difficult to see how the rudimentary Turkish rail net could have sustained both the pressure of maintaining Turkey's own armies in battle and provided for the movement and sustenance of an Allied Expeditionary Force.

The next matter of concern, was the designation of ports available and sufficient for the reception of troops transported by sea. Izmir, Banderma, Erdek, Tekirdag, and Istanbul, were indicated

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 Commandement en Chef du Theatre D'Operations le Mediterranee Orientale to Etat Major 3e Bureau.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

by the Turkish delegates as potential disembarkation points.<sup>295</sup> Precise allocation of sea bases was to be considered at later conferences.<sup>296</sup>

Lastly, the matter of airfields to be made ready was considered. The Turks authorized the preparation of airfields in two sectors, one in the East, against the case of Russian attack, and one in the West, for operations in Thrace or against the Dodecanese. In the Asiatic sector, five first line and five dispersal fields were allocated to the Allies. In the European Sector, four fields were earmarked for Allied use.<sup>297</sup> None of these fields was prepared to take modern aircraft. This being the case, the Allies requested, and received, permission to begin construction to place them in a state of readiness.<sup>298</sup>

In early 1940, a Committee in Cairo considered further the deployment of "Tiger" and "Leopard". On 3 April 1940 it presented

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> In January 1940, Wavell asked that authorization be granted for officers to make a reconnaissance of ports necessary for the deployment of British troops to Thrace -- Tekirdag, Istanbul, Bendirom, Erdek and Izmir. The party was to be led by a Brigadier-General, and include two RAF staff officers and an RN representative. The Turks gave permission to Butler for this party to do its work. PRO ADM 1/10358 GOCME to MAA 7 Jan 1940.

<sup>297</sup> The "Asiatic Sector" consisted of the area lying North and East of a line drawn Balkessir-Banderma. The "European Sector" consisted of the area lying South and West of a line drawn Corlu-Tekirdag. Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

its recommendations.<sup>299</sup> Both "Tiger" and "Leopard", it was decided, would embark at Port Said and Alexandria. "Tiger" would be landed direct at Istanbul. "Leopard" would go by sea only as far as Izmir and entrain there. Air Defence would be the responsibility of all three Services. If given two weeks advanced notice, it was judged that the RAF would be able to deploy five squadrons of Blenheim fighters, and three Squadrons of Gladiators to airfields at Izmir, Çannakkale, and Bandirma.<sup>300</sup> The two weeks grace period would also permit a predeployment in fast ships of whatever AA guns could be scratched together and Advance Parties. Local Air defence of disembarkation ports would be the responsibility of the Royal Navy.<sup>301</sup> The Army would be responsible for the provision of minor forces for port and airfield defence.

On 5 March, General Ironside brought his immediate subordinates together in his office to discuss Wavell's plan as it had by this time developed.<sup>302</sup> Çakmak, he told them, wanted Air support, and judged that if he could get enough he would be able to hold out against attack on any scale the Germans might be able to launch. Wavell, Ironside told them, was planning to go to Thrace

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<sup>299</sup> PRO AIR 9/126 op. cit., Operations Tiger and Leopard. Outline British Air Defence Plan 5 Apr 1940. (Committee composition: LCol Price (GSO.1 GHQME), Comd G. Bernhard (Fleet Gunnery Officer), Wing Comd G. Beamist (Air Staff Plans), Gp Capt C. Speckman (O.C. Fighters), and LComd Liddell (Fleet W/T Officer).

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid. AA defence of the Marmora, Bosphorus, Golçuk and Ismid were the responsibility of the RN.

<sup>302</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Mtg CIGS Office 5 Mar 1940.



with two Divisions, and while he considered this a good plan, he also considered that under no circumstances should British forces go to Thrace unless they were cooperating with the Turks in the defence of the Straits. The Deputy Quarter-Master General (DQMG) gave as his opinion that it would be useless to send any force to Thrace until the roads necessary to maintain them had been built. Total cost for the preparation prior to British deployment, he said, was likely to total two million pounds for base infrastructure, £ 700,000 for two bases on Gallipoli and £ 1,700,000 for aerodromes in Western Anatolia.<sup>303</sup> Construction of most of this had not started by May 1940.

There was yet an altogether more ambitious plan than "Bear"; more ambitious even than London's plan to divert four Divisions to the Near East in the event of emergency. This was the plan to despatch twelve Divisions and thirty-nine Air Squadrons to the Near East should it indeed become the war's major theatre in the Spring of 1940.<sup>304</sup> "Bear" was a short term expedient, and as planning developed, was reduced to being only the first increment in this larger deployment. Ten more Divisions from the United Kingdom and India, to make twelve altogether, became long term policy. As early as October 1939, Kennedy, the DMI & O, was considering how such a

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 Anglo-French Policy in the Mediterranean. War Plans Adm to C in C Med; COS (39)146 Jan 1940; and, WO 106/5706 op. cit., WO to GOCME 17 Jan 1940.

deployment might be made.<sup>305</sup> It was the British intention that the bulk of these forces were to operate in Thrace or Western Anatolia.<sup>306</sup> It was also the plan that they should operate under British command. On 17 January, the War Office quite emphatically instructed Wavell: "We are not (repeat not) prepared to accept as a *fait accompli* the position which General Weygand is trying to build up for himself in [the] Near East". Further, they instructed that "in no (repeat no) circumstances should British formations operating in Turkey be placed under Turkish commanders".<sup>307</sup> If Marshal Çakmak would not consent to operate under British command, and London considered, quite rightly, that he would not, the only solution would be separate commands.<sup>308</sup>

It was obvious that ten Divisions could not all arrive at the same port together. Three of them, "Cheetah", would go from embarkation ports in Britain directly to Thrace; three more, "Lion", would go from Britain to Izmir; another, "Trout", would come from India to Basra, with an additional three, "Salmon", to arrive from India later; in addition, a force of indeterminate size, "Lobster", would move overland to Iraq from Palestine.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Strategy VII -- The Middle East October 1939-September 1940, Note on the Study by the General Staff on the Problems entailed in developing Allied Forces in the Levant Kennedy 5 Oct 1939.

<sup>306</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 op. cit., WO to GOCME 17 Jan 1940.

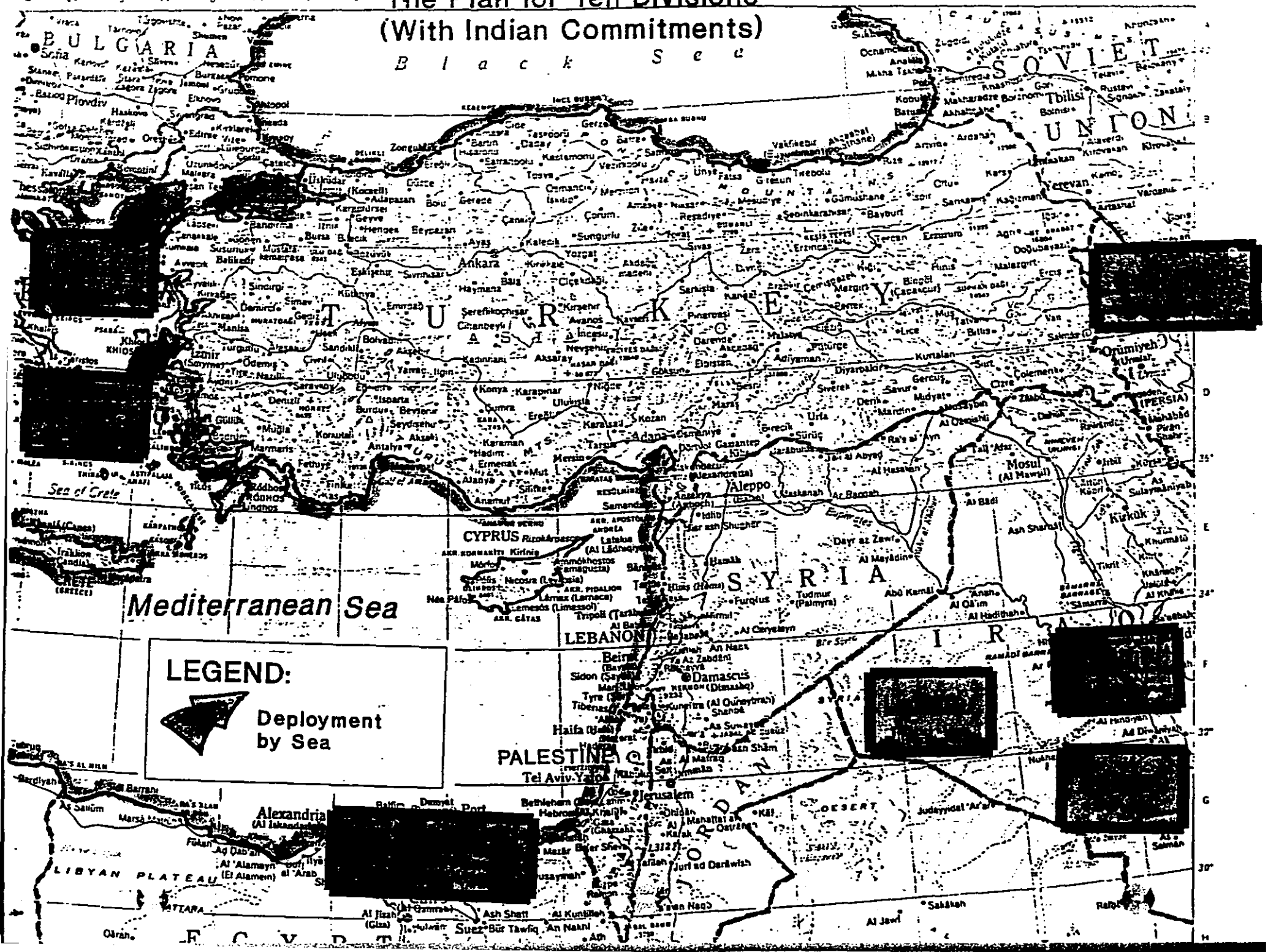
<sup>307</sup> Ibid., WO to GOCME 17 Jan 1940.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Despatch 63413 WO to GOCME; and Despatch 63711 Jan 1940.

# The Plan for Ten Divisions (With Indian Commitments)

## Black Sea



"Lobster", in fact, appears to have been 5th Indian Division being moved to the Middle East in March 1940 and intended to support possible Air operations from Northern Iraq if necessary.<sup>310</sup>

Indian commitments under the twelve Division plan were in addition to, and not instead of those made previously. "Heron", a Division for Egypt (4th Indian) had already arrived;<sup>311</sup> and "Scheme P", the dispatch of an Indian Expeditionary Force to defend the AIOC oilfields in Persia, initially planned as a Brigade, was beefed-up to a commitment of three Brigades in March 1940.<sup>312</sup> Such extensive use was made of Indian troops because they were available and trained, but lacked the equipment necessary for employment in Europe. Thus, if we include all increments and provisions, the plan for twelve Divisions, was, in fact, a plan to deploy fifteen Divisions to the Near East from Britain and India in the event that it became a major theatre of war.

The twelve Division plan was a theoretical reaction to an all-out German and/or Russian attack South. It was based on the assumption that "no military precautions against Italy need be taken".<sup>313</sup> It was also completely unreal. Most of the Divisions involved in this movement did not exist nor was it planned that they would exist in the foreseeable future. In his calculations of

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., DMO & I to MO.5 6 Mar 1940; and, CAB 44/7 The Situation in Egypt June 1940.

<sup>311</sup> PRO CAB 44/154 The Administrative History of the MEF BGen Pessell, p. 19.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., DMO & I to MO.5 6 Mar 1940.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid., WO to GOCME 9 Jan 1940.

future imperial strength on land, Ironside was in the habit of simply adding ten to the total in consideration of cases in which this deployment might be necessary.<sup>314</sup> The fact was, that no CIGS could have accurately predicted imperial strength for any time beyond the most immediate future. The twelve Division plan, however, was military slight of mind at its worst because it carried the germ of an unsupportable commitment through the production of a policy inconsistent with available resources.

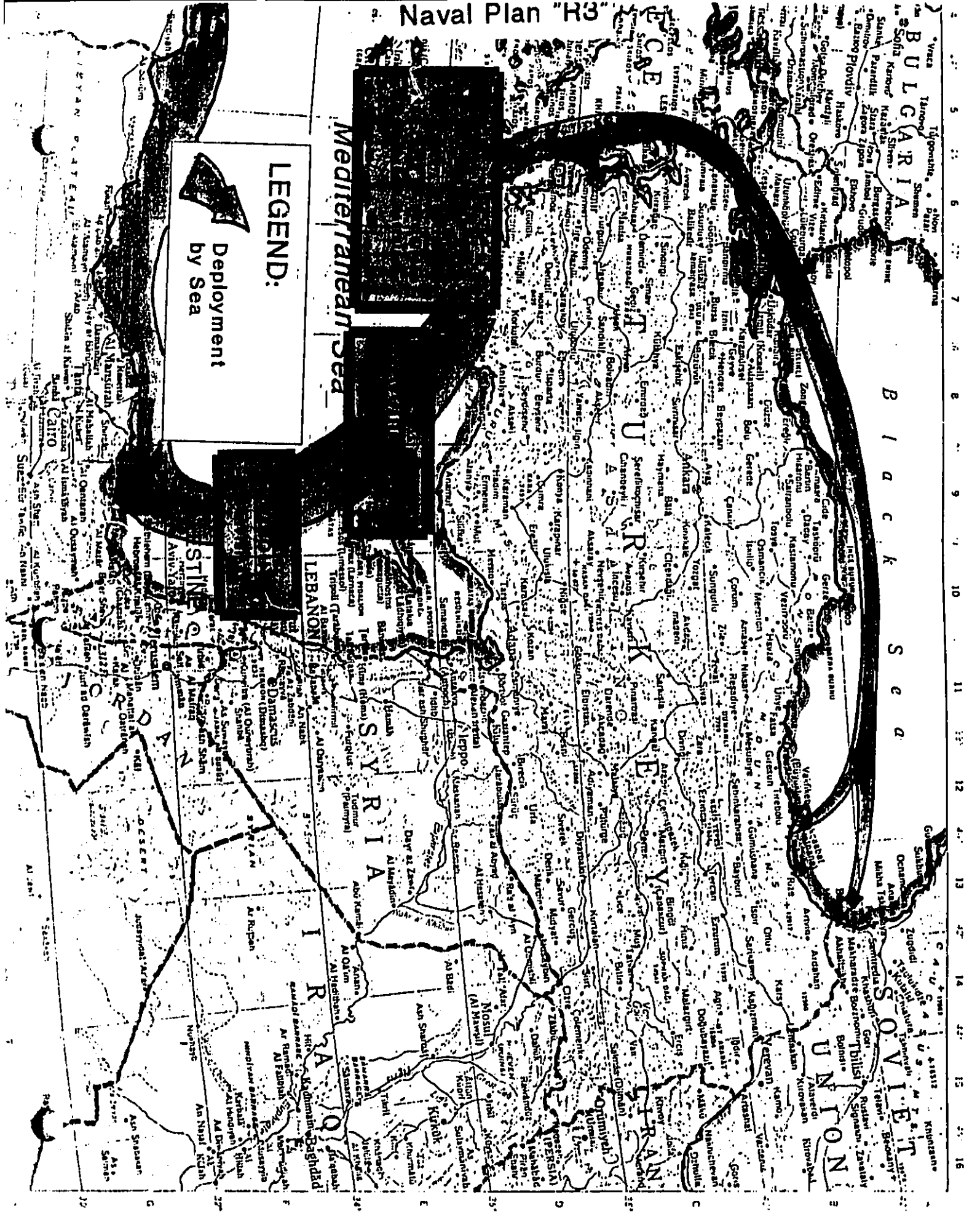
In February 1940, Captain Daniel (RN), the D Plans, drew up a scheme of altogether greater reality, called "R.3", for the despatch of a four Division task force in three packets from the United Kingdom to Iraq and Asia Minor.<sup>315</sup> The troops for R.3 did exist. The War Office, as has been seen, had already indicated that four Divisions might be available for deployment to the Near East in the event of an emergency. Until these Divisions were deployed to France and Norway in Spring 1940, "R3" was a viable plan even if a political constellation favourable to this deployment never emerged.

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<sup>314</sup> The Ironside Diaries, p. 102-104. Entries for 6 and 7 Sep 1939. At the outbreak of war, Ironside was planning for 32 imperial Divisions in the first, and another 32 Divisions in the second year of war. The Cabinet cut this back to 32 British divisions with a further 23 from the Empire by 1941. But still on 7 September, Ironside was making rough plans for the deployment of all 64 Divisions he had earlier forecast -- including 10 for the Middle East, 9 of which had no planned existence outside Ironside's mind. It seems probable that the 10 Divisions Kennedy was using as a planning figure derived from these "ghost" Divisions.

<sup>315</sup> PRO ADM 1/20034 Plan R.3 29 Feb 1940.

# Naval Plan "R3"



LEGEND:  
Deployment  
by Sea

B I A C K S E A

S O V I E T  
U N I O N

The Vanguard of this deployment, "Stratford", a force of five Battalions, would move from Rosyth and Plymouth on four fast Cruisers to secure the debarkation ports. "Red Force", of two Battalions, would come from Rosyth, and debark at Izmir. "Blue Force", also of two Battalions, would embark at Rosyth and debark at Batum. "Green Force", of one Battalion, would embark at Plymouth and debark at Trebizond.<sup>316</sup> The Advance Guard, "Avonmouth", the remainder of a Division -- about 13,000 men all ranks -- would move from the Clyde on three fast liners to Trebizond or Nikolaev depending on the political situation at time of despatch.<sup>317</sup> The Main body, "Plymouth" -- a force of three Divisions with an RAF component -- would follow in two series of fast and slow convoys sailing at five day intervals, with three to four troop carrying liners in each convoy.<sup>318</sup> The RAF contribution, two Squadrons of Gladiators, would sail directly to the Black Sea on the Furious, as they had insufficient range to move to the Near East themselves.

The Royal Navy, in all of this, would be responsible for the transport of troops to Batum and Izmir, for the naval defence of the disembarkation ports, to assist in the AA defence of the ports, and to move the RAF contingent to its operational fields.<sup>319</sup> For its own defence, the RN would be required to see to AS booms and

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid. 3000 men would travel in two smaller liners, the remainder in one large vessel.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

patrols, and for the provision of barrage balloons to cover base ports.<sup>320</sup>

**Naval, Air and Logistical Complications:**

It is difficult, however, to see how the Royal Navy could have fulfilled its allotted tasks even in this reduced plan. In November 1939, Cunningham had requested instructions. If London believed that the Germans would attack in the West, he wrote, then the Mediterranean was no consideration, and the planned concentration in Syria-Palestine, a tragic waste.<sup>321</sup> If, on the other hand, the Germans attacked South-East, then an entirely different situation arose and "to concentrate the enemy's power we must hope to place our troops in positions of strategic advantage before he strikes, lest we be faced with the difficulties inseparable from an opposed landing as in the Dardanelles".<sup>322</sup> What, he asked, was it expected that the Germans would do? What ships would he have? What preparations could be made? What was his role in all of this? He received no answers from London.

By January, Cunningham's perplexity was changing to scepticism. With some incredulity he wrote to the Admiralty on 8 January, that while GHQME continued to plan to go to Thrace, and while the French persevered in thinking that the RN could provide the transport for the three Divisions, he for his part, was

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 op. cit., War Policy in the Mediterranean C in C Med to DCNS 26 Nov 1939.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.



"still unaware of shipping to transport them and naval forces to ensure their safe arrival".<sup>323</sup> In other words, the decision had been made to go to the Balkans without anybody inquiring closely how the movement was to be accomplished, supplied, or supported by Sea. A planning session had been set with the Turks for March, and this was to be proceeded by a meeting of Planning Staffs in Cairo to be attended by Cunningham's deputy, Rear Admiral Willis.<sup>324</sup> Here, Cunningham said, he would look for some answers. Willis was to try to discover what Naval Forces the Turks would have available to operate against Germany, to protect communications, and for AS and AA warfare.<sup>325</sup> The Admiralty warned Cunningham, that ready or not, it might be necessary to transport the French Divisions with "Bear" any time after February 1940, and advised that he should work out his shipping plan with resources at hand as quickly as possible.<sup>326</sup>

Meanwhile, Weygand was pressing for information regarding Turkish intentions and the state of British preparations. In January, Weygand informed the AOCME that Cunningham's suspicions were true, and that the French did indeed plan to go to Thrace

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<sup>323</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 Anglo-French Policy in the Mediterranean. War Plans Cunningham to Adm 9 Jan 1940. See also, MGen I.S.O Playfair, The Mediterranean and Middle East, (HMSO: London) 1954, Vol I, p. 51.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., Adm to C in C Med 9 Jan 1940. The Admiralty wished Willis to request information about planning against Russia and to establish the remaining requirements to make the defence of the Dardanelles effective against Russian attack.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

entirely by sea, and looked to the RN to supply their transport.<sup>327</sup> Given his instructions from the Admiralty, Cunningham had no option but to accept with bad grace the obligation to provide transport and security for the whole movement including the French portion.<sup>328</sup> Obligation to provide, of course, was not, and cannot now, be taken as equivalent to ability to do so.

By January 1940, the RAF also was beginning to balk. It was not just a matter of airfield preparation and availability, but that it had insufficient forces to play the part cast for it.

British Air Forces allotted are totally inadequate [to] carry out [the] neutralization of German air threat from Balkan air bases being in my estimation . . . that Germany could operate some 30 Squadrons from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia . . . still more [obvious] is its inadequacy to fulfil tasks . . . at the same time it may be necessary to employ our bombers against enemy communications and in the event of [the] Turkish Army being badly pressed of using them in direct support of that Army.<sup>329</sup>

Slessor, the Director of Air Plans, was the moving spirit behind Air planning for regional operations. He was convinced that Turkey was vital to the Allied position in the Middle East and that the Middle East was the "keystone of the arch of Empire". If the Russians and Germans attacked South-East, then Britain, he thought would have no choice but to support Turkey up to the limits of its

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<sup>327</sup> Ibid., HQRAFME to Air Min 12 Jan 1940. The Turks had gotten into the habit of telling the British secrets on the condition that they not tell the French.

<sup>328</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 C in C Med to Adm 31 Jan 1940.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., SOS (Med) to WO 14 Jan 1940.

capability to do so; but Slessor was at least equally convinced that the RAF had insufficient planes to plan for operations in more than one theatre. Distasteful as it might be, planning for the Near East, therefore, could only remain contingency planning and could not be allowed to slide into operations. "On no account", he concluded his Appreciation for 1940, should Britain allow itself to "be dragged at the coat-tails of General Weygand into a hare-brained adventure at Salonica".<sup>330</sup> RAF reluctance notwithstanding, in the absence of full Staff Conversations, the Turks and French continued to make plans involving the employment of British Land and Air forces.<sup>331</sup>

Even while making plans for a deployment to the Near East, the Army in London remained sceptical of the value of regional operations and, by the Spring, was beginning to harbour doubts about their probable outcome. The Turks, for their part continued to insist, as they had at the Ankara Commander-in-Chiefs' meeting, that given the weapons they could defend themselves without other assistance. The JPC, then absorbing the lessons of the Polish campaign, was less certain, and was beginning to reconsider its previously optimistic estimation of Turkey's powers of resistance. "We are" they wrote:

doubtful whether they have fully appreciated the weight of German Air Attack which might be brought against their restricted communications in Thrace, and have no hesitation in saying that the despatch of an allied

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<sup>330</sup> J. Slessor, "The Strategy of 1940" 18 Jan 1940, The Central Blue, (Cassel: London) 1956. p. 266-267.

<sup>331</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 AAA to AOCME to Air Min 18 Jan 1940.

expeditionary force in the face of this threat might be a most hazardous proceeding.<sup>332</sup>

Poland, they judged, had demonstrated conclusively that no amount of gallantry is enough if a force is attacked on the ground and from the Air. The JPC concluded: "Although the Turks consider that they can hold their frontier without [the] assistance of allied formations, we think that they may be optimistic in this respect".<sup>333</sup> If the Turks were driven back to the Bosphorus by German attack, as the JPC judged they would be, then the primary role of Wavell's two Divisions would be to "sustain Turkish morale and prevent possible disintegration of their forces".<sup>334</sup> If Turkey did not request assistance in good time, then the "force despatched should be the minimum required as a token of support".<sup>335</sup> In no case, they insisted, should any force diverted to Salonika be allowed to grow so big as to "prejudice the support we can give to Turkey on which our defensive plans for the Middle East should be based".<sup>336</sup> The JPC finally concluded that "while it is of importance to prevent Germany or Russia reaching the Aegean or Sea of Marmora, we must above all ensure that Turkey is not defeated, since this could seriously threaten our whole

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<sup>332</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS (39)137(JP) Future of Military Policy in the Middle East 28 Nov 1939.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

position in the Middle East".<sup>337</sup> No question here of an advance across the Danube, or even of a defence in the Balkans. War in the Balkans might well be, the JPC thought by the Spring, a simple matter of avoiding defeat. Hardly an inspiring prognosis.

Certain Army commanders, however, continued to be rather more forward in their Balkan policy; but even these, as reconnaissance and liaison continued to uncover the perilous state of Turkish communications, began to develop a heightened appreciation of the difficulties facing a Balkan deployment. Both Ironside, the CIGS, and Wavell, the GOCME, were alive to the potential benefits to be gained by Balkan operations; but by the Winter, Ironside in particular, was doubtful that operations on any scale would be possible without extensive preparation and construction. Wavell, in Cairo, did not have to develop his own doubts. His Staff presented them to him fully prepared.

Ironside considered that Turkey's primary importance consisted of the fact that it "cannot be overrun by the Germany as can Rumania". In this way, it constituted a shield for the dangerously weak British defences in the Middle East.<sup>338</sup> If Turkey could not be made sure by being brought actively into the Alliance, the Allies would have no choice but to "examine building a "Maginot line" somewhere in Syria or Palestine as an essential defence against a German, Russian, and Turkish advance against the centre

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> PRO WO 193/139 Strategy #5. Notes on Strategic Situation in Europe 16 Sep 1939.

of the British Empire -- the Suez canal. The defence of Egypt against the North must be put in order at once".<sup>339</sup>

But both Ironside and Wavell were stymied by the sheer magnitude of the preparations required for the effective operation of Armoured forces in Thrace. In order to despatch a force even of the modest size planned by Cairo and London, port facilities valued at L40,000 would have to be build at Kilia Gelibolu, a road estimated at L160,000 constructed from Kilia Gelibolu to Edirne, physical plant and subsidiary roads valued at L500,000 constructed and installed throughout Thrace, and a pier costing L10,000 built at Tekirdag.<sup>340</sup> The alternative, as Cunningham pointed out, was to disembark the Allied Expeditionary Force -- Air and Land -- by lighter on an open roadstead.<sup>341</sup> No one judged the risks of such a course acceptable. Therefore, since all of the necessary work would require five to six months to complete, if the Allies were to provide effective aid in the Spring of 1940, either the British and the French would have to use the base-rail-communications system of the Turks or "assistance on the scale required" would not be possible.<sup>342</sup> Thus, while five Allied Divisions with considerable

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS(40)240 Assistance to Turkey CIGS Feb 1940.

<sup>341</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 op. cit., C in C Med to Adm 19 Jan 1940.

<sup>342</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS(40)240 op. cit. This was also the conclusion of the Anglo-French planning staffs meeting in Cairo in February 1940. M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, p. 30.

Air support<sup>343</sup> were available for deployment, unless something could be worked out with the Greeks for the use of their ports, or unless the Turks would agree, as in reality they could not, to allow the Allies to share their precarious communications, Ironside could not see how the Allies could operate effectively in Turkey before late Summer 1940 -- and only then, if an immediate start were made on the construction of military infrastructure in Turkey.<sup>344</sup> Moreover, as Wavell could not but have been acutely aware, the facilities required to support an Expeditionary Force were lacking in the Middle East itself: there simply was no contemporary counter-part to the Egyptian Base which had sustained British regional operations in the First World War. Stanley, the Secretary of State for War, informed the War Cabinet in March that British Forces in the Middle East were "still not in a position to operate outside Egypt, the Sudan and Palestine".<sup>345</sup> Even though the build-up of forces continued, there were no ancillary units, no reserves, and no bases. Neither was there Treasury sanction to spend the money to build bases. Therefore, he concluded, no Expeditionary Force was possible.<sup>346</sup>

#### The Dodecanese:

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<sup>343</sup> Approximately 100 Bombers, 52 Fighters, 32 Reconnaissance Aircraft had been promised by Britain and France together. Ibid., Annex I GOCME to WO and Ankara.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., Annex I.

<sup>345</sup> PRO WO 193/955 op. cit., Military Policy in the Middle East Mar 1940.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

Another factor complicating a possible movement to the Balkans was the continued occupation and strengthening of the Italian position in the Dodecanese islands. Although Italy was not at war, its neutrality was malevolent indeed, and to proceed by Sea to Thrace -- a risky operation in itself -- became doubly dangerous when the Dodecanese variable was added to the equation since Italy, from its base in the islands, would be in a position to endanger an Allied seaborne move, and in the event of an Allied reverse, to turn defeat into disaster. It has often been charged that the proposed attack on the Dodecanese derived, on the British side, from fears that the Italians would use their bases in the islands for attacks on RN anchorages in the Eastern Mediterranean. This motive has been much exaggerated. While Haifa, Famagusta and Alexandria were within range of planes operating from the Dodecanese, as Air Marshall Sir William Mitchell explained to Lord Lloyd in May 1939, it was a brave pilot indeed who would fly 300 miles over open seas to a point target and back again.<sup>347</sup> The attack on the Dodecanese was primarily important, as has been suggested, because of the position of the islands in relation to a planned deployment of a large Allied Expeditionary Force to Thrace. While the capture of the islands was "secondary" and "subsidiary" to a Thracian movement, it was generally conceded that no military force could be sent to Thrace by sea while the islands remained in

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<sup>347</sup> CC GLLD 20/3 Conversation with Air Marshal Sir William Mitchell 12 May 1939.



the hands of a potential enemy.<sup>348</sup> In 1941, General Marshal-Cornwall considered that the Dodecanese:

is the halfway point in our sea communications between Egypt and the Sea of Marmora, and therefore vital to Anglo-Turkish Military and Air cooperation. Therefore the Dodecanese operation is one of the first preliminaries for the concentration at the vital point i.e the Thracian frontier.<sup>349</sup>

Admiral Kelly, Cunningham's man on the Middle East JPC, judged that a force could be landed in Thrace, but could not be maintained while the Dodecanese remained in Italian possession.<sup>350</sup> Logic, then as now, indicated only two solutions to this particular strategic problem: either Italy must cease to be a potential enemy; or the ability to quickly seize the Islands in the event of Italian hostility would have to be assured.

Throughout the Winter and Spring 1939-1940, therefore, given the continued absence of Italian goodwill, Anglo-Turkish planning went forward to consider the reduction of the Dodecanese by joint action should Italy enter the war. Indeed, in the tripartite Staff conferences, planning for an attack on the Dodecanese received almost as much attention as for an Anglo-French deployment to Salonika and/or Thrace. One expects that this was so because much of the ground work for a Balkan deployment was done in London by the AFC or in Staff meetings in Paris and, therefore, did not require Turkish participation -- such was Anglo-French strategic

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<sup>348</sup> PRO ADM 1/11132 Ankara Staff Conference 1941 Minutes 15 Jan.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., Minutes 17 Jan.

disharmony, and so rudimentary the consequent planning. It is probable too, that the amount of time spent on planning this operation was a reflection of the fact that it was more purely a military matter -- thus laying in the province of the Turkish planners -- as well as more agreeable ground for planners from all three nations because it seemed much more likely to be an operation which could be accomplished with resources existing and available. That the operation was politically impossible after Italy's declaration of neutrality, seems to have caused less pause than it might; whether this was because contingency planning was necessary, in any case, to consider the common reaction to potential Italian hostility, or because the planners were reluctant to part with a project upon which there was so much unaccustomed agreement, would be difficult to say. Planning against the Dodecanese, moreover, could go ahead with much greater facility in 1939-1940 than thereafter because it had not yet become complicated by the question of the final disposition of the Islands.<sup>351</sup>

Operational planning against the Dodecanese was a legacy of prewar Anglo-Italian and Turco-Italian tension and this project was first placed on the strategic agenda during the Lund Conversations of July 1939. During Lund's visit, it was agreed that this operation would be undertaken the moment hostilities with Italy began. It was agreed also that planning for this operation was more

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<sup>351</sup> See PRO ADM 116/4478 Italian Possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean: Disposal After Capture by the Allies; also, FO 195/2468/457 Dodecanese.

a matter for local liaison than for Staff conversations.<sup>352</sup>

The matter of the Dodecanese was raised again during the Orbay conversations in London. The JPC concluded that the limiting factor would be equipment. Orbay, they thought, should be encouraged to order landing craft immediately. These, it was decided, were available, could be provided and training arranged.<sup>353</sup>

One suspects, however, that left to the themselves, the British would have continued desultory conversations without ever arriving at anything like a plan; after all, as they were less sold than their Allies on an early deployment to Thrace or Salonika, the preliminary reduction of the Dodecanese was simply a less vital concern for British than for French or Turkish strategists. Once again, it was the French who precipitated matters. At the Huntzinger conference, in July 1939, the French and the Turks discussed seriously the problem presented by the Italian position in the Dodecanese. While both Çakmak and Huntzinger were reluctant to make any hard decisions, since the operation would probably hang on the cooperation of the British Fleet, their conversations are enlightening in regard to the Turkish attitude to the question.<sup>354</sup> Marshal Çakmak said that the Turks considered operations against the Dodecanese to be "of primary

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<sup>352</sup> PRO CAB 80/4 COS 39(83) Plans For the Capture of the Dodecanese Note by the Secretary 17 Oct 1939.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.; also PRO CAB 54/1 DCOS (39)28(JP).

<sup>354</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 M.13/5695/8 Dodecanese (Record of Franco-Turkish staff discussions Jul 1939) 1st and 6th days.

importance".<sup>355</sup> The Turks, he told Huntzinger, had been giving the question continual study since April, but had not yet arrived at a final plan.

In general, General Gündüz continued, it had been agreed that the best way to proceed would be to attack the principal islands first. Rhodes would be the first objective. Turkish assault troops would land from small boats under cover of darkness on its numerous beaches and overwhelm the defenders. In this way, the Turks hoped to off-set the Italian advantage in the Air since Air attack would not be possible until the following morning, and by that time, he hoped, much of the island would be in Turkish hands. Once Rhodes had fallen, Leros would be isolated and bombarded by long range artillery since, being a rocky island surrounded by cliffs, Leros was not suitable for direct assault. The Turks hoped to use their 220mm Skoda guns firing from Bodrum on the mainland to reduce the Italian position on the Island. With the aerodromes on Rhodes and Leros gone, the remainder of the Islands, it was thought, would fall relatively easily. Calymnos would be next and would be bombarded by Air, Land and Sea. The only things left to settle, were the acquisition of the guns -- which had been ordered, but not yet received -- and the question of small craft. Turkey, Gündüz said, was interested in obtaining proper landing-craft and wondered if it might be able to build these for itself.<sup>356</sup> Marshal Çakmak "expressed", to Colonel Ross, MAA, his "hope that we would

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 6th day 20 Jul 1939.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

collaborate in this very difficult problem". Huntzinger and Çakmak agreed that the Islands should be taken by joint Anglo-Turkish effort and embodied this conclusion in the Military Convention, agreed to in principle by Britain in July, and signed in October by the Commanders in Chief.

Somewhat later, Ross talked again to Marshal Çakmak about the proposed attack on the Dodecanese. British intelligence, he warned, indicated that the machine-gun defences on the Rhodes beaches were good, and that any surprise attack would be "a risky business"; after all, he warned, the Italians had been fortifying the Islands for fifteen years.<sup>357</sup> Marshal Çakmak agreed. He told Ross that the Turks were also considering the possibility of isolating both Rhodes and Leros by bombardment and mopping up the smaller islands first. They had, he said, suggested a surprise attack to see what the British and French thought about it. "This would be thoroughly in accordance with Turkish methods" thought Colonel Ross.<sup>358</sup> What seems more probable, is that the Turks actually were considering the surprise attack -- it is a more reasonable idea -- but had no definite plan as yet. In any case, Ross echoed Lund and London in his judgement that "the Turkish General Staff have at present no adequate conception of the implications of this operation".<sup>359</sup>

The French, more than either of their alliance partners, were

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<sup>357</sup> An exaggeration. The Italians began fortifying the Islands in 1934. See Chapter I above.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., MAA to CIGS 30 Jul 1939.

<sup>359</sup> PRO WO 193/833 op. cit., Instructions for [the] British Military Mission to Turkey on Mobilization 9 Nov 1939.

interested in making preparations for an attack on the Dodecanese. On 28 August, at the AFC, the French delegation questioned the British closely about the availability of Cyprus as an airbase for French aircraft. The British, much to their embarrassment, had to decline the French request. The garrison of Cyprus, they were forced to confess, was a single Company and would be insufficient to ensure the security of any Air units deployed to the island.<sup>360</sup> Instead, the British directed French attention to the on-going survey of landing grounds in Asia Minor and Thrace by the British Attaché staff. Eight of these had been selected as most important and the Turkish General Staff asked to prepare them.<sup>361</sup> On 31 August, the French raised the question of Cyprus again, and Air Vice Marshall Evill, once again, refused to discuss Cyprus and again indicated his belief that Western Anatolia would be a much more suitable base for operations against the Dodecanese.<sup>362</sup>

In October 1939, the inter-Service Tactical Development Committee (ISTDC), a subcommittee of the JPC, prepared an appreciation on the capture of the Dodecanese.<sup>363</sup> It agreed with the Turkish assessment that the key to the position was the larger islands, and that if Rhodes could be captured the others would probably follow. For the assault on Rhodes, it considered that five

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<sup>360</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)14 14th Mtg 28 Aug 1939.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> PRO CAB 29/160 AFC(J)16 16th Mtg 31 Aug 1939.

<sup>363</sup> PRO WO 193/833 I.S.T.D.C. Appreciation DMI&O Oct 1939.

Brigades of Infantry,<sup>364</sup> one Battery of Medium Artillery, half an AA Brigade, a Tank Battalion, and a MG Company would be required.

For Leros, a larger force would be needed since it was a tougher nut to crack. Six Brigades of Infantry, and one Medium Artillery Regiment, the ISTDC considered, would be necessary here. Moreover, "Only first class troops" they judged, would be useful on Leros; and therefore, they thought it probable that British or French troops would be required. They doubted, however, that the Turks would allow this since "this operation is close to Turkish national aspirations". Due to the scale of the operation and the preparation involved, they concluded, an attack on the islands "could not be staged in the near future". The Turkish assault troops, for one thing, would have first to be trained in the use of landing craft, and the Turks could not train to use what they did not possess. Therefore, if the operation were to go ahead at all, it followed that the Turks would have to be given landing-craft immediately.<sup>365</sup> During Orbay's two stays in London, Kennedy, the DMI&O, consistently tried to get him to order these,<sup>366</sup> but, while rating the operation as important, the Turks could not be convinced to forego other requirements in favour of landing-craft.

When General Butler went to Ankara in January 1940, in response to a Turkish inquiry, he took with him details of types of

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<sup>364</sup> One Division with an independent Brigade.

<sup>365</sup> PRO WO 193/833 I.S.T.D.C Appreciation, op. cit.

<sup>366</sup> PRO WO 193/833 op. cit., Kennedy to Cornwall-Jones 9 Oct 1939.

landing-craft and their costs. Fifteen man punts could be had for L160; forty man assault craft -- twenty-six were required to carry a Brigade -- cost L2,600 each; motor landing craft, capable of carrying one hundred men and a light Tank, sold for L5,600. Thus, if the ISTDC estimates were correct, landing-craft for the assault on Leros alone would cost a minimum of L 400,000. It is difficult not to sympathize at times with the consistent Turkish complaint that too often they were treated like customers rather than allies.<sup>367</sup>

The Turks continued to consider the operation, and continued to judge it to be of crucial importance. The problem continued to be the provision of landing-craft for the assault troops. Since they could not afford these, the two Divisions of Mountain troops designated for the attack trained in the use of lighters at the Mountain Warfare school.<sup>368</sup> It was planned that they would embark from Marmaris Rethiya and land on Rhodes by night in four waves. But with the commencement of preparation for the dispatch of an Anglo-French Expeditionary Force to Thrace in the Spring, the fifty-five lighters assembled for the operation were moved to the sea of Marmora to ferry supplies. In January 1941, when planning began again for the operation, the problem of transporting the

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<sup>367</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 Anglo-Turkish Staff Conversations. Exchange of Information Annex II Types of Ships and Craft.

<sup>368</sup> PRO ADM 1/11132 Ankara Staff Conference 1941 Naval SubCommittee 16 Jan 1941. (Composition: Adm Ozel, Comd Besak, Comd Ulusan, Comd Sargut, Capt O'Connell (RN), LCol Johnson (RM)).



attacking troops had to be worked out entirely anew;<sup>369</sup> nor were the British, in 1941 -- though more understandably then -- willing to provide any landing-craft for the operation.<sup>370</sup>

Thus, despite planning which seems to have been almost complete, to judge by the surviving documents, even at the end of our period, there never was a real possibility of a joint attack on the Dodecanese Islands. There could have been none without some provision, at the minimum, of sufficient landing craft to transport the assaulting force. No shift was made to provide such vessels. Therefore, no attack on the islands was possible.

#### **Planning Spring 1940:**

Despite all the doubts and regardless of strategic bickering, contingency planning and interallied coordination continued. In February 1940 Cairo received definite permission from London to begin talking to the Turks about "Bear". Previously the availability of certain troops had been admitted, but Staff talks between Cairo and Ankara had never been authorized. On 23 February, writing at the behest of the COS, the CIGS told the GOCME, C in C Med, and the AOCME that Staff talks to consider the movement of "Bear" to Western Anatolia were authorized provided that Cairo considered the operations essential, and that Egypt's own defensive requirements were met. The question of Air movement, he noted, would be dependent upon the provision of Aerodromes.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> PRO ADM 1/11132 A General Appreciation Kelly 24 Jan 1941.

<sup>371</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS (40)246 Assistance to Turkey Mar 1940.

Four days later, London began to back-pedal. On 27 February, the War Office forwarded to the GOCME further planning guidance. He should plan, they said, to meet a German attack of sixteen Divisions -- eight maintained by the route Belgrade-Sofia-Simeonovgrad, and eight maintained by the route Rustavk-Elkhovo -- supported by thirty Squadrons of aircraft, half Bomber, and half Fighters.<sup>372</sup> He could plan "Bear", but should not, the War Office cautioned, attempt it unless the forces necessary were provided.<sup>373</sup> Why this last stricture applied is difficult to see. "Bear" had always been based on the assumption that it could be launched by Cairo without assistance. The War Office stricture was tantamount to an instruction to cease planning.

In March, the retreat became a rout. The instructions to Wavell were followed by a policy paper Measures to be Taken to Prevent Italy from Entering the War Against the Allies.<sup>374</sup> Whatever was done, the London planners asserted once more, nothing must be done to offend Italy -- which meant that nothing provocative, or even anything very much, should be done at all. The Allies, it was thought, should continue to concentrate strong forces in the Eastern Mediterranean. If Italy did enter, it would become necessary to divert shipping, and move forces from India to

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<sup>372</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS (49)250 Assistance to Turkey COS to GOCME 27 Feb 1940.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS (40)275, and COS (40)297 Measures to be Taken to Prevent Italy From Entering the War Against the Allies. Aide Memoire 27 Mar 1940.

Egypt-Palestine. It would also be necessary to attack the Dodecanese, and the COS, beating a dead horse to no good effect, reiterated their belief that it would be a good idea for the Turks to be encouraged to collect and train with light craft for this purpose.<sup>375</sup>

Gamelin, meanwhile, while failing to convince London to accept his views, had -- by constant reiteration -- convinced the AFC. By March, it had become the conviction of the joint planners that an German attack on the Balkans for reasons of prestige and economics was likely to precede a general offensive in the West, though it was conceded that whichever course "Germany will select will depend less upon logical deduction than upon the personal and unpredictable decision of the Führer".<sup>376</sup>

The CIGS countered with a memorandum on Possible German Action in South-East Europe in 1940 on 9 March.<sup>377</sup> Ironside considered that, "Germany might invade South-East Europe to raise German morale and to gain new minerals, particularly Roumanian oil. There is no sign at present that German moral needs a tonic, while an immediate gain in supplies would be problematical".<sup>378</sup> There was no reason, he thought, for the Germans to attack a region which had adapted itself to German needs so admirably. Nevertheless, he

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> PRO WO 193/785 Planning #6. Period of Inactivity. Matters for Consideration 2 November 1939-10 March 1940.

<sup>377</sup> PRO WO 193/144 op. cit., Possible German Action in South-East Europe in 1940 CIGS 9 Mar 1940.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

conceded, there was no guarantee that the Germans might not attack however unlikely that might be. And if they did attack, Ironside thought it improbable that Britain, France and Turkey between them had the ability to stop the German advance short of the Turkish frontier. If the Germans were to attack with twenty to twenty-five Divisions, Ironside continued, Rumania would collapse in two weeks. Yugoslavia would also fall quickly. Germany, if it wished, though to do so would serve no useful purpose, could advance beyond Nish and send sixteen Divisions against both Greece and Turkey. Thus, with a commitment of sixty Divisions, German would quickly neutralize the entire Balkan peninsula.<sup>379</sup> "There can be little cooperation" he concluded, "between Balkan states with the exception of Turkey. They could not hold up a German advance for long without the assistance from the Allies whose aid they would certainly invoke".<sup>380</sup> A forward policy in the Balkans, Ironside considered, was unlikely to do anything but provoke German attack, otherwise unlikely, and lead to another continental commitment which could not be made good. As late as January 1941, it remained the contention of the General Staff that Germany would never attack South-East unless provoked to do so. The Balkans were a German bailiwick, and provided the Kings did not let their scheming get out of hand, military operations would gain nothing not obtainable

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

at lower cost from a neutral Balkans.<sup>381</sup> The final utility of Turkey, for Ironside, remained as always, that it provided a barrier to German expansion. He had written in September 1939, and continued to believe in March 1940, that Turkey's fundamental importance to imperial defence lay in the fact that:

The Turkish Army is a formidable body of troops. If Turkey comes in against the Germans there is no possibility of Turkey being over-run such as there is in a country like Roumania whose army is not of high value.<sup>382</sup>

By this time, in any case, planning for a Balkan theatre was beginning to enter the realm of science fiction. It was almost certain that war would soon break out in the West, indeed the Allies were making plans themselves to stir something up in the Baltic. Whether the Germans attacked West, or the Allies went North, operations elsewhere would mean that the forces necessary for Balkan operations would be utterly lacking. On 16 March 1940, Captain Daniel (RN), the D Plans at the Admiralty, minuted Plan

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<sup>381</sup> PRO CAB 81/64 Future Operations Enemy Planning Section 1940-1941, FOES (40)1 German Appreciation Dec 1940. Ironside correctly pictured the German attitude to South East Europe prior to 1941. At Nuremburg, Ribbentrop was most insistent that Hitler had no intention of bringing war to the Balkans if this could be avoided because he would gain nothing by doing so. US Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, (US Government Printing Office: Washington) 1946. Supp B, p. 1183-4.

<sup>382</sup> PRO WO 193/147 op. cit., Ironside Memorandum 7 Sep 1939. In the General Staff, there was a school which tended more towards the Gamelin than the Ironside policy. Adams, the DCIGS, instructed Kennedy, the DMO & I in December 1939, to prepare plans to draw off some of the German strength likely to become overwhelming in the Spring of 1940. The Spring 1940, was, in War Office parlance the coming "time of testing". Ibid., DCIGS to DMO & P 31 Dec 1939.

R.3: "No further action is necessary".<sup>383</sup> If the Admiralty were to switch to the offensive in the North, there would simply be neither the ships nor the men for an extensive deployment to the Balkans. Narvik would cancel Salonika. Italy's attitude also continued to constitute a seemingly absolute constraint. In April, the COS reiterated for the benefit of the Balkan Ministers:

there can be no question of the despatch of any Franco-British land forces, even on a limited scale, unless Italy is at least a definitely benevolent neutral. The attitude of Italy is in fact, an overriding consideration and it is essential to avoid offending her susceptibilities.<sup>384</sup>

Nonetheless, through the Spring, Wavell continued to hanker for adventure in the Balkans and to advocate a more pugnacious Near Eastern policy. He informed London that he considered the risk of Italian hostility acceptable and requested authority to liaise with the Turks in reference to the defence of the Caucasian front against the Russians. He also told London that plans for an attack on the Dodecanese were being drafted.<sup>385</sup> Given his instructions and the sceptical attitude of his superiors, however, it is unlikely that Wavell would ever have received permission for serious preparation towards any of these potential operations.

The French continued to express their vigorous disapproval of

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<sup>383</sup> PRO ADM 1/20034 op. cit., Daniel Minute 16 Mar 1940.

<sup>384</sup> PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)283(JP) Balkans and the Middle East. Visit of His Majesty's Representatives to England. Aide Memoire 2 Apr 1940.

<sup>385</sup> CAB 80/9 COS (40)296(JP) Military Policy for the Middle East 15 Apr 1940.

British planning.<sup>386</sup> Conversations with the Greeks and Yugoslavs had been going very well Paris informed London. The Greeks had agreed to stocks of material being assembled in Greece, and were prepared to authorize the landing of troops at Salonika. They would allow the construction of aerodromes, and had shown "great goodwill" throughout. The Yugoslavs, the French said, had agreed to exchange of information and consultation.<sup>387</sup> Moreover, Gamelin continued to insist, German strength in the West made it most unlikely that there would ever be a successful Allied offensive between the Rhine and the Moselle. Thus, if there were no offensive in the Near East, there would be none at all.<sup>388</sup>

**The Shift in British Strategy in April 1940:**

On 26 April 1940, the COS abandoned their opposition to a Balkan deployment. They instructed the GOCME to ask the Turks to approach the Greeks with the request that the Allies be allowed to come to Salonika immediately and to sound them on the subject of Staff Conversations.<sup>389</sup> The Greeks did not answer. They had already been warned by Mussolini that the arrival of an Allied Expeditionary force at Salonika would be the signal for an Italian

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<sup>386</sup> PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)285 Allied Military Policy in the Balkans Apr 1940.

<sup>387</sup> PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)289 Franco-Greek-Yugoslavian Conversations. Aide Memoire 7 Apr 1940.

<sup>388</sup> PRO WO 193/147 op. cit., Appreciation of German Possibilities in the Spring 1940 and the Possibilities of a Resumption of the Offensive on Our Side.

<sup>389</sup> PRO CAB 80/10 COS (40)310 Despatch of an Allied Force to Salonika. Proposed Staff Conversations with the Turks 26 Apr 1940.

attack. Hitler, for once, did not disapprove of Mussolini's bellicose handling of the Balkans, because, at this juncture, it served to keep the Balkans quiet and the Allies out.<sup>390</sup> The shift in British military policy could not but have been influenced by the realization in London that the real war in the West had begun with the Germans having failed to oblige Allied strategy by presenting it with a second front. After the invasion of Norway, British planners were quick to draw the conclusion that operations in the South-East for the duration of 1940 were not likely unless the Allies started them<sup>391</sup> -- and this despite the fact that Germany retained sufficient force on the Danube to advance to the Maritza, the JIC thought, within three weeks.<sup>392</sup> If there was to be a second front in the Balkans, it would have to come from Allied rather than German action. Unfortunately, the forces required for such action had already been committed to Norway.

The truth was, that on the issue of deployment to the Balkans, a common Allied policy was never produced, with Wavell following a more offensive policy than London, Paris a less cautious line than Cairo, and Weygand, in Beirut, desperate to get to the Balkans. In all of this, the Turks, seldom consulted, continued to assert that their participation in Allied operations would be consistent with

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<sup>390</sup> M.L. Van Crevald, Hitler's Strategy 1940-1941, (Cambridge: London) 1974. p. 16.

<sup>391</sup> PRO CAB 80/10 COS (40)312(JIC) German Intentions in South East Europe.

<sup>392</sup> PRO CAB 80/10 COS (40)328(JIC) German Intentions in South East Europe 8 May 1940.



the level of support they received, and, one expects, were unwilling to go very much further North than the Çakamk line however excellent the strategy produced in Paris and however extensive the assistance from London.

**Conclusion:**

During the year bound on one side by the extension of Guarantees to the Balkan nations and on the other by the collapse of France, Britain and Turkey struggled unsuccessfully to produce a common strategy in the Balkans. France consistently argued for the preparation and dispatch of an Expeditionary force in order to consolidate some semblance of an Eastern Front against Germany. The various strands of British opinion, equally consistently, tended to arrive at the position that no such deployment would be possible for political and logistic reasons regardless of how strategically desirable it might -- might -- be. The Turks, meanwhile, were seldom involved in such planning, and when involved left their allies in no doubt of their ambivalent attitude. They remained, however, as the Staff Conversations testify, open to suggested courses of common action. If no common action proved possible, it was because, on the one hand, the weaknesses identified by the British were real weaknesses which could not be wished away, and because, on the other hand, no common action was possible where neither common policy nor a sufficient operational plan could be produced. The best that could be managed was some shift toward the eventual provision of assistance to Turkey some time after it might be attacked. When such an attack did not develop, the Allies were

( left, essentially, without any plan for common action at all. The nearest thing to such a plan -- Anglo-Turkish planning against the Dodecanese -- remained a dead letter until the end of our period due to British reluctance to part with the landing-craft necessary to the success of the operation, and Italian reluctance to enter the war before the disaster of the Summer.

## Chapter XII -- Planning Against Russia

Historically, Turkey and the Straits have occupied a central position in British planning for war against Russia. The simple reason for this was that Turkey, as custodian of the Straits, could open the door into the Black Sea to the Royal Navy, and conversely, could close the Straits to Russian commerce. While these conceptions remained part of renewed planning for this case after September 1939, they were displaced from primacy by other considerations as the Western Allies began to move towards a more aggressive posture following the Russian attack on Finland in November 1939: the utility of Turkey as a possible air base for aerial attack on the Caucasian oil fields; and the employment of Turkey as a barrier to possible Russian counter-action.

In the Winter of 1939-1940, planning for war against Russia quickly progressed beyond the point where it was defensive and contingent and became increasingly offensive and driven by operational considerations. Throughout, the moving spirit, once again, resided in Paris. War against Russia was a case which HMG faced only with considerable reluctance and which the Turks generally refused to consider at all. The most important reason for French enthusiasm was that by Winter 1939, Paris was beginning to think that only by starting the war elsewhere -- which essentially meant starting it against Russia -- could fighting in France itself be avoided. In the end, French urgency might have over-come British hesitation, and may even, by forcing Ankara's hand, have carried Turkey into war against Russia, had not Allied weakness, in this case the lack of heavy bombers, necessitated the postponement of

operations until after the collapse of France. Of all operational scenarios concerning the Near East this one came closest to fruition. It was a sign that Turkey's interests were not entirely congruent with its allies that this was the case it had the smallest share in planning, which it most feared, and to which it most strenuously objected.

#### **Allied Estimation of Russian Strength:**

A characteristic of this planning which should not pass unnoticed is the extreme undervaluation of Russian power upon which it was based.<sup>1</sup> Slessor, the Director of Air Plans, and the moving spirit of Near Eastern planning in the RAF, was later to write that, "the feature of the discussions which, in retrospect, really make one's hair stand on end is the air -- not perhaps of complacency but of acceptance -- with which we faced the prospect of enlisting Russia among our active enemies".<sup>2</sup>

In April 1939, the COS were asked by the Foreign Policy Committee of the Cabinet to prepare an assessment on the military value of Russia.<sup>3</sup> The COS concluded that the recent purges and the system of dual command had nullified many of the distinctive

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<sup>1</sup> So extreme was this devaluation that A.J.P Taylor ends his brief description of planning for war against Russia in 1939-1940 -- "the product of a mad hour" -- with the judgement that, "at present, the only charitable conclusion is to assume that the British and French governments had taken leave of their senses". A.J.P Taylor, English History 1914-1945, (Clarendon: Oxford) 1965. p. 465. See also, J. S. Herndon, "British Perceptions of Soviet Military Capability 1935-9", The Fascist Challenge, *op. cit.*, p. 297-312.

<sup>2</sup> J. Slessor, The Central Blue, (Cassel: London) 1956. p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> PRO CAB 53/48 COS 887 Military Of Russia 24 Apr 1939.

virtues of the Russian Army without replacing them with any countervailing advantages. "The inherent desire of the Russians to shirk responsibility is given full scope under this system and has resulted in discipline which was formerly good, now being of an indifferent standard".<sup>4</sup> The esprit of the old Czarist Army, had been nullified by "deep seated hostility to Communism". The Russians, the COS judged, had no good commanders, inferior communications, poor transport, and poor reserves.<sup>5</sup> The Russians would not be dangerous enemies, nor could they be effective friends. Moreover, the reluctance of Russia's neighbours to accept Soviet assistance made difficult the provision of effective assistance against Germany. The Russians could only help if allied to Poland, Rumania or Turkey. Poland and Rumania were adamant that if they could only be saved from the Germans by the Russians, then they would rather not be saved at all. Only the Turks did not immediately refuse to consider the idea. The COS concluded, therefore, that Russia's chief military utility as an ally would be to act as a source of supply for the Turkish Ally.<sup>6</sup> Admiral Sinclair, the head of the British Secret Service, agreed. Russia, he thought, "could do nothing of real value".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. See also, CAB 27/624 FPC Mts 25 Apr 1939; and, DBFP Series III, Vol IV, no. 183 Memorandum by Col Firebrace (Military Attaché Moscow); and, Memorandum by Wing Commander Hallawell (Air Attaché Moscow) 6 Mar 1939.

<sup>7</sup> PRO FO 371/23061 C3968/3356/18 29 Mar 1939.

If anything, the Admiralty was even more sceptical than the Army regarding Russia's potential either as ally or enemy. "Any form of active warfare", Godfrey, the DNI, wrote:

would bring about a break down in internal economy. Apart from this the Higher Command and Staffs are incapable of conducting a real war. If the USSR decides to declare war, it will confine itself to supply Germany and to a military effort which will cause no strain on [the] internal economy.<sup>8</sup>

Such a war would represent less a danger than an opportunity to finally complete the blockade by stopping Black Sea traffic -- and for this, only submarines would be required.<sup>9</sup> The Naval Attaché in Moscow, Captain Clanchy informed London:

The Service Attachés to this Embassy had always held the opinion that the USSR would in no circumstances be fit to undertake an offensive war . . . any form of active warfare prosecuted on land, in the air, or at sea would bring about a break down of the internal economy . . . Apart from this vital aspect, the "High Command" and "Staffs" of the fighting forces are incapable of commanding a real war. . . If the USSR decides to declare war against Great Britain, it will take NO ACTIVE PART and confine itself to supplying Germany with foodstuffs etc. and to any form of military effort which would place no undue strain on the internal economy of the country.<sup>10</sup>

Service opinion, in light of subsequent events, seems strange, but willingness to discount Russian power is all the more curious since it was based by no means on unanimous intelligence. The Czechs, the Rumanians, the Turks and the Lithuanians, were all

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<sup>8</sup> PRO ADM 1/9863 Naval Aspects of the Possibility of a War Between the USSR and Great Britain NAA to DNI 5 Nov 1939. Minute DNI.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Clanchy to Godfrey Nov 1939.

disposed to rate the Soviet Armed Services highly.<sup>11</sup> These opinions might have been instructive, because the Czechs and Turks at least, had considerably more contact with the Red Army than did France or Britain. The Red Air Force especially, often derided in London and Paris, was not similarly scorned in Eastern Europe. To paraphrase Napoleon, 3,200 first line aircraft West of the Urals were never to be despised -- particularly by those nations within range.<sup>12</sup>

**Reasons for the Development of Offensive Planning against the USSR:**

Based on these assessments of Russian power -- or lack thereof -- by Winter 1939, the British and French were giving serious consideration to the problem of defending Anatolia against German and/or Russian attack from the North. The British portion of this planning -- "Bear", the twelve Division plan, plan R.3 -- we have already seen. By Winter-Spring 1940, however, Western planning was showing a much more aggressive face.<sup>13</sup> Part of the reason for this lay in the violent Western reaction to the Russian invasion of Finland, following as it did, upon the occupation of Eastern

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<sup>11</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IX No. 6 de Lacroix to Boncour 21 Mar; no. 192 Coulondre (Moscow) to Bonnet 15 Apr 1938.

<sup>12</sup> DDF Series II, Vol IX no. 450 Note 2e Bureau de l'État Major de l'Air 25 May 1938; and, WO 106/5743 Russian-Air Force. Turkish General Staff Estimates Jul 1939(?). 31 Air Brigades west of Lake Baikal containing: 700 heavy bombers; 1500 fighters; 600 reconnaissance planes; and 200 transports.

<sup>13</sup> See, J.R.M. Butler, Grand Strategy. Vol II. September 1939-June 1941, (HMSO: London) 1957. p. 69.

Poland.<sup>14</sup> In addition, for France in particular, the Soviet-German combination seemed to provide a certain solution to the Italian dilemma. Fascist detestation of Soviet depredations, Paris thought, would provide the opportunity to act in the Near East without antagonizing Italy; possibly even, consolidating it to the Alliance by pushing the Russians and Germans into an undisguised alliance. In effect, Paris hoped to redirect the anticomintern against Germany.<sup>15</sup>

In Britain too, the connection between acceptance of Russian hostility and Italian neutrality was not missed. On 7 December the question of provision of assistance to Rumania was discussed by the War Cabinet. If Russia attacked Rumania, and the Turks were in, then it was thought that Britain would be bound to come in; but, if

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<sup>14</sup> It is notable that the special committee called in Geneva to consider League reaction to the Finnish appeal under Article 11 of the League Covenant, consisted of Bolivia, the UK, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Eire, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Uruguay, and Venezuela -- in other words, of nations not subject to Russian reprisal leavened by a very strong Dominion presence. The Scandinavian nations were extremely embarrassed by the decision to expel the Soviets from the League. The Balkan nations indicated that they were "most apprehensive" about this decision and the French insistence that sanctions be applied. With Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and China abstaining, it was decided to expel Russia while allowing "assistance of such individual members as might desire to go to the assistance of Finland". PRO FO 411/22 N 420/1/56 League Delegation to Halifax 11 Jan; and, FO 800/309 Mtg of Ministers 14 Dec 1939. Turkey, for its part, was the only Balkan nation to support Russia's expulsion. See also, Esmer, p. 50.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Marie de la Gorce, La Republique et son Armée, (Fayard: Paris) 1963. p. 363. de la Gorce argues that for the French Army, the Russians were simply a much more acceptable enemy on ideological grounds than the Germans. They were much happier planning war against the Russians and the Germans than against the Germans in alliance with the Russians.



in such a case the Turks were not in, was it still the French intention to attack Russia? Chatfield, answered that it was. In such a case, Italy would remain neutral, and Germany would probably neutralize itself. Thus, by attacking Russia, the Allies would replace a war which they could not win, for one they could not lose.<sup>16</sup>

Normally the planners might have balked at the equation of Russian and Italian power because neither French nor British were inclined to rate any Italian Armed Service highly, but the Russian disasters in Finland seemed to confirm all the most pessimistic predictions regarding Russian strength, and in such a way, it was thought, as to necessarily reduce considerably the fear the Soviet Union inspired in the smaller nations of Eastern Europe. "Germany", Ironside wrote, "has probably always known the weakness of the Russian Army, but now the world knows it. Her prestige has fallen considerably and the terror she inspires among small nations must have lessened."<sup>17</sup> Thus, it was thought, acceptance of Soviet hostility was as apt to prove as valuable a touchstone in Allied relationships with the minor states of Europe as with Italy. In reality, at least in the case of Turkey, Russia's botched assault on Finland was a mixed blessing for the Allied cause. While cheered by the scale of Russian debacle, Turkey was downcast by what had been a further demonstration of the inability of Britain and France

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<sup>16</sup> PRO CAB 65/2 WC 107(39) 7 Dec 1939.

<sup>17</sup> Ironside Diaries, p. 188. Entry for 25 Dec 1939.

to assist their friends -- in this case, Finland.<sup>18</sup>

Britain was not influenced towards greater activity in the Near East by French arguments alone, but also by the conviction that something had to be done quickly to tighten the economic screws on the Axis. By the Winter of 1939, London was faced with evidence that Germany was not only surviving, but winning the economic war. Hankey warned in November 1939:

Germany in almost every case has succeeded in reducing the deficit against her in the clearing with European neutrals below the figure at which she started the war. With the active assistance of firms in adjacent neutral countries she is developing organizations which will help her to evade action that may be taken by us against her exports.<sup>19</sup>

Britain's blockade was failing. The British were not the only ones who could see this. The Mediterranean blockade especially, Weygand complained, was "entirely ineffective. Everything was going through".<sup>20</sup> The lesson for the economic planners was clear. Unless Britain took some direct action against German trade, then at the bitter end of the economic war, Britain and not Germany was likely to be starving in the dark. Since British and French planners, by the Winter of 1939, had rejected the possibility of an Allied Land offensive in the West, the loss of the economic war, would mean the

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<sup>18</sup> PRO CAB 65/6 WC 70(40) 16 Mar; and, CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 entries for 13 and 14 Dec 1939.

<sup>19</sup> PRO CAB 63/100 Report W/E 10 Nov 1939.

<sup>20</sup> PRO CAB 66/4 WP(39)159, The Balkan Problem, 13 Dec 1939.

loss of the war.<sup>21</sup> The economic war, then, would have to be prosecuted with entirely greater ruthlessness. By December 1939, the COS were considering operations in the Baltic, against Rumanian oil -- "by diplomatic action or guile" -- and against Russian oil as options towards escalating the economic war.<sup>22</sup> Until the Winter of 1939, an Air offensive against the Russian oil industry was seen as part a plan aiming at the defence of Turkey against Russian attack.<sup>23</sup> From December, however, planning against Russia began to assume a momentum of its own and the bombing of Russia became not a factor in the defence of Anatolia, but the defence of Anatolia a consideration in Air planning against the Caucasian oilfields.

In January 1940, the COS returned a landmark answer to a question from the Foreign Office. Halifax had wondered whether the advantages of going to war with Russia outweighed the advantages of Russian neutrality.<sup>24</sup> Based on the cases outlined by Halifax, the COS advised, that while in principle opposed to extension of the war, if war with Russia were the only way to intensify the economic

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<sup>21</sup> PRO WO 193/147 Our War Strategy CIGS Memo 17 Jan 1940. Ironside started his analysis with the incontrovertible fact that Germany had superiority over the Allies in land and air forces. He went on to proposed economic/conventional warfare aimed at the German oil and iron supply as the best possible strategy. "Except in the Economic field", Ironside concluded, "our action is at present limited to countering moves made by the enemy". Gamelin and Darlan were entirely in agreement with the British economic analysis. Gamelin, Vol III, p. 215.

<sup>22</sup> PRO WO 193/147 Strategy #11 DCOS to DMO&P 31 Dec 1939.

<sup>23</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 WO to GOCME 9 Jan 1940.

<sup>24</sup> PRO CAB 80/6 COS 39(171) op. cit.; and, WP(39)175.

war, and the economic war were the only way to bring about the defeat of Germany, then, "the disadvantages of open hostilities with Russia be accepted".<sup>25</sup> This decision was followed, in February, by a joint conclusion of the COS and DCOS which took British strategy further in the same direction. The French thesis, that the Russian and German threats were fundamentally related, was accepted. Therefore, the more commitments the Allies could force upon the Russians, the more quickly would they collapse. Whether there should be war or not was a political question requiring political terms of reference, but from a purely military standpoint, the COS/DCOS considered that war with Russia waged in the North and in the Near East, would bring Stalin rapidly to his knees, and that this in turn would be a step toward the reduction of Germany.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, it is probable that much that passed as strategy in the last few months before the decisive clash of arms in France had as much to do with psychology as strategic calculation. The General Staffs of Britain and France had long identified the Spring of 1940

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<sup>25</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS(40)189 Military Implications of a Declaration of War 10 Jan 1940. Halifax preferred, however, that if such a war were to be brought on, that the chosen field should be the Baltic. "Although we may all be agreed that it would be in our interests that the war should spread to the Balkans . . . nevertheless the fact remains that the Germans (or the Russians) may at any moment decide to go South-East. So long as this possibility exists it would seem to me that we ought to take every precaution within our means against such an eventuality". CAB 80/7 COS (40)216(S) Scandinavia and the Middle East Halifax to Chatfield 23 Jan 1940.

<sup>26</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS (40)230 Hostilities with Russia 9 Feb; also, COS (40)235 Allied Military Policy in the Balkans Report of the Allied Military Committee 13 Feb 1940.

as a "time of trial". If they would not be strong enough to attack the Germans, then the contrary, that the Germans would not be strong enough to attack them, was far less likely to be true. If war could not be started elsewhere it would come to France; and since it seemed unlikely that the Germans would oblige by attacking anywhere but at the decisive point -- in France -- it was left to France and Britain to get the shooting started elsewhere.<sup>27</sup> This argument gained greater urgency, since, despite public assurance to the contrary, neither the British nor the French General Staffs faced the coming "time of trial" in France with complete confidence.

#### **The Question of the Straits:**

In time honoured fashion, as Britain began to consider the possibility of war with Russia, it turned its attention to the Straits. In the Winter of 1939, Britain began to make approaches to Turkey relative to the opening of the Straits to British vessels in order to extend the blockade to the Black Sea. At the very least, it was hoped that the Turks would allow Submarines in to disrupt

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<sup>27</sup> MGen Spears judged that Daladier and Reynaud, in particular, horrified by the prospect of France becoming a battlefield for the second time in a generation, were concerned to keep "warlike operations as remote from France as possible". He concluded that "French politicians, without perhaps realizing it, were instinctively in favour of any operation at a considerable distance from France. It was" he thought "the same mental outlook that led the French General Staff to make plans for a war to be fought in Belgium". MGen E. Spears, Assignment to Catastrophe, (Reprint Society: London) 1956 (1954). p. 79, 88.

the passage of oil from Baku to the mouth of the Danube.<sup>28</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson approached this question in the way traditional to Straits diplomacy: he sought to establish a precedent. Britain, he told Saraçoğlu, was worried about Russian submarines passing through the Straits and needed to know under what circumstances they would be allowed egress. Knatchbull-Hugesson need not have added that in defining conditions of exit for the Soviets, Saraçoğlu would be describing terms of entrance for the British. Saraçoğlu replied cagily that Russia had hitherto demonstrated a satisfactory attitude and that Turkey would not commit itself on this question until faced with a concrete case.<sup>29</sup>

The question was approached independently by the NAA, Captain O'Donnel, at the Ankara Naval talks 11-13 December 1939.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> An ingenious proposal from Admiral Kennedy-Purvis was that MTBs be passed through the Straits to operate on the Danube. These vessels, since they displaced less than 100 tons, were not controlled under the Montreaux Convention. The proposal, however, was rejected because it was thought that such an action would set a poor precedent for subsequent operation of the Convention. PRO FO 371/25014 R1602/242/44 Minute 31 Jan 1940.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 371/25014 R242/242/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 30 Dec 1939.

<sup>30</sup> PRO ADM 1/9992 Discussions With the Turkish General Staff, Report on the Anglo-Turkish Naval Discussion Held at Ankara 11, 12, 13 December 1939. The conference had theoretically been called to discuss signals coordination. From 11-13 December, Commander A.J. Baker Cresswell (RN), and Lieutenant-Commander J. Liddel (RN) met with the Naval Operations Department of the Turkish Navy to coordinate codes, W/T (Wireless-Telegraph), and signals. It was quickly discovered that the greatest signals problem was that the Turkish used by the Turks was "old-fashioned" and not easily understood by the British. ADM 1/9992 NAA to DNI 15 Dec 1939. While the conference was in session, the first Malta-Ankara wireless trials were successfully conducted. ADM 1/9992 NAA to DNI 15 Dec 1939. Concurrent with the signals conference were Anglo-Turkish naval discussions which aimed to coordinate protection of allied

O'Donnel had been instructed by Cunningham to sound the Turks directly as to the circumstances in which they would allow the British to enter the Black Sea. What were Turkish dispositions, O'Donnel asked: did they wish to cooperate; would they consider plans for common action in the Black Sea? The Turkish delegation insisted on definite and limited questions.<sup>31</sup>

Had the Turks, O'Donnel continued, any plans for naval action in the Black Sea and could the C in C Med know what they were? The Turks replied that they had plans for the protection of convoys, the blockade of Bulgaria, the protection of the sea lanes between Rumania and Turkey, and the Defence of the Straits. What of Russia? enquired an incredulous O'Donnel. "Up to now", they said, "no offensive plans had been made against the Russians as their attitude had been friendly". Now that this had changed, the Turks said, Turkey desired to coordinate plans with Britain and to know British thinking regarding possible combined action in the Black Sea.<sup>32</sup> After this, the conference collapsed into mutual questioning without answers. The import of these questions, sketch answers, and evasions was that the Turks wanted to see Cunningham's plan and know the scale of British assistance before they would commit themselves, and continued to insist that the maintenance of the Straits regime was primarily a Turkish concern

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shipping -- Turkish ships had for some months been part of Allied convoys -- minefields, and entry to military ports.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

to be assured by the Turkish Navy. This being the case, the Turks hinted that if the British were worried about possible egress by Russian submarines, then the best course would be to ensure that Turkey received in good time the ASW craft it had ordered two years previously.<sup>33</sup>

The problem for the British, of course, was that a case had developed unforeseen at Montreaux. Britain was at war with Germany, but Russia was closer to being an enemy than an ally -- as could hardly have been predicted in 1936. Turkey also was unexpectedly neutral, and therefore bound by the provisions of the Montreaux convention. At Montreaux, as we have seen, the British supported a regime which gave Turkey much discretion in opening and closing the Straits because the Turks, being friendly, were thought more likely to use this for than against Britain. In 1939-1940, determined not to give the Russians grounds for hostility, the Turks used their discretionary powers against the British. A regime which Britain had hoped an advantage quickly began to become a handicap.

In January, the French, hoping to cut through the problem, suggested that following the League's condemnation of Russia as an aggressor, Turkey could open the Straits to the Allies and close them to the Russians under articles 20 and 25 of the Montreaux Convention while preserving its own neutrality.<sup>34</sup> By February, the RN too, was pressing anew for a definition of the circumstances

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> PRO FO 371/25014 R1220/242/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson 19 Jan 1940.



under which British ships would be allowed through the Dardanelles.

Phillips informed the Foreign Office:

their Lordships feel strongly that the loss of time which might occur in obtaining the assent of the Turkish Government to the passage of the straits by allied warships might so seriously prejudice the chances of successful cooperation with the Turks that an approach should be made to them without delay on the lines suggested by the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>35</sup>

The Commander in Chief, Cunningham, had suggested that the British approach be to request definition of the contingencies in which Turkey "would be bound under the Montreaux convention in opening the Straits, either as a belligerent or under the threat of imminent danger of war".<sup>36</sup>

While the time element was a genuine concern, by February, there was a powerful desire in the Admiralty to enter the Black Sea for no defensive purpose at all. In effect, the Turks were being asked to help string an RN trip wire which if blundered into by the Russians would automatically precipitate the intrusion of a RN task force to the Black Sea; also the Admiralty hoped to get the Turks to pin themselves to a narrow definition of the Straits convention. In this way, the cases in which the Western allies might automatically expect ingress and on what scale would be known for planning purposes; as well, the cases in which Russian egress would

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<sup>35</sup> PRO FO 371/25014 M.02278/40 R1777/242/44 Phillips to FO 7 Feb 1940.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.; also, PRO ADM 1/10358 C in C Med to ADM. "Since Allies present policy is to resist enemy initiatives in [the] Balkans the time factor becomes doubly important. One thing is quite certain about this situation, should it arise; the longer the delay in sending forces to assist Turkey the greater will be the opposition to be met".

be denied.

In February, Cunningham's loaded question was passed to Saraçoğlu.<sup>37</sup> His oral reply was that the Straits would be open "in all the circumstances in which [the] three powers should be belligerent together".<sup>38</sup> He stressed that a German attack on Rumania did not necessarily constitute such a case because it would involve the possibility of war with Russia, which, under protocol two of the Tripartite Treaty, vitiated full operation of the alliance. The French desire to open the Straits against the Russians under Articles 20 and 25 also fell to protocol two. The fact was, Saraçoğlu said, that while the Montreaux convention gave the Turks the power to open the Straits to a force operating in response to a League decision, to close them to an aggressor, and to allow Allied forces in should Turkey feel itself threatened, the Turks considered each of these to be possible only in a prewar case. Since Turkey was not bound by the Tripartite alliance to go to war with Russia, and indeed, by the terms of its bilateral agreements with Russia was forbidden to make warlike preparations or associate itself with Russia's enemies, it could not consider

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<sup>37</sup> PRO FO 371/25014 R1777/242/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 10 Feb 1940. See also, FO 195/2464/186 186/5/40 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 10 Feb; 186/7/40 C in C Malta to Knatchbull-Hugesson 12 Feb; and, 186/9/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Saraçoğlu 13 Feb 1940.

<sup>38</sup> PRO FO 371/25014 R2781/242/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson 29 Feb; and, FO 195/2464/186 186/G/12/140 Proces Verbal Saraçoğlu to Knatchbull-Hugesson Feb; and, 186/13/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO Feb 1940.

the Allied requests.<sup>39</sup> Privately, Menemencioğlu and Saraçoğlu assured Massigli and Knatchbull-Hugesson that in practice the Western Allies would get all the warning required if their help were needed against Russia.<sup>40</sup> Staff conversations were necessary, the Turks claimed, and some notion of the military measures involved before the question could be adequately addressed.<sup>41</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson, not entirely *au courant* with Anglo-French planning or, one expects, with Turkish intentions, judged that in practice this assurance gave the British everything that they wanted.<sup>42</sup> The Turkish reply should have surprised no one. In earlier questioning relative to the provision of assistance to Rumania it had been recognized that Turkey's attitude to the opening of the Straits was likely to be determined by the position of the USSR and Turkey's extreme reluctance to do anything likely to antagonize this power.<sup>43</sup>

By the second week in March, it was the common gossip of Balkan diplomats that the Turks had been asked to open the Straits.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*; also, PRO FO 424/284 R3126/242/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 29 Feb. Enclosure II Saraçoğlu to Knatchbull-Hugesson 26 Feb 1940.

<sup>40</sup> PRO FO 371/25014 R2794/242/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO Feb; and, FO 195/2464/186 186/14/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 29 Feb 1940. See also, PRO CAB 65/2 WC 109(39) 9 Dec 1939.

<sup>41</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/10/40 Saraçoğlu to Knatchbull-Hugesson 19 Feb 1940.

<sup>42</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/14/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 29 Feb 1940.

<sup>43</sup> For example: PRO CAB 65/2 WC 85(39) 16 Nov; and, CAB 80/3 COS (39)67(JP) Possible Russian Action in the Balkans 7 Oct 1939.

Less in the know than even Knatchbull-Hugesson, Rendel, from Sofia, derided such rumours as impossible since such a question would take no account of the Montreaux Convention. Only De Robien, the French Military Attaché, Rendel wrote, was prepared to believe this supposition -- but he, Rendel concluded, was "a typical French Soldier" with no use for international agreements or respect for the neutrality of noncombatant states.<sup>44</sup>

In February, at the time of the Cunningham question, the RN had gone considerably beyond planning to help defend Turkey, and had drawn up contingency plans for the insertion into the Black Sea of a force of four eight inch Cruisers, two six inch Cruisers, and a Destroyer Flotilla.<sup>45</sup> It is noteworthy that this force, while excessive for contraband control alone given the De Bunsen conclusions, would be rather well matched against the Soviet Black Sea Fleet.<sup>46</sup> A hint that this was exactly the main consideration in the constitution of the task force can be found in a memorandum by the CIGS to the GOCME in January. Having assured the defence of the Bosphorus, he wrote, it was RN intention to "aim at

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<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/16/40 Rendel to Knatchbull-Hugesson 9 Mar. In Rome too, such rumours were exchanged and believed. FO 195/2464/186 R3255/242/44 Charles (Rome) to Nichols (FO) 4 Mar 1940.

<sup>45</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 C in C Med to Adm 8 Feb 1940.

<sup>46</sup> PRO CAB 16/183B DP(P)70 Anglo-French Soviet Delegations Meeting August 1939 31 Aug 1939. Memorandum for the guidance of the UK Delegation. The Black Sea Fleet consisted of 1 old 12" Battleship; 2 X 7" Cruisers; 1 X 5" Cruiser; 14 large destroyers (9 modern); 8 destroyers; 48 submarines; and 1 AC tender.

concentrating an allied fleet for operations in the Black Sea".<sup>47</sup> The naval operation most generally spoken of in relation to the Black Sea was the bombardment of Batum.

**Bombing Russia in 1940:**

By March, Naval planning was joined, and to a large extent, superceded, by Air planning aiming to reduce Russia to economic ruin and military impotence through the bombardment of its Caucasian oilfields. On 5 March, Ironside called his principal subordinates into his office and informed them, that while the War Cabinet had not yet considered plans for operations in the Middle East, "if Russia come into the war we shall at once begin bombing the oil fields at Baku probably some time in April".<sup>48</sup> French assistance, he said, could be counted upon after May. Gamelin, he told them, "has begun to say that there are other places than the Western Front where the war may be fought". He himself, he said, was "not prepared to initiate war with Russia"; but continued "that the War Cabinet would like to force it on".<sup>49</sup> In any event, Ironside considered that the time was coming when an extension of hostilities to encompass Russia would be a realistic policy option for Britain. India was arming and by March possessed a considerable pool of troops not sufficiently equipped for a European battlefield but outfitted well enough for operations in the Middle East. The Eastern Dominions also were beginning to furnish troops in this

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<sup>47</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 CIGS to GOCME 9 Jan 1940.

<sup>48</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Mtg CIGS Office 5 Mar 1940.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

category, and with the Australians at Gaza, the New Zealanders at Cairo, and the Cavalry in Palestine, Britain possessed substantially more Land power in the Eastern Mediterranean than it had hitherto.<sup>50</sup>

Later in the month, the British received notification that the French were intent upon pushing Turkey toward conflict with the Soviets. "The French Government" the British Delegation to the AFC informed Ironside:

will probably raise [the] question of air and sea action against Baku and Batum at [the] next meeting of [the] Supreme War Council. Following points to be studied: Air bases including bases in Turkey, groupings, protection by fighter aircraft, sea, possibility of passing submarines through the Straits, also action to be taken if Russians retaliate by land attack on (? Turks). Also action if Italy comes in against us.<sup>51</sup>

The French motivation at this juncture was, at least in part, political. On 21 March the Daladier Government collapsed as a direct result of what was seen to be its feeble handling of the war as best exemplified by its failure to come to the assistance of Finland. Its replacement, the Reynaud administration, was pledged to do something against the Russians. Unfortunately, the Finns had collapsed two weeks previously, on 12 March. As the possibility of effective operations in the Baltic began to recede, "something" was

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> PRO WO 193/144 op. cit., Mil Msn #1 (DCIGS) to CIGS 23 Mar; WO 106/5706 CIGS to DCIGS (Mil Msn #1) 23 Mar; and, CAB 80/9 COS (40)277 25 Mar 1940.

glossed more and more as "something in the Near East".<sup>52</sup>

On 3 April, Reynaud convoked his first War Cabinet with the French COS present. For ninety minutes the future of the Armee d'Orient was the topic of discussion and Weygand the star performer. "When you speak", Reynaud told Weygand later, "one has something; as for Gamelin, it is like sand running through one's fingers".<sup>53</sup> At the end of the discussion, it was decided that it was essential that France open, and open in short order, an Eastern Front; otherwise, neither Ministers nor COS could see how France could win the war -- whatever level of assistance Britain provided.<sup>54</sup>

Reacting to a message from Reynaud, on 27 March 1940, the War Cabinet considered for the first time in earnest the possibility of striking at Russia through the Near East. Chamberlain reacted with horror to the French proposals. "That he [Reynaud] should mention submarines going into the Black Sea without mentioning Turkey", Chamberlain stormed, "seemed fantastic".<sup>55</sup> It was Churchill, typically, who took the ideas up and made them his own.<sup>56</sup> The Oilfields at Baku in the Caucasus, Churchill said, were

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<sup>52</sup> P. Reynaud, In the Thick of the Fight, (Cassel: London) 1955, p. 257; and, Reynaud, Vol II, p. 20n. "Note Sur la Conduite de la Guerre" 16 Mar 1940.

<sup>53</sup> C. Petrie (trans), The Private Diaries of Paul Baudouin, (Eyre & Spottiswoode: London), 1948. p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> P. Baudouin, Neuf Mois au Gouvernement, (Editions de la Table Ronde: Paris) 1948. p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Ironside Diaries. Entry for 27 Mar 1940.

<sup>56</sup> PRO CAB 65/6 WC 76(40) 27 Mar 1940.

economically important to Germany as well as Russia. These would be vulnerable to Air bombardment by British planes based in the Middle East. Batum, on the Black Sea, with its oil refineries and storage works, could be bombarded from the Sea. Submarines as well, Churchill was certain, could be passed into the Black Sea to stop the Russo-German oil traffic. Halifax questioned Churchill regarding the possibility of Russian retaliation. Churchill considered that "it was just possible that such action might not involve us in a war with Russia" -- that Russia might not strike back at all; but, if it did, he believed that its counter-strike would be limited to Air attack on Iraqi and Persian Oilfields.<sup>57</sup> His power ebbing, and confronted by French certainty and Churchillian enthusiasm, there was little Chamberlain could do, and planning that had been defensive and contingent began to become increasingly offensive and operational.

Subsequent British Air planning was strongly influenced by Air doctrine as it had developed in the years previous to the war. Air Warfare, it was judged, compared to other forms, was "cheap, flexible, and relatively bloodless".<sup>58</sup> This was particularly the case, it was believed, if vulnerable but crucial sectors of the enemy economy were targeted. By far the best type of target, from all stand-points, were oil production and storage. Only three or four hits, it was thought, would be sufficient to destroy a target

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> PRO AIR 9/5 Air Power as Imperial Defence 1920-1937 Folio 20 Address by CAS 13 Jan 1925.



of this nature sixteen thousand metres square.<sup>59</sup> Resulting from this conclusion was an Air War Plan, WA(5C), which aimed at the annihilation of Germany's oil supply.<sup>60</sup>

It is notable that when WA(5C) was drafted there was no mention of any effect that the bombing of Russia would have on Germany; indeed, such an effect was specifically precluded. By October 1939, Air Plans noted, Germany was importing only about 4% of its petroleum from the USSR.<sup>61</sup> By March, when the Cabinet was considering the possibility of the aerial bombardment of Russia, Air Plans had determined that Russia had ceased to be a net oil exporter at all, and was in fact importing large portions of its own requirement -- particularly high octane aviation fuel -- from the United States.<sup>62</sup> WA(5C) gave way to WA 106 -- a plan which aimed at the dislocation of the Russian oil industry and thereby the "complete collapse of the war potential of the USSR".<sup>63</sup> It was hoped, one expects piously more than realistically, that "the

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<sup>59</sup> PRO AIR 9/96 Assumptions for War Planning, Estimate of Bombing Effect Against Various Forms of Target; and, Notes on the Relative Merits of Oil and Power as Objectives for Air Attack 16 Oct 1939. See also, CAB 48/7 CID Subcommittee on Industrial Intelligence in Foreign Countries FCI(SUB)2 Appendix B 31 Mar; CAB 48/8 Air Targets Subcommittee FCI(AT) 1st Mtg 15 Dec 1936; and, CAB 48/9 FCI(AT)6 Reports and Appreciations on Certain Groups of Industries 9 Apr 1937.

<sup>60</sup> PRO AIR 9/96 Notes on the Relative Merits of Oil and Power as Objective for Air Attack, op. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.; also, PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)272 German Oil Production Report of Hankey's Committee on Preventing Oil from Reaching Germany 23 Mar 1940.

<sup>62</sup> PRO AIR 9/147 Plan W.A 106 2 Apr 1940.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

repercussions of the dislocation might well prove disastrous for Germany as well".<sup>64</sup>

Air Plans judged that Russia was highly vulnerable to such a blow -- not least because its own fuel supply was precarious. 93.5% of Russia's oil was produced in the Caucasus.<sup>65</sup> 58.5% of Russia's oil passed through two targets, Baku and Batum; while 27.5% passed through a third, Grozni.<sup>66</sup> 91% was refined at these three centres.<sup>67</sup> Of the three, Baku, with its convergence of oil fields, storage, and refineries, was by far the best target. Forces available for such an attack included the four Blenheim Squadrons of RAFME, one Wellesley Squadron based at Basra, and the twenty-four Farmers, and sixty-five Glen Martins of the French Air Force in Syria.<sup>68</sup> In Army parlance, the RAF component of this force was referred to as "Pike"; which, as the name might indicate, constituted an alternate deployment for the Air component of

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> PRO AIR 23/980 S.45567/Plans op. cit. Appendix A.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> PRO AIR 23/980 S.45567/Plans op. cit. Appendix A.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.; see also, PRO CAB 80/7 COS (40)208 Assistance to Turkey Against German and/or Russian Aggression if Italian Neutrality is Assured (Interim Report). French Forces Available in the Eastern Mediterranean for the Support of Turkey Enclosed. In Jan 1940, the French Air Force in Syria was: 1 Groupe Block 200 (Reconnaissance); 1 Groupe Potez T.O.E (Reconnaissance); 1 Groupe Potez 25 T.O.E (Observation); and 2 Flights Potez 25 (AC). By the end of Mar 1940, it was expanded to include: 1 Groupe Morane 406 (Fighters); 1 Groupe Potez 63/11 (AC); and scheduled in May, 1 Groupe Douglas Glen Martins (Bombers). Thus, unless the French had plans for further expansion, RAF estimates of the assistance the French would be able to provide appear to have been exaggerated.

"Bear".

Air Plans judged that two Blenheim Squadrons, flying two sorties a week, could lay waste to all three targets in five to twelve weeks. Six to twelve raids by a Bomber Wing could destroy one refinery. Therefore, it was concluded, given available Anglo-French Air strength, Baku, Batum and Grozni, could all be annihilated in one to three weeks. Damage inflicted would be irredeemable in the short term, and would take nine months to two years to repair; and even then, successful repair would be predicated upon the cessation of Allied bombing.<sup>69</sup>

The problem came in the identification of airfields from which Allied bombers could operate; particularly as the range of a Blenheim carrying a full bomb load was only 750 miles.<sup>70</sup> Best airfields for an attack on Baku were Tehran, Tabriz (Iran), and Kars (Turkey); against Grozny, Kars, Erezum (Turkey), and Tabriz; against Batum, Kars, Erezum, and Erzincan (Turkey).<sup>71</sup> Habbaniyah, the closest British base, was not in Blenheim range of any target. Mosul, an Iraqi base, of which the British might be able to obtain use, was in range of Batum and Grozny, but Baku was out of reach for Blenheims flying from here. Wellesleys, operating from Habbaniyah or Mosul, would be able to reach all three targets, but there was only one Squadron of them available. Thus, Britain and

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 AOCME to Air Min 26 Jan 1940.

<sup>71</sup> PRO AIR 9/148 Appendices to Plan WO 106 April 1940 Appendix A.

France had only two options: they could obtain permission to operate from Turkish and Persian airfields, or they could wait until a greater number of Heavy Bombers were available.

Persian permission to operate from Tehran and Tabriz was not in doubt. In February, the Iranian Minister of War had approached the British Military Attaché and suggested a joint attack on Russia. "The time had come", he said, "for Iran and Britain to coordinate plans for war against Russia".<sup>72</sup> There was much to be said, the COS considered, in the case of the adoption of an offensive stance, for an advanced base in Tehran and permission to overfly Iranian territory.<sup>73</sup> Iraq, it was judged, might prove less tractable, but not such a problem as could not be solved by insistence and increased base security.<sup>74</sup> Turkey too was likely to prove obdurate and could not be coerced as could the Iraqis. In January, the Turks had made a tentative division of airfields based on common defence against different contingencies. If Russia were the enemy, and bombing the policy, the British would have use of aerodromes at Diyarbekir, Mardin, Husayin, and Kars. The French would have access to Plazir, Palatya, and Karakuse. The Turks would take Erzincan, Erzerum and Ereis.<sup>75</sup> From these bases, the

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<sup>72</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS (40)242 Hostilities with Russia. Attitude of Iran 23 Feb 1940.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> If the threat were to Thrace, the British were to have Izmir, Aydin, Akhisar; the French, Belekishar, Benderma, Bursa and Marmora. PRO ADM 1/10358 HQRAFMED to Air Min 24 Jan 1940. Unlike many Turkish airports, ones listed here, appear to have been,

Blenheims would only just be able to make Baku.<sup>76</sup> Of course, the contingency the Turks had in mind when they had made the division was defence against a Russian attack and not an attack on Russia.

If permitted to use these bases, Mosul, and to overfly Iran, Air Plans considered WA 106 feasible. It was the AOCME who had problems with the plan. He warned that if WA 106 were to be a guaranteed success, Britain must prepare itself to provide considerable Air reinforcement for the Middle East.<sup>77</sup> Later amendments produced at the Air Ministry called for the employment of five Heavy Bomber, three Medium Bomber, and two Fighter Squadrons against the Russian oilfields in the Caucasus.<sup>78</sup> Since greater Air strength would not be available until the Autumn of 1940, plans were put on hold until then. This is the state in which planning stood at the time of the German onslaught on the Western Front.<sup>79</sup>

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surfaced and ready to receive aircraft. Only Belekishar and Banderma were still under-construction in December 1940. AIR 23/973 The Turkish Air Force HARA FME Memorandum 12 Dec 1940.

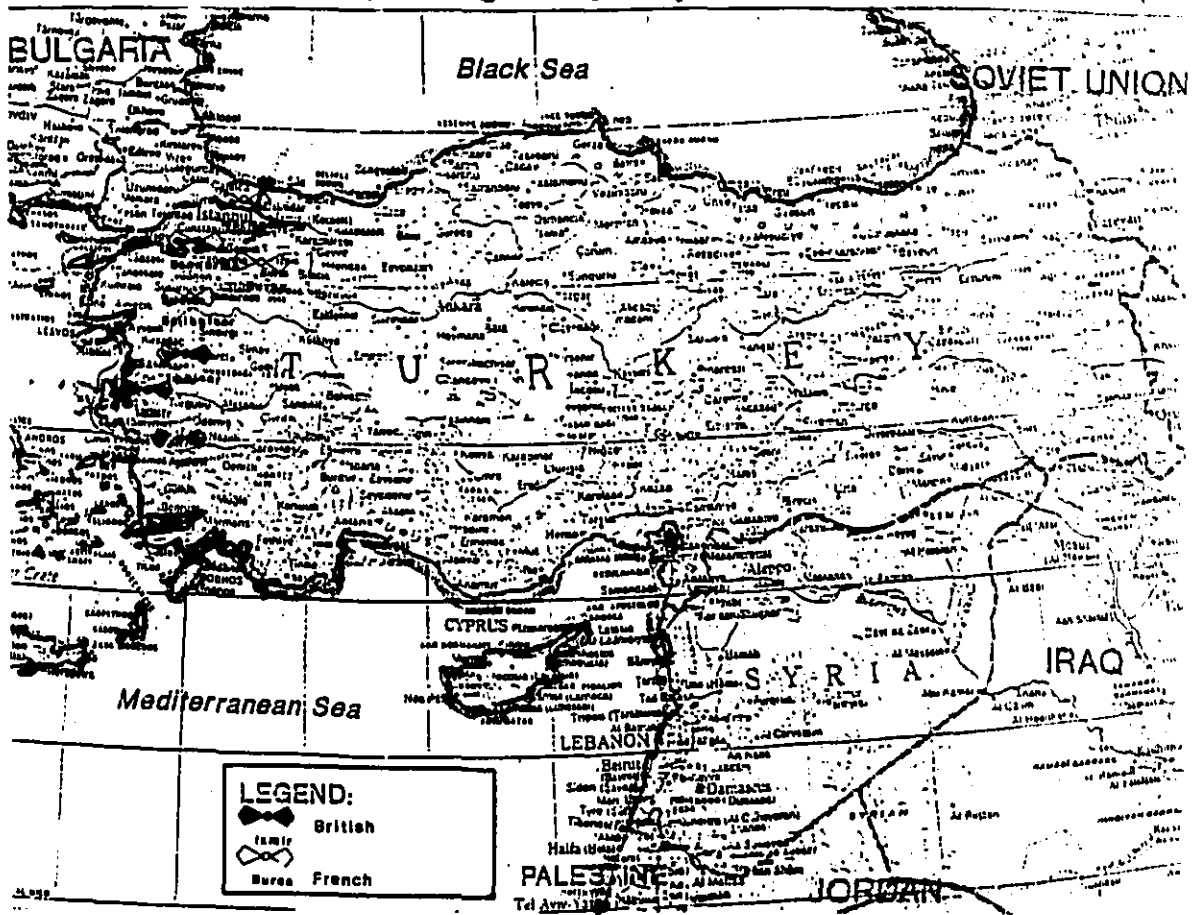
<sup>76</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 AOCME to Air Min 26 Jan 1940.

<sup>77</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 Air Min to AOCME 2 Feb 1940.

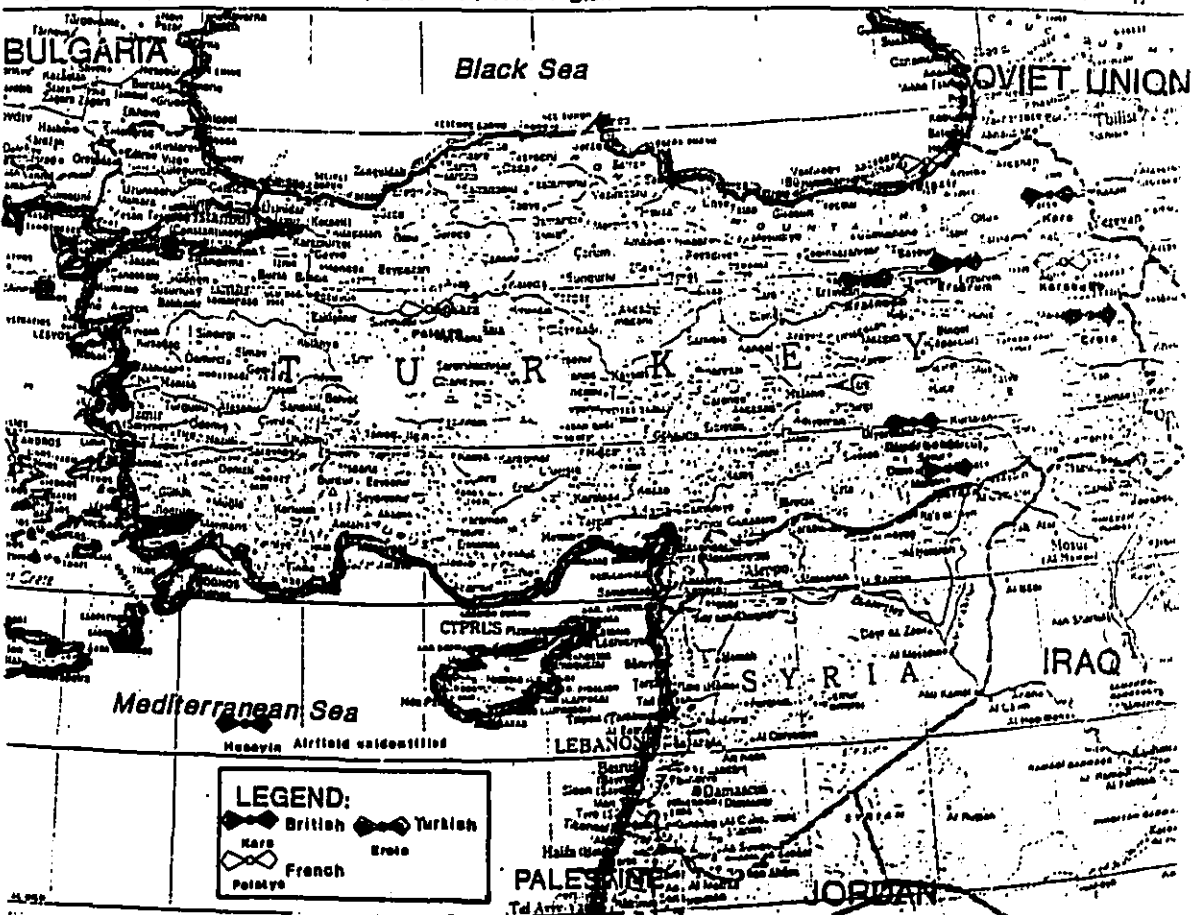
<sup>78</sup> PRO AIR 23/980 S.45567 Outline Plan for the Denial of Russia's Oil to German Controlled Europe by Air Attack 22 Jul 1941.

<sup>79</sup> PRO CAB 80/8 COS (40)242 op. cit. Bomber Command was hardly the force, in the Spring of 1940, that it subsequently became. On 4 April 1940, when Portal took office as CAS, Bomber Command consisted of 7 Blenheim and 2 Whitley in France with 15 Wellington, Whitley, and Hamden Squadrons held back in Britain -- a total of 240 aircraft of which two-thirds were operational at any one time. Denis Richards, Portal of Hungerford, (Heinemann: London) 1977. p. 139.

Provisional Distribution of Airfields Jan 1940  
Case JI: War Against Germany in Thrace



Provisional Distribution of Airfields Jan 1940  
Case I: War Against Russia



The enthusiasm of all levels of the Anglo-French strategic executive for this project seems strange considering the sluggish Air policy being followed against Germany. It becomes more explicable when we remember that, in the West, Air policy was based less upon humanitarian consideration than the judgement of Air planners that, Germany being able to hit back and having a stronger Air Force, the "widest possible restriction of Air bombing would be to the advantage of this country".<sup>80</sup> In Halifax's judgement -- a verdict nearly unanimous in London -- "we have everything to gain by the restriction of air warfare".<sup>81</sup> Against Russia, this consideration ceased to apply because Russia could do no worse than bomb Iraq and Iran, or attempt a Land move South which must of necessity go through Turkey. The worst that the Russians could do to India was limited long range bombing and the only preparation the British thought they needed to make to meet this threat was to augment their intelligence organization in Central Asia.<sup>82</sup> The beauty of an attack on Russia, therefore, was that in the best case Russia would be struck down and might take Germany with it; while in the worst case, Russia would be sorely damaged while being left without the means of effective retaliation.

Neither Cairo nor London were unduly worried by the thought of

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<sup>80</sup> PRO CAB 16/22 Limitation of Armaments SubCommittee. SubCommittee on the Humanitization of Aerial Warfare BTG(AW) 1st Mtg 8 Jul 1938.

<sup>81</sup> PRO CAB 16/22 op. cit., BTG 1st Mtg 8 Jul. See also, BTG (AW) 3rd Mtg 14 Jul 1938.

<sup>82</sup> PRO CAB 80/3 COS (39)56 Russian Threat to India 29 Sep 1939.

a Land campaign against Russia in the Middle East. The Iraq Defence Plan, as revised in 1939, foresaw a possible Russian advance through Eastern Anatolia aimed at the Kirkkuk and Khaniqin oil fields.<sup>83</sup> Because it was not thought that Russia could move South without passing through Eastern Anatolia, Turkey became, as the JPC pointed out, "the first line of defence of the Suez Canal against aggression from the North".<sup>84</sup> Kennedy, DMO&I, judged that if the Russians were able to get through the Turks, with Russian communications as exposed as they would be to disruption from the Air and through sabotage, two or three Divisions would be able to deny them access to the Persian Gulf. The best the Russians could hope to achieve by Land attack, Kennedy thought, was possession of the oilfields of Northern Iraq counter-balanced by war with Turkey.<sup>85</sup> Kennedy's three Divisions were to come from India, were to be armed on the limited Middle East scale, and were designated "Salmon" to follow on an advance party "Trout".<sup>86</sup> "Salmon", "Trout", "Lobster", "Pike", and "Scheme P", taken together, would have resulted in a considerable Indian Army presence (four to five Divisions with an RAF component) in Iraq and Persia strongly reminiscent of the Mesopotamian Field Force of the First World War.

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<sup>83</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 DMO Note on the defence of Iraq 6 Oct 1939.

<sup>84</sup> PRO CAB 80/5 COS (39)137(JP) Future of Military Policy in the Middle East 28 Nov 1939.

<sup>85</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 DMO Note on the defence of Iraq 6 Oct 1939.

<sup>86</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Despatch 63413 WO to GOCME Jan; WO 106/5706 Mtg in CIGS Office 5 Mar 1940; and COS (39)137(JP) op. cit. 28 Nov 1939.



Wavell concurred with Kennedy this far, but continued his analysis with the consideration that having overrun Northern Iraq, the Russians would have two options: they could move towards the Canal through Syria, or proceed into Persia.<sup>87</sup> Wavell had an excellent practical basis on which to build his thinking -- he had, after all, been liaison officer to the Grand Duke and Yudenich in the First World War. The Russians, Wavell thought, would not attack Persia for fear of the Turkish Army lying on its Right flank.<sup>88</sup> If the Russians went for Palestine and the Canal, if the Red Sea Route were kept open, and if proper destruction of communications behind the Russians were assured, Wavell judged that six or seven Divisions only would be required to hold a line in Northern Syria and Palestine. No "Eastern Maginot", or defences on anything like the Continental scale would be required.<sup>89</sup> "I feel quite sure" he informed Ironside:

that owing to the poverty of the communications such a threat is one which we need not worry much about, so long as TURKEY is on our side. I know the CAUCASUS and the country from KARS to ERZERUM and ERZINSAN well from the last war when I was six months with the Russians in those parts. The communications . . . would make it impossible for a force of any size to approach the CANAL . . . Of course if TURKEY joined RUSSIA and became hostile an advance on the CANAL through SYRIA would be probable; and I think the best place for a defensive line would be on the Syria, Palestine border.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Notes on the War Office Memorandum on the Defence of the Suez Canal Against an Attack From the North GOCME 6 Oct; and, Ironside to Wavell 7 Oct 1939.

<sup>88</sup> PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)286(JP) Iran 7 Apr 1940.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Wavell to Ironside 27 Sep 1939.

Kennedy was very glad that Wavell did not see the requirement for the deployment of any very large force to the Middle East. "I saw Mesopotamia" he wrote to Wavell's COS, "and I don't want any hand in a repetition of that".<sup>91</sup>

On the surface, British *sang-froid* when it came to the contemplation of the possibility of war in the Near East seems strange when placed in apposition to British reluctance to the idea of an extension of war to the Balkans. But the fact was that Britain feared Russia far less than Germany, thought it could fight Russia with troops equipped to a level which would have been judged entirely insufficient for operations against Germany, and, finally, believed that the conflict with Russia could be limited to the Near East and would not result in anything so damaging as a possible German advance to the Mediterranean. Russia, for the General Staff, was less dangerous, placed less dangerously, and was more vulnerable to the type of ready power Britain possessed than was the German enemy. It seems entirely probable that the slide from contingency planning through operational planning to actual operations would have continued and that such an attack would have been attempted if the decision had not been made to await the arrival of additional Squadrons of Heavy Bombers -- pushing back the possible start date beyond the beginning of the German assault on the West.

#### **Why were the Turks not informed?**

If Turkish acquiescence was essential, why was it that the

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<sup>91</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 DMO&I to A. Smith 9 Oct 1939.

Turks were never formally involved in planning? And even more, if we exclude Massigli's shadowy conversations with Saraçoğlu, as revealed in the White Book,<sup>92</sup> then we are left with the certain conclusion that the Turks were not even informed that such planning was on-going. It seems probable that the major reason for these omissions was the known reluctance of the Turks to consider this case, also that as much as they were not informed, the Turks resisted information.

At the beginning of April 1940, Knatchbull-Hugesson obtained an interview with İnönü and Saraçoğlu with the intention of drawing them into conversation about possible actions against Russia.<sup>93</sup> This interview followed shortly after soundings taken by Morgan, the Chargé, at the prompting of the Foreign Office, which had left Morgan in little doubt that the Turks were not interested in forming part of any anti-Soviet combination; especially in the absence of effective assistance and predeployment.<sup>94</sup> After wary sparing about the up-coming conference of Balkan Ministers, the Italian and Bulgaria problems, and about the delivery of war material, İnönü gave Knatchbull-Hugesson the opening for which he was looking. Russia, the President said, was beginning to move away from Germany; perhaps Turkey could be of some use in drawing it

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<sup>92</sup> See, Massigli, p. 385; and, Auswartiges Amt., Die Geheimakten des Franzosichen Generalstabes, 1940.

<sup>93</sup> PRO FO 424/284 R4337/4156/67 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 3 Apr 1940.

<sup>94</sup> Auswartiges Amt., Die Geheimakten des Franzosichen Generalstabes, 1940. Document No. 32. Massigli to Paris 1 May 1940.

toward the Allies? Knatchbull-Hugesson answered that while this might be desirable, it might also be possible to strike at Germany through Russia. "Purposely", he suggested this, thinking, "it would be useful to leave some opening for carrying further a conversation on this basis after my return from London, if it was found to be desirable".<sup>95</sup> İnönü parried, that if this were Britain's plan, then it would be necessary to first coordinate defensive plans for the Caucasus. Knatchbull-Hugesson attempted to steer the conversation towards the subject of the Black Sea. "We must be strong everywhere", he said, "in Thrace, in the Caucasus and in the Black Sea". İnönü, not trusting his own command of English, made Saraçoğlu translate and then replied to Knatchbull-Hugesson with some heat: "We must make ourselves strong on land and in the air".<sup>96</sup> Despite the intimation of fundamental disagreement, the interview ended on a positive note. Knatchbull-Hugesson gave as his opinion that German was already beaten politically, psychologically and economically. "The President expressed complete agreement, and indeed, interrupted me, before I had time to mention the political side of the question, to say on his own initiative, that he regarded Germany as politically beaten".<sup>97</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson concluded from this conversation, that while the question had been broached, "I still do not think that it will be easy to get the Turks to undertake anything beyond defensive action against Russia,

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<sup>95</sup> PRO FO 424/284 R4337/4156/67 op. cit.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

at all events, until they were themselves fully equipped and prepared . . . I think this shows they are still far from any naval measures which would not be strictly in accordance with the Montreaux Convention".<sup>98</sup>

At the meeting of Balkan Ministers, 8-11 April, Halifax questioned Knatchbull-Hugesson closely on the probable Turkish reaction to the British plan to wage Air war against the USSR in the Near East.<sup>99</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson told him that it would be a "grave mistake to do anything that would give the Turkish Government the impression that we were persuading them to take action through purely selfish motives of our own". HMG should be as frank as possible, or the Turks would feel cheated and react accordingly. Any leak of this plan before the Turks were informed formally would be, he thought, absolutely fatal for Anglo-Turkish relations. And even if these perils were avoided, he doubted if Turkish fears could be sufficiently calmed to ensure their participation. It would be better, he concluded, if the Turks were left out altogether and the plan went ahead from bases in Iraq and Iran.<sup>100</sup>

It was not that the Turks considered war with Russia unlikely -- indeed, in the Summer of 1939, İnönü gave as his personal opinion to King Carole, that "we will all be fighting together

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> PRO CAB 80/10 COS (40)305 Visit of His Majesty's Representatives in South-East Europe 23 Apr 1940.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

against Russia before long"<sup>101</sup> -- but that the Turks feared war with Russia given the state of their own preparations and the weakness of their Allies. The notion that Russia could respond to Allied bombing only through Turkey, while comforting in London and Paris, was productive of entirely different sentiments in Ankara.

"The question of Turkey's attitude figured largely in that of our relations with Soviet Russia" Halifax wrote in April. "The Turks would not like us to make an offensive against Soviet Russia now": he continued, but "They might not, however, mind so much later in the Summer". As the British would not be ready until later in the Summer, the question, he thought wrongly, could be safely deferred for the moment.<sup>102</sup>

There was another reason why the Turks were not kept more fully informed of Anglo-French planning against Russia. British planning, in the 1920s, for possible war against Turkey had always included the notion that it might be possible to foment a Kurdish rebellion; indeed, Britain had tried to do just this in the closing years of World War One. In the troubled years that followed 1918, Britain maintained and sought to exploit contact with the Kurds.<sup>103</sup> The beauty of this connection for London was that it was of equal utility against the Russians, the French in Syria, and the Turks. It would be strange if the British, with their

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<sup>101</sup> CC GLLD 20/4 Balkan Tour Lord Lloyd 11 Nov 1939.

<sup>102</sup> PRO FO 800/321 Mtg of Ministers 11 Apr 1940.

<sup>103</sup> See PRO AIR 9/42 Folio I Notes on Possible Air Action Against Turkey Nov 1924; and, Rawlinson.

obligation to defend Iraq -- planning for which indicated Turkey as the most important threat to Iraqi independence -- and the large Kurdish presence in the Iraqi Army, allowed contact with the Kurds to lapse after 1927. In fact, the local defence forces maintained by the British to defend their airbases in Iraq were largely recruited from Iraqi out-groups: Kurds, Marsh Arabs, and Assyrians.<sup>104</sup>

Of course for the Turks, such a situation was absolutely anathemata. The only thing that could possibly be worse than contact with subversive Kurds would be contact with the Dashnaks -- Armenian terrorists.<sup>105</sup> In fact, there is evidence that from Spring 1940 the British had entered into conversations with both Kurds and Armenians with the view that they might of use to the British against Russia by systematic sabotaging oil installations in the Caucasus. The credit for this suggestion lies with the Air Attaché in Baghdad, who, in January 1940, suggested a scheme of comprehensive sabotage in the Caucasus.<sup>106</sup> Further, as has been already shown, an important component of planning for Middle

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<sup>104</sup> J. Lunt, Imperial Sunset. Frontier Soldiering in the 20th Century, (MacDonald: London) 1981. p. 35-55.

<sup>105</sup> The Headquarters of the Dashnaks was in Cairo, and their official journal Housaper was published there. The Dashnaks were intellectual nihilists along 19th Century Russian lines. The organization was founded in 1892 in Cairo and was pledged to free Armenia from Russian and Turkish control. Dashnaq = Armenian Revolutionary Federation. PRO FO 371/20864 E7557/466/44 Metropolitan Police Report 23 Dec 1937.

<sup>106</sup> PRO ADM 1/10358 Air Min to AOCME 2 Feb 1940. If contacts with the Kurds had been maintained, the Air Attaché would be a logical person to suggest such a scheme, since the RAF had responsibility for the defence of Iraq.

Eastern Land defence was the use of indigenous populations for acts of sabotage behind an advancing Army. In Northern Iraq, of course, it was to their Kurdish friends that the British looked in this regard. It is certain that from early 1941 contacts with both Dashnaks and Kurds were flourishing.<sup>107</sup> It is equal true that from August 1941, Armenian and Kurdish operatives were being prepared for operations inside Turkey, and by September, that acts of sabotage were actually being carried out against Axis supplies on their way to Syria and Iraq when passing through Turkey.<sup>108</sup> One probable reason, therefore, that the British were not entirely anxious to discuss their plan of operations against Russia with the Turks was because it involved contacts that would have alarmed the Turks to a degree that would be difficult to exaggerate.

#### **Conclusion:**

Two conclusions are difficult to resist. The first, of course, is that the avoidance of conflict with Russia, whatever it may have seemed at the time, was an unmixed blessing for the Allied cause. War against Russia in 1940 probably would have been, as Taylor has suggested, like Gallipoli -- only worse. The second is that operations against Russia in the Near East however brought on -- Italy being neutral and the possibility of offensive operations

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<sup>107</sup> PRO WO 193/638 SOE/NE Series. SOE NE/2; WO 193/639 SOE/NE/SECRET. SOE NE/4. Near East Bureau; and, WO 193/955 op. cit., Col McNair MO.1/G.1 to DDMI(1) 27 May 1940.

<sup>108</sup> PRO WO 193/640 SOE/NE/7. Especially, GOCME to WO 17 Aug; WO to GOCME 2 Sep; GOCME to WO 7 Sep; WO to GOCME; BGen Mallaby from S.F Tayler 20 Sep; WO to GOCME 18 Oct; GOCME to WO 21 Oct; and, GOCME to WO 27 Feb 1941.



against Germany in the Balkans having been excluded by the Spring -- was probably the last chance for effective operation of the Tripartite Alliance failing response to a German or Russian attack on Turkey. The decision to postpone this case, therefore, in the context of the times, amounted to the effective renunciation of an offensive posture in the Near East and of a fully functioning alliance with Turkey.

**Chapter XIII -- Spring 1940**  
**War Without Turkey**

**The Movement Towards Turkish Neutrality:**

By the Spring of 1940, time was running out for the Tripartite Alliance. Little had yet been done to make the Alliance an actuality and the "time of testing" so long predicted by the General Staff had almost arrived. By the middle of April, it was patently imminent. In this twilight time, on the verge of being too late, Britain and France began to make vigorous efforts to jump start the alliance by making it active in some theatre. For their part, the Turks, considerably disillusioned by their disappointments of the past year, and very probably beginning to sense that the war, contrary to expectation, would pass them by -- were beginning to exhibit a caginess and egocentricity not in keeping with their earlier policy and more characteristic of the Ottoman Empire, and their later wartime policy, than that of Atatürk's Republic.<sup>1</sup> Those Turkish statesmen who were without doubt Britain's friends began to speak eulogistically of a relationship rapidly becoming a might-have-been. So long, Dr. Aras told Halifax on 4 May, as Britain and Turkey held together, and the communications overseas were maintained, the Allies would win: "all else was merely a phase of war operations".<sup>2</sup> One expects that by May, this was an article of faith for Dr. Aras more than an

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, the attitude described by Derengil in many publications. For the most concise statement of his argument, see, S. Derengil, S. "Turkey's Diplomatic Position at the Outbreak of the Second World War". Bogazici Universitesi Dergisi. Vol 8-9. 1980-1981.

<sup>2</sup> PRO FO 800/320 Halifax to Loraine 4 May 1940.

expression of practical politics.

Dr. Aras told Halifax something else. He said that in the event of a German attack South-East, Turkey would stay out until the situation had clarified. Anything else, he said, might be playing into the hands of Hitler. In any case, he said, it was probable that Turkey would restrict its action to ensuring Bulgarian neutrality. Turkey's declaration of war, he said, would be kept in reserve. In this way, he hoped, Turkey might tie-up the Balkans with neither Allied nor Axis interference.<sup>3</sup> Could Britain still count on Turkey, at least to preserve its neutrality? Halifax thought it could.<sup>4</sup>

Halifax termed the Balkan policy proposed by Aras "conditional inaction" and, while not completely convinced, informed the French of Dr. Aras' proposals. Gamelin, typically, although one of the principle exponents of a peripheral strategy, "saw clearly the possible advantages of conditional inaction, provided the Turks cooperated in it . . . he liked the idea".<sup>5</sup> Halifax himself, on the other hand, was dissatisfied with the change of strategic horses. "The part that strikes me most strongly" he wrote on 13 May, "is that there is no mention of the Germans. What will they be doing all this time?" Halifax also shrank from a policy he considered tantamount to "hiding behind Balkan skirts".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 800/320 Phipps to Halifax 5 May 1940.

<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 800/320 Halifax to Loraine 13 May 1940.

Halifax's uneasiness notwithstanding, by February, there were signs that the Balkan Entente might be more solid than had been supposed, and that the neutral bloc proposed by the Turks in the Winter might finally be at hand. At a Balkan summit meeting in Belgrade Saraçoğlu brought the representatives at last to discuss the possibility of a mutual guarantee against external aggression.<sup>7</sup> It was decided that there should be a meeting of Balkan General Staffs to discuss the subject of possible military cooperation.<sup>8</sup> A continuing argument against a common Balkan line, however, was the Bulgarian complication, and it may be that the meeting in Belgrade was, in part, a blind for discussion of plans against Bulgaria. By February border tension and the constant evocation of Berlin by Bulgaria in disputes with Turkey had led the Turks closer to confrontation with Bulgaria than they had been at any time since the Balkan wars.<sup>9</sup>

**Ankara, Aleppo and Naval Liaison in the Spring of 1940:**

Cairo, however, was not sold on the idea of Balkan neutrality and at the beginning of February, proposed another Commanders' conference in Ankara. This conference would follow shortly after a bilateral Anglo-French meeting in Cairo the conclusions of which would be immediately forwarded to the Turks for their

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<sup>7</sup> PRO CAB 65/5 WC 34(40) 6 Feb 1940.

<sup>8</sup> PRO CAB 65/5 WC 39(40) 12 Feb 1940.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 371/R1868/316/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 3 Feb; and, FO 371/R17073/84/7 Rendel to FO 15 Aug 1940. In his memoirs, Von Papen makes no bones of the fact that he actively discouraged the Bulgarians from any cooperation with the Balkan Entente. p. 456-459.

consideration.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the month, the British advance party, composed of three Naval, three Army, and four RAF officers, arrived in Ankara to study the reports of the Anglo-French reconnaissance parties which had been criss-crossing Turkey in the five months since the signature of the Military Convention.<sup>11</sup> Weygand followed on 26 January to discuss with the Turks the division of responsibility for the defence of Thrace.<sup>12</sup> The Turks considered that the proposed conference might be useful, but thought that further Staff conferences would be *moreso*.<sup>13</sup>

On 8 March, Air Chief Marshall Sir William Mitchell arrived in Ankara with General Jauneaud, the French Air Commander in the Eastern Mediterranean. They came at the specific invitation of Marshal Çakmak. On 11 March, they met with General Gündüz in the morning and with Çakmak in the afternoon. The Turks were very concerned about the lack of progress in the construction of aerodromes. For three years -- beginning with Elmhirst's tour in 1937 -- the RAF had virtually unrestricted access to Turkey's

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<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/3/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 5 Feb; 186/4/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 7 Feb 1940; and, M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, p. 28. The Anglo-French staff concluded that available rail and port facilities would permit only the deployment of small forces, and those only after 5-6 months of engineering preparation.

<sup>11</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/11/40 GHQME to MAA 19 Feb 1940.

<sup>12</sup> M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, p. 28-29. The Turks assigned to Weygand the area of Western Thrace, West of the Sea of Marmora. Weygand judged that this area was too small to permit the deployment of the proposed Anglo-French Expeditionary Force, and concluded, predictably, that the British and French must go instead to Salonika, or the French to Salonika and the British to Thrace.

<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/11G/40 Morgan to MAA 23 Feb 1940.

military airfields and had made several comprehensive surveys, they complained; yet nothing had been done to prepare airfields for common action. Both Çakmak and Gündüz expressed their hope that this problem might receive due attention.<sup>14</sup>

Later in March, Halifax, still uncomfortable with the new Turkish attitude, decided to go to Ankara to stiffen Turkey's adherence to the alliance.<sup>15</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson, unaccustomedly, rejected the idea. There was no point in coming to Ankara he informed Halifax. Such an action would only give the Turks an opportunity to air their grievances regarding the insufficient scale of British assistance.<sup>16</sup>

A few days later, General Gündüz went to Aleppo for the second tripartite Staff conference -- the final preparation for the proposed Commanders' conference shortly to convene. He was accompanied by Menemencioğlu's deputy, the Assistant Secretary-General, M. Acıkalın.<sup>17</sup> The Aleppo Staff conference was a disaster. The British and French had drawn up the agenda in Cairo, and it dealt mainly with proposed Allied operations in the Balkans and against Russia. Gündüz insisted that all questions be considered and kept shifting the discussion to the problem of

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<sup>14</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 AAA to Morgan 23 Mar 1940.

<sup>15</sup> PRO CAB 65/6 WC 72(40) 19 Mar 1940.

<sup>16</sup> PRO CAB 65/6 WC 78(40) 1 Apr 1940.

<sup>17</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/186 186/22/40 Gen Smith to WO 21 Mar; and, PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)286 Staff Conversations With the Turks. Meeting at Aleppo. Aide Memoire 8 Apr 1940; Collins, p. 231; and, M. Weygand, Recalled to Service, p. 30-31.

Italy. It had been five months since the Treaty, he complained, and it was high-time that plans for all possible contingencies were discussed. The British and French representatives had not been briefed to discuss anything not on the agenda. The best information they could give Gündüz was that if Italy were in the war, the scale of assistance that Turkey could expect would be much reduced.<sup>18</sup> The construction of adequate communications, ports and airbases were identified by all participants as major restrictions on the effective operation of the Alliance.<sup>19</sup>

Only the RN was able to make significant progress with the Turks. One suspects, however, that this was because Commodore Uzel was less strictly monitored than the Heads of the other Services. Following the Aleppo Conference, 11-13 April, there was a meeting in Ankara between members of the Turkish Naval Staff and officers from Cunningham's Staff.<sup>20</sup> A plan for the extension of submarine warfare to the Black Sea was agreed upon with the British to receive base facilities at Golçuk. O'Donnel the NAA judged that everything had gone very well, and the British delegation given

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. One of the reasons for allied inflexibility was that the Commanders themselves did not attend the conference. Wavell, who was in Pretoria, was represented by his deputy MGen Arthur Smith. Collins, p. 231.

<sup>19</sup> Collins, p. 231. For the Aleppo conference, see also, MGen I.S.O Playfair, The Mediterranean and the Middle East, (HMSO: London) 1954. Vol I, p. 53; and, Cunningham, A Sailor's Odyssey, (Hutchison: London) 1951, p. 222.

<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 195/2464/150 150/19/40 NAA to Knatchbull-Hugesson 10 May 1940.

every assistance.<sup>21</sup>

Relations between the RN and the Turkish Navy remained excellent. The establishment of permanent liaison, in fact, was only barely averted by strenuous FO objection.<sup>22</sup> Cunningham's proposal in May to appoint Admiral Kelly as a permanent personal representative was not opposed by the Turks; on the contrary, they welcomed it. It fell, instead, to FO reluctance to avoid giving the impression of rushing the Turks. The proposal of Admiral Ulgen in October, then Turkish Under-Secretary of the Navy, to send a senior Turkish officer to Alexandria as permanent liaison with the Mediterranean Fleet, almost inconceivably, faltered in December on FO reluctance to see a senior Turkish officer resident in Egypt. "There has been political objection", Lampson wrote, "to Turkish infiltration into Egypt. The presence of this one officer may do more harm than good".<sup>23</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson's marginalia is easier to understand than Lampson's objection: "infiltration!!!! K.H".<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Cunningham's attempt to appoint Admiral Kelly as personal liaison officer in Ankara: PRO FO 195/2468/457 360/2/40 27 May; 360/3/40 Ankara to FO 1 Jun; 360/5/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 14 Jun; 360/6/40 Kelly to Adm 15 Jun; 360/9/40 NAA to Adm; 360/11/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Cunningham; and 360/15/40 MAA to Cunningham 2 Aug 1940. Turkey's attempt to appoint liaison officer to Cunningham in Alexandria: FO 195/2468/479 479/1/40 NAA to Cunningham 25 Oct; and Lampson to Knatchbull-Hugesson 14 Dec 1940.

<sup>23</sup> PRO FO 195/2468/479 Lampson to Knatchbull-Hugesson 14 Dec 1940.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Knatchbull-Hugesson Note 26 Dec 1940.



### Norway, France, and the Beirut and Haifa Conferences:

In April, the fiasco of the expedition to Norway began: Salonika North -- Gallipoli only worse. In Ankara, it seems to have been scarcely noticed at all. The Turks, Knatchbull-Hugesson wrote, "have taken the Norwegian business in excellent spirit: the naval successes have had a very good effect: the press remains admirable, better than our own".<sup>25</sup> On 22 April, when news of the first failures began to arrive, Knatchbull-Hugesson rushed to interview Menemencioğlu and Saraçoğlu to ascertain the Turkish reaction. Neither Menemencioğlu nor Saraçoğlu mentioned Norway in the course of the conversation. Either the Turks truly had failed to notice the on-going debacle, or as seems much more likely, they would have considered it poor manners and worse policy to point out to the accredited representative of an ally that yet another friend was rapidly moving to an unhappy end.<sup>26</sup>

On 10 May 1940, the long awaited German attack in the West began. It was quickly obvious that all was not going well for the Allies, though in Ankara the scale of the disaster was not immediately obvious. By 14 May 1940, the War Cabinet was considering seriously, for the first time since 1938, the

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<sup>25</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 entry 28 Apr 1940.

<sup>26</sup> It is worthy of peripheral note, that from January 1940, the British detected a gradual shift in German propaganda. Previously, much of German propaganda had hammered at the themes of British brutality and unscrupulousness. From January 1940, the Ministry of Information, detected a gradual shift towards emphasis on "British weakness", and the rottenness of British politics and society. Finland and Norway, can only have confirmed for many neutrals the validity of the German perspective. PRO CAB 68/4 WP(R) (40)37 Analysis of German Propaganda 1-15 Jan 1940.

possibility of active Italian hostility in the Mediterranean.<sup>27</sup> The Turkish press, loyal to the Tripartite alliance, appealed for Balkan unity. The "countries of the Danubian basin and the Balkans" Cumhuriyet warned, "must decide before it is too late, to rise as a single man against aggression. Only the unity and solidarity of all the Balkan peoples can effectively ensure the Balkan peninsula's safety".<sup>28</sup> Appeals could not off-set disaster. On 22 May, the first real war news arrived in Ankara. It was the disclosure that Amiens had fallen to the Germans. Knatchbull-Hugesson passed a "very gloomy evening" in the company of Saraçoğlu.<sup>29</sup> The news the next day was worse. "News this evening shattering" was Knatchbull-Hugesson's simple but eloquent entry in his diary.<sup>30</sup>

On 21 May 1940, borne on rumours of collapse in the West, the Commanders-in-Chief met in Beirut for the last time as a trio.<sup>31</sup> In Beirut, from desperation rather than recognition of reality, the general principle that the Turks would command in Thrace was accepted. Gündüz had been insistent on this point at Aleppo.<sup>32</sup> Until the last minute the British resisted the subordination of

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<sup>27</sup> PRO CAB 65/7 WC 122(40) 14 May 1940.

<sup>28</sup> BIA, Vol XVII, No. 10 (18 May 1940), p. 629.

<sup>29</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit. entry 22 May 1940.

<sup>30</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit. entry 23 May 1940.

<sup>31</sup> PRO 80/11 COS (40)392 Middle East InterAllied Commander's Conference 26 May 1940; and, Collins, p. 231.

<sup>32</sup> PRO CAB 80/9 COS (40)286 op. cit.

their own command. The previous day, in fact, the War Cabinet Defence Committee with Chamberlain in the chair had considered the question and decided that it was essential that Britain have command in Thrace in order to prevent Weygand from draining British forces in the Middle East *à la mode Sarraïl*.<sup>33</sup>

Çakmak, now Generalissimo designate, agreed that in the event of a movement to Thrace, Air Headquarters need not move but would receive general instructions where they were. He also accepted the urgency of operations against the Dodecanese should Italy enter the war, and that Air operations should commence against the Italians as soon as war was declared. When questioned about Turkish intentions in the Caucasus, he asked his colleagues if they could provide the twelve Divisions required for an offensive option. When they admitted that they could not, he declared that it was "not worthwhile to discuss" the question further.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, the Commanders considered the worst possible case: war against Russia, Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria -- no longer as unlikely as it had seemed. In such an eventuality, the French, given the unpromising conditions of the day, could offer only one Division by Z +30 days, with another available for operations against the Dodecanese. The British, for their part, could only promise forces as available some time after Z +3 weeks.<sup>35</sup>

On 27 May, the Staffs assembled for a final meeting at Haifa.

<sup>33</sup> PRO CAB 69/1 DO(40) 3rd Mtg 16 May 1940.

<sup>34</sup> PRO 80/11 COS (40)392 op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

The Haifa conference was the requiem of prewar cooperation. No useful work was accomplished, no direct notice taken of the disaster taking shape in France. All that could be agreed upon was the obvious: that there would be no major operations in the Near East in 1940. General Mittelhauser, the French commander in Syria, arrived in Ankara on 3 June just in time to return to Beirut.<sup>36</sup> The British participants returning home on 4 June were not to meet their Turkish counter-parts again until January 1941.<sup>37</sup>

In truth, by the end of May, the British were only going through the motions of alliance, borne forward by momentum produced by an engine which had ceased to function. The land-mark paper, British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality, had already been written. The sole motivation of British strategy amid French collapse was "to avoid defeat".<sup>38</sup> Turkey no longer had much relevance in imperial strategy beyond its basic default value as a breakwater to German or Russian expansion towards the Middle East. Britain itself, it was agreed, was now the decisive theatre.<sup>39</sup>

As if to mark this new reality beyond recall, the decision was made, as the C in Cs met in Beirut, to withdraw much of the carefully husbanded Middle East Reserve for the defence of the

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<sup>36</sup> BIA, Vol XVII, No. 12 (15 June 1940), p. 760.

<sup>37</sup> CC ELMT Directives and Policies MidEast Marshal-Cornwall to C in C Med 17 Dec 1940; and ADM 1/11132 Ankara Staff Conference 1941; and, Collins, p. 231.

<sup>38</sup> PRO CAB 80/11 COS (40)390 British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality 25 May 1940.

<sup>39</sup> PRO CAB 80/11 COS (40)397 British Strategy in the Near Future 26 May 1940.

United Kingdom.<sup>40</sup> Kennedy protested this decision. The withdrawal of Wavell's only reserve, he thought, would "seriously prejudice [the] chances of Turkish intervention on our side . . . to the French it would indicate our abandoning cooperation with them in the Middle East".<sup>41</sup> The withdrawal "would be viewed throughout the Middle East as an indication of abdication"; as the final departure of the Legions.<sup>42</sup> But in truth, with the total loss of the BEF probable, the MidEast Reserve was the only force available for the defence of the United Kingdom itself; a rather more important consideration in imperial strategy than the opinion of the Arab world.<sup>43</sup>

**French Collapse, the Entry of Italy and Turkish NonBelligerence:**

As could only have been expected, by the beginning of June, Rome was sounding the Turks on their probable reaction to Italian action in the Mediterranean.<sup>44</sup> Ankara replied that Italy must believe that Turkey would "fulfil obligations she had contracted

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<sup>40</sup> PRO CAB 80/12 COS (40)410(JP) Middle East. Withdrawal of British Land Forces. Fifteen Battalions of Infantry -- a full Division were to be withdrawn.

<sup>41</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 Note on the Withdrawal of English Battalions from the Middle East Kennedy to Chamberlain 30 May 1940.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Wavell had more confidence than Kennedy. He was certain of his ability to defend the Middle East even in the worst case -- the loss of Britain itself; and of his ability to reconquer it in the worse than worst case -- the loss of Egypt following upon the loss of Britain. PRO WO 106/5706 Wavell to CIGS 16 Jun 1940; and, Sir John Kennedy, The Business of War, (Hutchison: London) 1957, p. 103.

<sup>44</sup> BIA, Vol XVII, No. 12 (15 Jun 1940), p. 760.

with Great Britain and France against such an eventuality".<sup>45</sup> The Turkish press reacted with outrage to the suggestion that Turkey would default on its obligations. Cumhuriyet, on 9 June, was most strident. The Italians, it warned, "should not fool themselves with the idea that Turkey may, on some pretext or other, attempt to evade her obligations".<sup>46</sup> In truth however, it is difficult to see what more the Turks could have done than give Italy reason to delay their attack.

On 8 June, with Italian intervention days away, the COS considered if given Italy's entrance to the war, it would be desirable for the Balkans nations to enter the war directly.<sup>47</sup> Greece, and Yugoslavia, it was thought, should be encouraged to consider an Italian declaration of war to be a *casus belli*. Moreover, the CIGS considered:

we should make a direct and final approach to Turkey to concert with Greece and Yugoslavia to form a common Balkan Front on our side in the even of Italy entering the war with the Allies or attacking Yugoslavia.<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, effective Turkish action against Italy was impossible. The only direct action envisioned against Italy had been an attack on the Dodecanese. Accordingly, at the end of May, the Foreign Office had instructed Knatchbull-Hugesson to tell the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Cumhuriyet was following an editorial line established by Ulus on 5 June and Yeni Sabah on 7 June.

<sup>47</sup> PRO WO 193/960 Strategy in the Middle East COS (40)442 Balkan Policy in the New Situation (Draft Report) CIGS 8 Jun 1940.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Turks that in the event of Italian attack, "It would be most desirable that the Turkish Government should declare war on Italy and occupy the Dodecanese as contemplated".<sup>49</sup> But it had also been contemplated that the Allies would provide naval assistance and landing-craft. No shift had been made to supply the second, and, in the context of the times, there was no hope of the first. Informed of the FO instruction, and realizing that it could only lead to embarrassing demands, questions and recriminations, the Services took immediate action to counter-act it. Do not encourage the Turks to attack the Dodecanese, the Services urged Ankara: they would only ask for the promised assistance, and neither British nor French were in a position to provide it.<sup>50</sup>

Even had Allied regional impotence not been obvious and admitted, by the end of May the establishment of a Balkan front or an attack on the Dodecanese had moved beyond the boundaries of practical politics. As in World War One, whatever else they might be willing to do, no Balkan nation -- including Turkey -- was willing to enter a war to buoy up a Great Power coalition which looked certain to lose; moreover, to lose in short order. Knatchbull-Hugesson could not have been the only resident of Ankara

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<sup>49</sup> PRO WO 106/5706 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 28 May 1940.

<sup>50</sup> PRO WO 106/ 5706 Dewing to Flake (Allied Military Committee) 30 May 1940. By Oct, the Dodecanese was definitely excluded from the imperial agenda for the moment. At a meeting with Eden in Cairo, both the GOCME and AOC "were emphatic that the necessary land and air forces could not at present be made available". Cunningham, not so emphatic, agreed. WO 193/963 Visit of the Secretary of State to the Middle East, Minutes of Cairo Conference 16 Oct 1940.

who noted that the collapse of the armies in France had "been a real *chef d'oeuvre* of the military art" proving "beycnd question" Anglo-French inferiority.<sup>51</sup>

On 10 June, Italy declared war on France. "What a performance" Knatchbull-Hugesson wrote: "Really words fail me: there seems to be no idea left except force, fraud and spite".<sup>52</sup> On 11 June, the Italian Air Force raided Malta and it was clear, that by the Tripartite Treaty, Turkey was obliged to enter the war.<sup>53</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson and Massigli presented a demand to Saraçoğlu for an immediate declaration of war.<sup>54</sup> "Turkey would do what was right", Saraçoğlu assured them, "but would react with a certain prudence".<sup>55</sup> Could British ships operate in Turkish waters against Italian ships Halifax wondered? No, Aras answered. To permit this while not belligerent would be the act of a colony, not an independent nation.<sup>56</sup> The only remaining question was the exact constitution of Turkish "prudence".

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<sup>51</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit. entry 6 Jun 1940.

<sup>52</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 op. cit. 10 Jun 1940.

<sup>53</sup> PRO CAB 65/7 WC 161(40) 11 Jun 1940.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. Massigli later was to remember this day with something less than pride. "To remind Turkey of a promise given was one thing," he wrote in his memoirs, "but to invite her to rally to our cause on the very day of the evacuation of Paris was another . . . 'I feel something of an assassin' I told my colleague during our trip". Massigli, p. 432.

<sup>55</sup> PRO CAB 65/7 WC 163(40) 12 Jun 1940.

<sup>56</sup> PRO FO 371/R6510/316/44 Halifax to Knatchbull-Hugesson 11 Jun 1940.



The first result of the Italian entry to the war, as had been long expected, was the severance of Turkey's sea communications with the West. The disintegration of the Turkish economy began to accelerate from loss of markets, of imports, and shortage of metals and manufactures.<sup>57</sup> On 12 June, Ankara announced the severance of economic relations with Italy and ordered Turkish ships to return Turkish ports.<sup>58</sup> That very day, however, Saraçoğlu undercut the impact of this demarche by announcing the conclusion of an ad hoc trade agreement with Germany.<sup>59</sup> Pro-Western elements likely to dissent had been gagged in advance. On 11 June, Yeni Sabah, violently pro-Allied, was suspended by Government order. On 13 June, it was joined by Aksam, the most bitterly anti-Italian Turkish journal.<sup>60</sup>

By 13 June, it had become clear that "what was right" and "prudent" did not include war with Italy. The Deputy Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, speaking with Knatchbull-Hugesson, said that the Turks were considering the matter of the request for a joint note, but were having problems seeing how this would be possible. The Treaty had been tripartite. Could France now play its part?<sup>61</sup> Not willing to rely solely on Axis assurances, and no

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<sup>57</sup> PRO FO 837/1019 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 2 Aug; FO 837/1018 Monthly Reports on Economic Situations May-Sep 1940.

<sup>58</sup> BIA, Vol XVII, No. 13 (29 Jun 1940), p. 829.

<sup>59</sup> Medlicott, p. 279. Negotiations towards this treaty had gone forward since 30 May.

<sup>60</sup> BIA, Vol XVII, No. 13 (29 June 1940), p. 829.

<sup>61</sup> PRO CAB 65/7 WC 164(40) 13 Jun 1940.

longer able to count on Allied support, the Turks moved closer to true neutrality backed by nearly complete mobilization.<sup>62</sup>

The next day, 14 June, the Turks quietly informed London that they would not enter the war. "The pure and simple application of article 2" of the Treaty, they said, "would be likely to draw Turkey into an armed conflict with the USSR". Halifax explained to the War Cabinet, that "they have in consequence decided to refer to the dispositions of protocol 2 of the Treaty".<sup>63</sup> Turkey, it was explained, was therefore restricting its action to the adoption of nonbelligerence. Halifax replied icily that in that case, "we should have to reserve our own liberty of action".<sup>64</sup> A forsaken and dying Chamberlain wrote to his sister: "Blow after blow after blow comes upon us. Turkey has run out on her obligations. Egypt the same. Iraq wavering. Spain on the point of coming in".<sup>65</sup> All British calculations had been upset. All strategic considerations overthrown. Turkish prudence had overborne Turkey's obligations.

Knatchbull-Hugesson was horrified at what he considered the Turkish defection. He had, after all, like Loraine, constantly assured London that in the event of general war, or war with Italy, Turkey was certain to be on Britain's side. The fact was though, that Saracoğlu was rather better informed of the true state of

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<sup>62</sup> BIA, Vol XVII, No. 13 (29 Jun 1940), p. 829. Extended on 15 June.

<sup>63</sup> PRO CAB 65/7 WC 166(40) 14 Jun 1940.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> BR NC 18/1/1162 21 Jun 1940.

affairs in France than were either Knatchbull-Hugesson or Massigli.<sup>66</sup> What became clear too, in July, was that Saraçoğlu's invocation of protocol 2, was not mere pretence. The Turks were, in fact, terrified at the opportunity presented to Stalin for the settling of Eastern accounts by Western collapse, and Von Papen made every effort to ensure that they did not forget this danger.<sup>67</sup>

#### The British Reaction:

It was soon apparent that Britain would make no greater use of its "liberty of action" than fire control. Halifax closeted with Churchill to come up with the most elegant way to "make the best of a bad job".<sup>68</sup> Knatchbull-Hugesson was instructed:

to inform the Turkish Government that we were unable to regard the attitude which they have taken up as a fulfilment of their undertakings to the allies. The present decision could only make the most deplorable impression on the world at large. We could not accept their proposed declaration in its present form, but we were prepared to accept it with certain modifications.<sup>69</sup>

London suggested that rather than simply issuing a statement to the effect that they were nonbelligerent, the Turks state that:

Following upon the entry of Italy into the war against Great Britain and France, the Government of the Republic has decided in agreement with its allies to adopt for the

<sup>66</sup> CC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-1940 entry 4 Aug 1940.

<sup>67</sup> PRO ADM 116/4266 Russo-Turkish Relations 1940, Proposed Revision of the Montreaux Convention 26 July 1940 Mil Branch to D Plans. See especially, Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 5 Jul; FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 11 Jul 1940; and, Von Papen, p. 461.

<sup>68</sup> PRO CAB 65/7 WC 167(40) 15 Jun 1940.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

present an attitude of nonbelligerency.<sup>70</sup>

The changes, Halifax wrote, "were in our view, essential".<sup>71</sup> It was hoped, too that Turkey would accompany this declaration by the severance of diplomatic ties with Italy and a stoppage of commerce.

While not all that might be desired, Churchill thought that these concessions would control most of the damage; particularly as they would be accompanied by a statement from London to the effect that the activation of the Turkish alliance was not desired. Churchill believed, he told the Cabinet, "that we might well learn a lesson in propaganda methods from the Germans. When at the beginning of the war Italy had refused to come in, the Germans had put it out that they did not desire their participation".<sup>72</sup> He hoped to put the same happy face on the Turkish desertion. In the end, the Turks refused even this face-saving gesture. On 26 June, Turkey issued its declaration of non-belligerency without Churchill's suggested revisions.<sup>73</sup> The Anglo-Turkish debacle was complete.

At the beginning of June export of Air material from Britain

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> "The Government of the Turkish Republic has considered the situation which has arisen from Italy's entry into the war and have decided on the application of Protocol 2 . . . Turkey will preserve her present attitude of non-belligerency for the security and defence of our country. While continuing on the one side military preparations, we also have to remain more vigilant than ever. We hope by this position of watchfulness and by avoiding any provocation, we shall preserve the maintenance of peace for our country and for those who are around us". PRO FO 371/R6510/316/44.

was suspended.<sup>74</sup> On 3 July, the decision was made that not all, but most naval supplies could also no longer be spared.<sup>75</sup> The Army made no similar declaration. After Dunkirk it would only have been a pointless statement of the humiliating obvious. As a final mortification, the British planning establishment began to consider a case in abeyance for the previous five years -- war against Turkey. It was not that Turkey was distrusted, but that faced as the British were with the immediate loss of the war, it was not inconceivable that Turkey might "throw herself into the arms of Germany" to save itself from Russia or simply to atone for past impudence.<sup>76</sup> Such planning was not necessary. Germany had already decided that the Balkan status quo suited its purposes just fine and had warned off its associates -- Russia and Italy -- from any adventures they might have planned.<sup>77</sup> Left to themselves, as it was now almost certain they would be, the Turks were unlikely to enter voluntarily the post 1940 war.

At the beginning of July, Halifax spoke of the Turkish decision in the House of Lords.

Finally, as regards Turkey we remain bound to Turkey by the closest ties. It will be remembered that on the entry of Italy into the war the Turkish Prime Minister declared that Turkey would maintain her present attitude of

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<sup>74</sup> PRO ADM 116/4883 Supply of Turkish Naval Requirements Controller Minute 22 Jun 1940.

<sup>75</sup> PRO ADM 116/4883 op. cit., D Plans to VCNS 3 Jul 1940.

<sup>76</sup> PRO ADM 116/4883 op. cit., The Political Importance to Turkey 24 Jul 1940.

<sup>77</sup> G. Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, (Odham Press: London) 1948. p. 374-381. Entries for 19 June, 7 July and 20 July 1940.

nonbelligerency. His Majesty's Government fully appreciate the circumstances which led to this desire of the Turkish Government, who throughout have kept in close contact with His Majesty's Government. Meanwhile our treaty with Turkey, stands, as does the friendship and sympathy between our two peoples on which the treaty is based, and which, has rendered in the past, as it also will be in the future, a fruitful basis for construction cooperation between us, both as long as the war continues and in the years of peace to come.<sup>78</sup>

With this bittersweet renunciation, the opportunity for fruitful Anglo-Turkish military cooperation came to an end.

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<sup>78</sup> Hansard, Lords Vol CXVI col 889.

### Conclusion

This discussion began with the question of why the Tripartite Anglo-Franco-Turkish alliance of 1939 failed to function. Having come this far, it seems possible to set forth some of the causes of failure, which, if not corporately the entire cause, were at least more than sufficient.

One of the chief causes for the failure of the Tripartite Alliance, and the one most often neglected by historians, was the equivocal place occupied by the Alliance within British Strategy. British desire for active alliance with Turkey was sporadic at best, and, prior to the brutal clarification of Britain's strategic situation provided by the decision of June 1940, was largely undermined by the existence of powerful strategic dilemmas inherited from the prewar period. The Turkish connection was never considered entirely on its own merits but was viewed in relation to a number of political scenarios each of which were seen as involving strategic dilemmas sufficient to vitiate operation of an Anglo-Turkish alliance. Against Italy, Turkey was a nearly essential ally given existing Allied strategy. But Italy chose not to enter the war, and imperial reality seemed to indicate throughout our period that the Italian distraction must not be allowed to result in the commitment of resources required to meet the more dangerous German threat. It was the general case, therefore, that Turkey was an important element in consideration of a strategic scenario which British planners were powerfully tempted to exclude and it is entirely significant to the fact of the

Tripartite Alliance that its foundation was layed in the half year bracketed by the strategic reassessment of Spring 1938 on the one side and by the outbreak of war on the other, which was abberant to the general flow of British strategy in that early and decisive hostilities against Italy were accepted as the probable overture to the general war by then obviously probable. The possibility of Italian neutrality having been excluded, Turkey waxed in importance and those arguments which had seemed to call for caution correspondingly waned. The result was the Joint Guarantee. After the outbreak of war, however, when the conceptions of the Spring were nullified by the fact of Italy's actual neutrality, British regional strategy quickly resumed its former course and policy-makers returned to the former consensus that Italian neutrality was an imperative which an active Turkish alliance would do much to jeopardize.

Against Germany, the case actually manifest after September 1939, Turkey was an important ally, but in London, for most of our period, the greater reality seemed to be that a straight-forward arrangement with Turkey coupled with a useful level of assistance would so antagonize Italy that the Turkish connection would become as much a liability as an advantage. In addition, it was difficult to see how a Turkish alliance could operate against Germany without a parallel agreement with Russia and the consolidation of the Balkans at the side of the Western Allies; and both of these could have been achieved only with extreme difficulty, if at all, and at a cost often judged by London to be more than an effective Turkish



alliance was worth. If the cost of an effective Turkish alliance was policy adjustment certain to be costly and likely to be dangerous, with no guarantee of any adequate return, then so pragmatic a Government as Chamberlain's was unlikely to consider such a step.

Planning against Russia, such a feature of the Anglo-French dialogue after November 1939, played little part in tripartite discussions. This was, one expects, because such soundings as were made revealed that the Turks were unlikely to consider this case. In addition, many in London, including Chamberlain, continued to view the acceptance of hostilities with the Soviets as a mistake. In truth, when all is said, planning against Russia reveals more about the dynamics of the Anglo-French relationship and about French strategic perceptions on the edge of the precipice than about the Tripartite Alliance. Nevertheless, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the operation normally associated with this case, the bombing of Baku, was the most likely regional operation prior to Summer 1940; and this precisely because this case was of all least afflicted by debilitating strategic dilemmas while seeming to cut through some of those paralyzing consideration of other cases. For example, French strategists in particular seem to have been sincere in their belief that by striking at Russia, they would not only reduce the possibility of fighting in France itself, but might well turn the Anti-Comintern against Germany while risking nothing more than a Russian response they deemed unlikely to be effective.

Thus those discussions which assume that it was in Britain's unvarnished best interest to secure a Turkish alliance prior to the Summer of 1940, and that it was HMG's intention to achieve such an alliance, simplify the situation to the point where simplification becomes merely incorrect. During the period 1934-June 1940, it only seemed sporadically in Britain's interests, as identified by HMG, to achieve a full-blown alliance with Turkey; far preferable, it was generally considered, would be a working relationship without commitment -- friendship undefined rather than a formal alliance.

There were, however, other reasons for the failure of the Alliance -- above all, the inability of the western Allies to provide anything like a level of support sufficient to permit the Turks to consider the complete redirection of their policy. Against the argument that preparation for each case, potential or actual, must involve the extension of assistance to the Turks, was opposed the inexorable reality of British weakness and imperial vulnerability. Material assistance fell to the pathetic inadequacy of Britain's own forces. Predeployments and preparations collapsed before political arguments, the insufficiency of available resources, and, finally, having become aware of the true state of affairs, to Turkey's own unwillingness to countenance provocative activities. Economic assistance, as crucial a requirement as any if the alliance were to function, was hobbled from the beginning by strenuous Treasury insistence that Britain's economic resources were limited, and that provision had to be made for many projects of higher priority before much could be done for the Turks. A

Turkish alliance would be costly. British planners never doubted this. What they did doubt was Britain's ability to bear the cost, and whether the attempt to do so would represent the best use of Britain's scarce resources.

It should never be forgotten as well, that throughout our period, British policy was handicapped by ultimate dependency upon Armed Forces and a strategic base entirely insufficient for the roles in which they would have been cast by a more "forward" policy in the Near East. British war-planners were not unaware of the possibilities -- Paris ensured that -- but could not see how they could be squared with existing resources. There could not be an active policy where there could be no operations and no operations where there were no forces available for deployment.

Given the dilemmas of imperial strategy, the inability to provide assistance, and the inadequacy of its own forces, an active alliance, from the stand-point of London, represented as many dangers and costs as potential benefits. Thus, it would be fair to say that the Turkish alignment, during much of our period, represented, for a London more inclined to consider realities than potentialities, the exclusion of Turkey from the ranks of Britain's possible enemies more often than the inclusion of Turkey in the ranks of Britain's friends. After war's outbreak, British policy-makers were willing to consider a more active Near Eastern policy and a more active Turkish alliance some time in the future. But until British strength would permit consideration of a more active policy, London was much more inclined to view Turkey as a

breakwater to Axis expansion toward the vulnerable British position in the Middle East and as a variable in Middle Eastern opinion than as an active ally. In this greater context, operational scenarios produced during the first phase of the war, whatever the significance accorded them by Paris, shrank in London to little more than contingency planning to meet several possible threats to the Turkish rampart.

Turkey, for its part, until the disasters of May-June 1940, never excluded the possibility that it would take part in the war at the side of its Allies, and the elements of the Alliance -- the Tripartite Treaty, the Military Convention, and the Commercial agreements of January 1940 -- were largely Turkish-inspired and responsive to Turkey's own aspirations. There is no evidence that the Atatürk administration was insincere in policy statement, or the successor İnönü government in negotiation; no authority for the belief that it was other than the Turkish intention to honour the agreements as made -- no authority that is, until these agreements began to prove abortive in Winter 1939 when the assumptions upon which they had been based began to collapse; no evidence, until it began to seem as if neutrality might indeed be a realistic policy action for the Turks; no evidence, finally, until it became suddenly apparent that an invitation to enter the war was an summons to participate in disaster.

In general, from 1934, the Turks were following an agenda at once more and less ambitious than Britain. More ambitious in that it aimed at fundamental realignment of policy while HMG aimed at

the preservation of as much of its policy as possible; less ambitious, particularly after 1938, in that it was even less willing than HMG to consider in principle an active course in any case except that of war with Italy without allies. Three things were necessary to overcome this reluctance none of which pertained before or after the conclusion of the Alliance. First, Turkey would have had to be assured of adequate provision of assistance -- principally economic and material. Second, Turkey would have had to be certain of an acceptable political situation, which must necessarily involve, if the case under consideration was war with Germany, at least Russia's benevolent neutrality, and if Turkey's assistance were to be of much consequence, Balkan consolidation including Balkan adherence. Thirdly, unless confident of a realistic level of military assistance from its Western Allies, except once again, in the case of war against Italy without allies, Turkey would have been unwilling to take the field whatever its political aspirations and inclinations of the moment might have been. In this respect, it is hard to resist the conclusion that the process of articulating the alliance, from the Turkish perspective, represented little more than a gradual disillusionment as previous policies failed one by one, and as the collapse of political and military presuppositions awakened Ankara to the true state of affairs. It can have been no less obvious in Ankara than elsewhere that Britain was weak and therefore irresolute, and that France was frightened and therefore irresponsible. Its chosen allies, weak reeds, and its enemies, threatening and dangerous, by the Spring

1940 at the latest, Turkey was playing less for inclusion in any alliance group than to avoid exclusion from all alliance groups.

The Tripartite Alliance, on the one hand, the logical consequence of Turkey's prewar policy and the outcome of a policy of rapprochement with the West followed vigorously by Atatürk and his successors, in this respect, was, on the other hand, the badge of the collapse of the columns upon which that policy had been set. Most importantly, Atatürk's policy had depended for its efficient operation on continued Russo-Turkish amity to parallel the new relationship with the West: İnönü's treaty was carried through despite, and largely because of, Russia's hostility.

Viewed from another perspective, the failure of the alliance can be seen as the comprehensive failure of its elements: not only the political instrument signed on 17 October, but of the Military Convention signed the next day, and finally, of the agreements on provision of assistance signed by Menemencioğlu in January 1940. Why did the political agreement fail? Because given the limits imposed upon the Alliance by Allied weakness, it could not envisage the unconditional participation of Turkey in any case other than the entry of Italy to the war in the Mediterranean -- a case that did not materialize until the collapse of France created conditions so dangerous that Turkey's entry into the war would have been the height of recklessness.

Similarly, the Military Convention, as further articulated by the Staff conferences of the Winter 1939-Spring 1940, made no sufficient or even realistic provision for any Allied cooperation

except against the Dodecanese -- an operation impossible before the Italian declaration of war, and unlikely thereafter. Other operations would have required extensive preparation and the commitment of a level of support entirely beyond Western capabilities before 1941. Had there been no active war before Spring 1941, and the Allies left to make their preparations in peace, it is possible that the Military Convention would have become the directing document for a higher level of Allied activity. This not being the case, it remained little more than the operating instructions for a military alliance never fully assembled.

Finally, Menemencioğlu's negotiations in Paris, and Orbay's in London proved equally abortive. If the Turks were to play an active role in the alliance then economic reality dictated that they must obtain greater distance from Germany -- this last if they were even to obtain the elements of national economic survival; yet the Allies remained sceptical of their ability to provide much assistance to the Turks in this regard and the low level of support actually provided could not avert the near economic collapse of Turkey following the declaration of war from loss of markets and lack of crucial imports. The Orbay conversations, also, as has been shown, remained almost entirely without fruit. What was required was not promised. What was promised was not provided. Nevertheless the reality remained that if the Turks were to participate actively in the Alliance then they would have to obtain modern weapons, and if they were to participate against Germany, then they could not

continue to depend upon Germany for their weapons requirements; yet, British unpreparedness and French parsimony -- this last largely rooted in the poisonous Hatay dispute of the past decade -- left until too late the provision of any adequate level of support, and even such promissory notes as Menemencioğlu had been able to collect were placed in default by the collapse of the Summer.

Two questions remain, avoided in the main text because neither is subject to final proof. The first is the question of inevitability; the second is that of responsibility.

Was it inevitable that the Tripartite Alliance fail? If we set aside, for the moment, the facts that "inevitability" is an extremely hazardous concept for the Historian, and that events only assume the gloss of being "inevitable" after they have occurred, it seems probable that we must conclude that the failure of the alliance only became certain with the complete failure of one of the allies -- France -- in the Summer of 1940. Nothing in British History, certainly, authorizes the view that British regional policy was incapable of overlooking any number of problems and deficiencies if a policy option appeared desirable for one reason or another at the time of consideration. Gallipoli, Salonika, Mesopotamia, all in 1915, Greece in 1941, the Dodecanese in 1943, the Suez in 1956 -- to list only the most dazzling failures -- indicate beyond question that Britain's policy-makers were willing to buy any number of lame horses and dry cows if they appeared likely to be productive of political advantage or seemed operationally feasible. It would be an imprudent Historian who



would exempt Chamberlain's government -- responsible, as it certainly was for at least the Norway fiasco -- from this general rule. It was only with the obvious, and comprehensive failure of the elements of the alliance in the Summer of 1940 that failure became truly "inevitable"; which, of course, is only to say that having died, death was inescapable. Turkey, for its part, would have viewed full and open operation of the Alliance with considerable misgivings after the defection of Russia from the peace front in September 1939, and particularly after Saraçoğlu's visit in October revealed just what the implications of this were for Turkey itself. This fact, however, does not empower us to conclude that operation of the alliance would have been impossible due to Turkish objection. Turkey, let us not forget, was placed in an unenviable strategic position which denied it, finally, a complete veto on whether the Alliance operated or not. In the first place, Turkish Statesmen laboured under a disability not shared by modern Historians: they didn't know, for instance, that Germany would not attack South-East, nor that Turkey would not follow Finland on the Russian agenda. To meet either case with any hope of success, operation of the alliance was essential, and effective operation, in turn, would be largely contingent upon effective preparation. Effective preparation, finally, was likely to precipitate exactly that contingency -- Axis or Russian attack -- which the Alliance, in Turkey's eyes, was designed to meet. Turkish Statesmen and Soldiers, were aware of this dilemma, but confronted with two distasteful options, until the summer of 1940, continually

pushed the allies to assist in the construction of at least the infrastructure for common action. Until June 1940, it was Western weakness rather than Turkish reluctance which remained the limiting factor. Western weakness, that is, rather than Turkish reluctance which, very probably, kept Turkey off the strategic timetables of its threatening neighbours to the North. Western weakness inhibited the activation of the Alliance in this way also: failing full agreement between the partners that the Alliance might be fruitfully activated, it was always an option for the West to force the issue by some overt military action -- perhaps the bombing of the Caucasian oil fields -- rather in the same way in which Germany had stimulated its Turkish connection in the First World War by sending the Goeben and Breslau to shell Odessa. Activation, after all, could come about through declarations of war against Turkey as easily as from declarations of war by Turkey. It is a fact of History that this option was given serious consideration by the Allies . . . for the Summer of 1940. It was an accident of History, and by no means an inevitable one, that activation of the Alliance in this way was preempted by the German annihilation of France rather than by any decision of Allied Statesmen. Thus, Turkey's isolation from the war, in 1940, was less the product of the wisdom of its Statesmen than of the weakness of its Allies -- strongly flavoured by large dollops of pure, naked chance. In no sense was it inevitable.

The second question, that of personal responsibility for the failure, seems, at first glance to be rather more of a poser, but

becomes less so if we decouple the matter of "responsibility" from its morale counter-part, "utility". By this I mean that it becomes much more permissible to say that with a Prime Minister other than Chamberlain effective operation of the Alliance might have been easier, if we refuse to make the subsequent judgement that such a policy would have been preferable. Making all due allowance for the weaknesses, and dilemmas faced by the allied Statesmen, it seems probable that had the cast been different, the results might have been less sterile. Had Chamberlain been Churchill, Eden been Halifax, Halifax been Simon, and had Atatürk remained alive, and therefore, had Saraçoğlu not replaced Aras, and Menemencioğlu not come so vigorously to the fore, it may be that sufficient preparation and sufficiently fruitful coordination would have been possible early enough for the Alliance to have become a fact -- as opposed to a concept, which is what it remained -- prior to the collapse of France. Whether such an Alliance would have better served the interests of the partners, is a question to which there can be no final answer. This thesis is inclined to the position that it would not have been so. Responsible? The answer must be "Yes". The Statesmen of 1939 can not be absolved of having, to some extent, caused the failure of the Alliance in that their policies inhibited its fuller development. A question on which there can be no final answer, however, is whether in doing so, they better served the interests of their various countries than had they acted differently, thus giving the Alliance greater scope for effective action, and therefore, increasing the possibility of common defeat

and collective disaster.

Thus, the Tripartite Alliance of 1939 represented three things. Firstly, it was the final, sterile harvest of a Turkish policy of realignment followed from 1934 to which Britain was brought to accede only by the political dangers of 1939. Secondly, it represented the turning of Turkey to the West and, thus, is of considerable importance in relation to Turkish policy after 1945. In relation to Turkey's policy during the war, however, the Tripartite Alliance was a near irrelevance. Finally, in relation to British policy before and during the war, the Turkish connection represented either a missed opportunity or a spectacular improbability depending upon one's view of imperial reality. Given the perception most dominant in London prior to Summer 1940 it is difficult to see how the relationship could have been developed further than it was.

# Appendix A

Table One: Turkish Weapons Demands Dec 1937-Jan 1940

Ser	Weapon	Ozdes Dec 1937 <sup>1</sup>	Weygand May 1939 <sup>2</sup>	Huntsinger Jul 1939 <sup>3</sup>	Orbay Jul 1939	Orbay Oct 1939 <sup>4</sup>	Misc	Total
1.	Destroyers	4			4	*	8 <sup>1</sup>	8
2.	Submarines	10			4	*	8 <sup>2</sup>	8
3.	Escorts	4			4	*		4
4.	Minesweepers				2	*		2
5.	Ptl Vessels				2	*		2
6.	Sub-chasers				25	*		25
7.	MTBs				10	*		10
8.	Mines				500	500		1000
9.	Vickers mines for submarines					750		750
10.	Depth charges				350	*		350
11.	Torpedoes				350	*		350
12.	Gun Batteries for Yavuz				1 set	*		1 set
13.	AS netting						4 1/2 miles	4 1/2 miles
14.	Boom defence vessels						7	7
15.	Boom defence depots						3	3

<sup>1</sup> PRO ADM 116/4198 Capt Cakir (Turkish Naval Attaché London) to Adm 27 Oct 1939.

<sup>2</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E737/528/44 Adm to FO 7 Feb 1938.

Ser	Weapon	Ozdes Dec 1937 <sup>1</sup>	Weygand May 1939 <sup>2</sup>	Huntzinger Jul 1939 <sup>3</sup>	Orbay Jul 1939	Orbay Oct 1939 <sup>4</sup>	Misc	Total
16.	Trawlers						3 <sup>3</sup>	3
17.	15" guns	9			10	*		10
18.	13.5" guns				10	*		10
19.	6" guns						14 <sup>4</sup>	14
20.	4" guns						6	6
21.	3" AA guns						2	2
22.	2lb pompoms						5	5
23.	Aircraft 1st line (undefined)		250					
24.	Training aircraft (undefined)		100		50	*		
25.	Spitfires						60 <sup>5</sup>	60

<sup>3</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 op. cit., and ADM 116/41297 op. cit. Priority list agreed with Turkish Naval Mission 30 Jun 1939. Also 3 above.

<sup>4</sup> From wrecked Agincourt and Erin. PRO FO 371/21930 E895/188/44 Lorraine to FO 19 Feb; E895/188/44 DNI to NAA 19 Feb 1937. Also four serials below.

<sup>5</sup> Actually, 3 separate orders. 50 ordered in Jan 1938 direct from Vickers. PRO FO 371/21927 Aras to FO 30 Jan; and, E404/78/44 FO to Air Min 25 Jan. Initially, Air Ministry decided to permit the Turks access to this restricted design. E2508/78/44 Bowker Minute 30 Apr. Decision changed when it appeared that this would interfere with RAF building program. E2688/78/44 9 May. Turks continued to express interest. E4503/78/44 Baggallay Minute 9 Aug 1938. Access reopened in Aug 1939. Two orders for 30 each followed. First: FO 371/23289 E5508/86/44 Elmhirst/Bowker Telecon 2 Aug; and, AIR 8/259 Orbay to Newall 12 Aug. Second: FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939.

Ser	Weapon	Ordes Dec 1937 <sup>1</sup>	Weygand May 1939 <sup>2</sup>	Huntzinger Jul 1939 <sup>3</sup>	Orbay Jul 1939	Orbay Oct 1939 <sup>4</sup>	Misc	Total
26.	Blenheims	12			10	*	18 <sup>6</sup>	40 <sup>7</sup>
27.	conversion kits				30	*	50 <sup>8</sup>	50
28.	Lysanders				36	36		72
29.	Ansons				25	25		50
30.	Battles				30	*		30
31.	Hurricanes				15	*		15
32.	Morane Coblenz 406s				50	*		50
33.	Magisters				25	*		25
34.	Wellingtons					10		10
35.	Skuas				30	*		30
37.	240mm guns			24	24	*		24
38.	210mm guns				36	*		36
39.	AT guns		1350	some	500	1000 <sup>9</sup>		2850

<sup>6</sup> In Jan 1938, the Turks ordered 12 Blenheims. PRO FO 371/21927 Air Min to FO 21 Jan 1938. On 18 Aug, in response to a query from the Bristol Company, they raised the order to 30. FO 424/282 R5206/21/92 Halifax to Loraine 9 Aug; and, R5630/21/92 Loraine to Halifax 18 Aug 1937.

<sup>7</sup> The Turks already had 12. Total would be 52.

<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>9</sup> To include: 40 X 2pd guns; and 260 X 37mm AT guns.

Ser	Weapon	Ozdes Dec 1937 <sup>1</sup>	Weygand May 1939 <sup>2</sup>	Huntzinger Jul 1939 <sup>3</sup>	Orbay Jul 1939	Orbay Oct 1939 <sup>4</sup>	Misc	Total
40.	AA guns 37mm		1000		260	128 <sup>10</sup>		2388
41.	AA guns 75mm		260			*		260
42.	AA guns Bofors				162	162		324
43.	Field guns		536	36 <sup>11</sup>	836 <sup>12</sup>	*		836
44.	Medium tanks				300	200		500
45.	Light tanks		300					300
46.	Armoured Cars						36 <sup>13</sup>	36
47.	Trucks				800	300		1100
48.	Cross Country Trucks				2000 <sup>14</sup>	300		2300
49.	Universal Carriers				300	*		300
50.	Boys ATR				5000	*		5000

<sup>10</sup> 64 offered in July. An additional 64 requested in October for total of 128.

<sup>11</sup> 24 X 155mm (74/14) and 12 X 105mm.

<sup>12</sup> 24 X medium howitzers; 24 X 155mm howitzers; 104 X 105mm howitzers; 12 X 105mm guns; 128 X 75mm guns; 284 X 18 or 24 pd guns; 152 mountain guns; and, 68 X 105mm mountain howitzers

<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E3135 Coote to FO 27 May 1938; and, FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1939.

<sup>14</sup> 1000 demanded from British 1000 from French.



Ser	Weapon	Ozdes Dec 1937 <sup>1</sup>	Weygand May 1939 <sup>2</sup>	Huntzinger Jul 1939 <sup>3</sup>	Orbay Jul 1939	Orbay Oct 1939 <sup>4</sup>	Misc	Total
51.	LMGs		10000	10000	10000	*		10000
52.	MMGs				1000	*		1000
53.	HMGs		500		5000	*		5000
54.	Rifles		150000	100000	150000	*		150000
55.	Grenades		1500000	500000	1500000	*		1500000
56.	Gas Masks		400000	400000	400000			400000
57.	SAA				108000000			108000000

**Assumptions:**

1. Unless directly specified in documents consulted, repetition of a demand is taken to indicate restatement rather than a new demand.
2. The unspecified demands for aircraft and guns given to Weygand in May, are judged to have been articulated in, and were not additional to, the later Orbay lists.

**Table Two: Turkish Armaments: NonAllied Orders**

Ser	Item	Number	Country	Date Ordered	Result
1.	Submarines	3	Holland	1937 <sup>1</sup>	Unknown
2.	Submarines	2	Germany	1937	Withheld <sup>2</sup>
3.	ME 109Es	60	Germany	Unknown (1939)	Withheld <sup>3</sup>
4.	ME Bombers	8	Germany	Unknown (1939)	Withheld <sup>4</sup>
5.	Martin 139	18	US	1937	Delivered 1938 <sup>5</sup>
6.	Gotha Trainer	15	Germany	Unknown (1939)	Withheld <sup>6</sup>
7.	Curtiss Hawk	50	US	Unknown (1939)	Received 24 by Jan 1940 <sup>7</sup>
8.	240mm guns	12	Czechoslovakia	1937	8 delivered Mar 1938 <sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 Loraine to Cagodan 23 Feb 1937 (Annex III NAA to Loraine).

<sup>2</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 Supplies to Allies DNI Minute Feb 1938.

<sup>3</sup> PRO WO 298/1969 M.13/5695 Appendix III Jan 1940. Germany to have started deliver 10 per month after Jun 1939.

<sup>4</sup> PRO WO 298/1969 M.13/5695 Appendix III Jan 1940. Germany to have delivered 2 in Nov, 4 in Dec 1939, and 2 in Jan 1940. Turks flying already 23 Heinkel IIIs by Jan 1940. WO 287/141.

<sup>5</sup> PRO AIR 23/973 HQRAFME 12 Dec; and, WO 287/141 Jan 1940.

<sup>6</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 Appendix III Jan 1940.

<sup>7</sup> PRO WO 287/141; and, PRO WO 208/1969 M13/5695 Appendix III Jan 1940.

Ser	Item	Number	Country	Date Ordered	Result
9.	240mm guns	12	Germany	1937	2 delivered By Jan 1940 <sup>9</sup>
10.	210mm guns	12	Czechoslovakia	1937	Not Delivered <sup>10</sup>
11.	210mm guns	12	Germany	1937	Withheld <sup>11</sup>
12.	150mm guns	20	Germany	1937	1 delivered by Jan 1940 <sup>12</sup>
13.	149.7mm guns	80	Czechoslovakia	1937	Delivered 1938 <sup>13</sup>
14.	105mm guns	56	Germany	1937	Delivered 1938 <sup>14</sup>
15.	105mm guns	10	Germany	1937	unconfirmed <sup>15</sup>
16.	105mm mountain guns	136	Germany	1937	unconfirmed <sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1938.

<sup>9</sup> Remainder withheld. PRO WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 Jan 1940.

<sup>10</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 Jan 1940.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1938.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Ser	Item	Number	Country	Date Ordered	Result
17.	75mm guns	128	Germany	1937	Delivered 1938 <sup>17</sup>
18.	75mm AA guns	16	Germany	1937	Withheld <sup>18</sup>
19.	37mm AA guns	12	Germany	unknown	Delivered
20.	37mm AA/AT guns	100	Germany	unknown	Delivered 1938. <sup>19</sup>
21.	20mm AT guns	60	Germany		unconfirmed <sup>20</sup>
22.	50 calibre MGs	500	Poland		unconfirmed <sup>21</sup>
23.	Bren guns	8000	Czechoslovakia		Delivered 1938 <sup>22</sup>
24.	Motorcycles	1350	Czechoslovakia		150 delivered Aug 1938 <sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Delivery unconfirmed, but, at least in Jan 1941, there were no 75mm AA guns in the Turkish armoury. WO 208/1975 Debrief Larden/DDMI(1) Oct; and, WO 208/1972 Lewis Report 1941.

<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1938.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1938.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Ser	Item	Number	Country	Date Ordered	Result
25.	7 1/2 ton tractors	630	Czechoslovakia		Delivered Aug 1933 <sup>24</sup>

**Assumptions:**

1. If the Turks can be shown to have an weapon of Axis origin in January 1940, this indicates delivery before the arms embargo of Sep 1939.
2. If the Turks can be shown to have a weapon of Axis origin in January 1940 in identical number to an earlier order, the presence of the weapon results from that order.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

## Appendix B

### Turkish Weapons Demands: Agreed Deliveries

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
1.	Destroyers	8	4 <sup>1</sup>
2.	Submarines	8	4 <sup>2</sup>
3.	Escorts	4	4 <sup>3</sup>
4.	Minesweepers	2	2 <sup>4</sup>
5	Minelayers	0	2 <sup>5</sup>
6.	Ptl Vessels	2	0
7.	Sub-chasers	25	8 <sup>6</sup>
8.	MTBs	10	10 <sup>7</sup>
9.	Mines	1000	500/500 <sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 4 ordered by Ozdes approved. Contract signed with Vickers 27 Mar 1939. PRO FO 371/23297 E22995/272/44 Aras to FO 27 Mar; E2295/272/44 FO to ADM 6 Apr. Treasury approval: E2343/272/44 Treasury to FO 29 Mar. Delivery promised 1 per month Sep-Dec 1941. E3639/272/44 Bowker Minute. 2 to be constructed by Vickers, 2 Sub-contracted to Denney. ADM 116/2196 Treasury to Adm 21 Jun 1939. 4 ordered by Captain Cakir in Oct 1939, not available for foreseeable future. ADM 116/4198 Adm to Captain Cakir 29 Nov 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Contract signed with Vickers for four 30 Mar 1939. PRO FO 371/23297 Aras to FO 30 Mar. Treasury approval: E2949/272/44 27 Apr. Admiralty refused to consider application to increase order to 8. FO 371/21930 E737/528/44 Adm to FO 7 Feb 1938.

<sup>3</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E7568 Loraine to FO 18 Dec 1937; and, FO 371/21930 E737/528/44 Adm to FO 7 Feb 1938.

<sup>4</sup> Treasury approval: E2951/272/44 22 Apr 1939.

<sup>5</sup> PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>6</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep; and, ADM 116/4198 Cont to Sect 12 Oct 1939.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.; and, ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>8</sup> Initially the Turks were promised 300 mines. In Jul 1939, however, the decision was made to increase the number available from admiralty stocks to 500. PRO FO 371/23297 E4818/272/44 ADM to FO Jul; FO 371/23294 E4877/147/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 13 Jul; and, ADM 116/4196. In Oct, it was decided that a second shipment of 500 would be possible. ADM 116/4198 Cont to Sect 12 Oct 1939.

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
10.	Vickers mines for submarines	750	120 <sup>9</sup>
11.	Depth charges	350	350/350 <sup>10</sup>
12.	Torpedoes	350	32 (new type) <sup>11</sup>
			200 (old type) <sup>12</sup>
13.	Gun Batteries for Yavuz	1 set	Not available <sup>13</sup>
14.	AS netting	4 1/2 miles	4 1/2 miles <sup>14</sup>
15.	Boom defence vessels	7	7 <sup>15</sup>
16.	Boom defence depots	3	3 <sup>16</sup>
17.	Trawlers	3	3 <sup>17</sup>
18.	15" guns	10	2 <sup>18</sup>

<sup>9</sup> PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>10</sup> PRO FO 371/23294 E4877/147/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 13 Jul; FO 371/23297 E4818/272/44 ADM to FO Jul; ADM 116/4196; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939. The Admiralty decided in October that after the first consignment, a second, also of 350, would be available later. FO 371/23297 E4818/272/44 ADM to FO Jul; ADM 116/4196; and, ADM 116/4198 Sect to Cont 12 Oct 1939.

<sup>11</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939; and ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>12</sup> 200 promised to Orbay. Number soon thereafter reduced to 50 by decision of the Admiralty. PRO FO 371/23295 E6328/143/44 Bowker Minute Sep; and, ADM 116/4196.

<sup>13</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
19.	13.5" guns	10 <sup>19</sup>	10 <sup>20</sup>
20.	6" guns	14	14 <sup>21</sup>
21.	4" guns	6	6
22.	3" AA guns	2	2
23.	21b pompoms	5	5
24.	Spitfires	30/30	30/30 <sup>22</sup>
25.	Blenheims	12/18/10 <sup>23</sup>	40 <sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec; FO 371/20865 E7124/528/44 Phillips to FO; FO 371/21930; and ADM 116/4394 FO to Adm 18 May 1938. Turks attempted to order 15" guns direct from Vickers. Admiralty advised, initially, that the contract be rejected. Later, 2 guns offered to Turkey. ADM 116/4494 Adm to Captain Aydinalp 26 Aug 1938. Guns to have been diverted by Admiralty from Spanish order placed with Vickers: ADM 116/4197 Vickers to Adm 12 Jan 1940.

<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec; FO 371/20865 E7568/528/44. Minute G.M.; FO 371/21930 E3436 Oliphant to Loraine 10 Jun; and, E 3994/188/44 Phillips to Treasury 5 Jul 1938. Originally offered by Admiralty as replacement for 15" guns not available. Guns were taken from scrapped Chatham and Crombie and valued at 50% discount ADM 116/4494 Adm to Capt Aydinalp 22 Aug 1938.

<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E2935/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO; E2933/143/44 20 Apr Bowker to Knatchbull-Hugesson. Contract signed with Vickers for 13.5" and 15" guns 30 Mar 1939. FO 371/23297 E2391/272/44 Aras to FO 30 Mar. Admiralty approval: E2997/272/44 Adm to FO 24 Apr. Treasury Approval: E3236/272/44 2 May.

<sup>21</sup> From wrecked Agincourt and Erin. PRO FO 371/21930 E895/188/44 Loraine to FO 19 Feb; E895/188/44 DNI to NAA 19 Feb 1937. PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940. Also four serials below.

<sup>22</sup> Order 1: PRO FO 371/23289 E5508/86/44 Telecon Elmhirst/Bowker 2 Aug; AIR 8/259 Orbay to Newall 12 Aug. Order 2: FO 371/20868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct. Order 2 approved in consideration of unavailability of Skuas: PRO FO 371/23268 MR(39) 44th Mtg 16 Oct 1939.



Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
26.	Conversion kits	50	30 <sup>25</sup>
27.	Lysanders	36/36	36 <sup>26</sup>
28.	Ansons	50	25 <sup>27</sup>
29.	Battles	30	30 <sup>28</sup>
30.	Hurricanes	15	30 <sup>29</sup>
31.	Morane Coblentz 406s	50	60 <sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Order 1: PRO FO 371/20865 E7568 Loraine to FO 18 Dec. Order 2: FO 371/21927 Air Min to FO 21 Jan 1938; (increased to 18 from 12) FO 424/282 R5206/21/92 Halifax to Loraine 9 Aug; and, R5630/21/92 Loraine to Halifax 18 Aug 1937. Order 3: ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939. Throughout, Bristol was extremely reluctant to do unbacked business with the Turks. FO 371/21927 E593/78/44 Bowker Minute 1 Feb 1938.

<sup>24</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E5508/86/44 Telecon Elmhirst/Bowker 2 Aug; and, AIR 8/259 Orbay to Newall 12 Aug 1939.

<sup>25</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>26</sup> 36 promised 17 Oct: PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct; and ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep. Contract signed May 1939 with Westland: FO 371/23289 E3587/86/44 Westland Co. to FO; and, AIR 8/296 AC & Source of Contracts to CAS 19 Sep 1939.

<sup>27</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep. Contact signed 21 Jul: FO 371/23289 E5239/86/44 Aras to FO; and, E5508/86/44 2 Aug. In September, switched to direct contract with A.V. Roe: AIR 8/296 AC & Source of Contracts to CAS 19 Sep 1939.

<sup>28</sup> Order for 30 approved: PRO ADM 116/4196 Baggallay (FO) to Playfair (Treasury) Jun; FO 371/23294 E4877/147/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 13 Jul. Later in July, Newall offered Orbay 100 Battles. Orbay did not want this many; and preferred to deal direct with Anson for those he would buy. AIR 8/259 Newall/Orbay conv 31 Jul. In Sep, Orbay reconsidered and requested 30 through the credit agreement. ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep; and, AIR 8/259 Orbay to Newall 12 Aug 1939.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 371/23289 E5508/86/44 Telecon Elmhirst/Bowker 2 Aug; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39) 30 Sep. In October, number offered increased from 15 to 30 due to inability to supply Skuas. FO 371/23868 MR(39) 44rth Mtg 16 Oct; and, FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939.

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
32.	Magisters	25	not available <sup>31</sup>
33.	Wellington	10	10 <sup>32</sup>
34.	Skua	30	30 <sup>33</sup>
35.	Hanrior H182s	50 (trainers)	50 <sup>34</sup>
36.	240mm guns	24	24 <sup>35</sup>
37.	210mm guns	36	0
38.	AT guns	2850 total, including:	250 total
		260 X 37mm ATGs	not available <sup>36</sup>
		40 X 2 pd guns	none available <sup>37</sup>
		2550 misc ATGs	250 X 25mm ATGs <sup>38</sup>

<sup>30</sup> 10 in September, and 25 a month thereafter. PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep; and, AIR 8/296 Source of Contracts to CAS 19 Sep 1939.

<sup>31</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct; ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep; and, AIR 8/259 Orbay to Newall 12 Aug 1939.

<sup>32</sup> Commitment accepted in principle, but delivery problematical. PRO AIR 8/296 MAA to Air Min 19 Sep; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939. In Jan 1941, the Turks raised the order to 27: CC ELMT Dir and Policies MidEast Summary of Staff Conversation January 1941 Jan 1941.

<sup>33</sup> Initially full delivery anticipated. Later judged to be impossible. In exchange, 15 further Hurricanes, and 30 Spitfires promised. PRO FO 371/23868 MR(39) 44rth Mtg 16 Oct. Turks cancel order 12 Aug: AIR 8/259 Orbay to Newall 12 Aug 1939.

<sup>34</sup> PRO AIR 8/296 AC & Source of Supply to CAS Sep 1939.

<sup>35</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>36</sup> Neither a British nor a French calibre.

<sup>37</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5706/143/44 MI.1 to FO 14 Aug 1939.

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
39.	AA guns 37mm	2388	none available <sup>39</sup>
40.	AA guns 75mm	260	not available
41.	AA guns Bofors	324	24 <sup>40</sup>
42.	3.7" AA guns (static)	0	12 <sup>41</sup>
43.	3.7" AA guns (mobile)	0	120 <sup>42</sup>
44.	Field guns	836 total, including:	54 total
		24 med howitzers	

<sup>38</sup> By Oct, there were 20 X 25mm ATGs already in Turkey. The French promised another 30 if there were no expeditionary force with 200 more to follow between Nov 1939 and 1940. 180 of these, those eventually sent, were diverted from the BEF allotment. PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)30 R8949/7378/44 17 Oct; WO 106/5743 Ironsides to Çakmak 13 Dec; CAB 80/6 COS (39)164 14 Dec 1939; WO 406/5742 Mtg CIGS Office 19 Jan; WO 106/5743 Allied Military Committee 25th Mtg 24 Jan 1940; and, WO 193/560 MAA to WO 20 Feb 1941.

<sup>39</sup> The WO initially promised a total of 64 guns. PRO FO 371/23294 E4877/143/44 WO to FO 7 Jul; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939. By Oct, the decision was made that none could be spared FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939.

<sup>40</sup> Not obtainable by Britain after the outbreak of war: ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 Sep. 250 guns, previously ordered by Britain, were trapped in Sweden in Sep. Britain requested that 162 be diverted to Finland and Turkey. Financial terms were difficult because the Swedes insisted on free sterling payment. Eventually the Treasury was brought to agree to pay for 24 guns supplementary to the credits. FO 371/23868 R8856/7378/44 16 Oct; CAB 67/2 CP(G)(39)75 7 Nov; CAB 80/4 COS(39)106 31 Oct; and, COS(39)140 2 Dec 1939.

<sup>41</sup> Promised Oct: PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)30 R8949/7378/44 17 Oct 1939.

<sup>42</sup> Initially 20 promised: PRO FO 371/23294 E4877/147/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 13 Jul. Number raised to 120 in Oct: FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)30 R8949/7378/44 17 Oct 1939; CAB 80/5 COS(39)140 2 Dec 1940.

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
		24 X 155mm howitzers	24 <sup>43</sup>
		104 X 105mm howitzers	
		12 X 105mm guns	12 <sup>44</sup>
		128 X 75mm guns	
		284 X 18 or 25 pd guns	18 X 18 pd guns <sup>45</sup>
		152 mountain guns	
		68 X 105mm mountain howitzers	
45.	Medium tanks	500 <sup>46</sup>	2 Battalions (100) R.35s <sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>45</sup> No 25 pd guns; 18 X 18 pd guns available: PRO FO 371/23867 Despatch 1745 MAA to WO 27 Sep; ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39) 30 Sep; WO 106/5743 Whitby to DMO&P 17 Dec 1939; and, WO 106/5742 Minutes of Mtg in CIGS Office 19 Jan 1940.

<sup>46</sup> Figure from Orbay lists. 100 ordered independently by Yildiz company, to be payed for in free sterling: PRO FO 371/23292 E1080 Morton to Nichols 11 Feb 1939. 64 ordered by Turks independent of Orbay list in 1938: FO 371/21930 E3135 Coote to FO 27 May 1938; and, FO 371/23292/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1939. See also, FO 371/23867 Despatch 1745 MAA to WO 27 Sep; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>47</sup> None available from Britain. Answer to 1938 order: PRO FO 371/23295 E5706/143/44 MI.1 to FO 14 Aug. Answer to 1939 orders: ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep; and, FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939. See also, CAB 80/5 COS(39)140 2 Dec 1939. The French promised Orbay 1 battalion (50 tanks) immediately and another battalion in May 1940. C. Serre (ed), "Note Sur les Cession de Material a l'Etranger (1939-1940)" Rapport Fait au Nom de la Commission Chargee d'Enqueter sur les Evenements Survenus en France de 1933 a 1945 No. 2244, (Assemblée Nationale: Paris), 1954, Part III, p. 281-291.

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
46.	Light tanks	300	50 Mark VIBs <sup>48</sup>
47.	Armoured Cars	32	12 Citroen Keggesses <sup>49</sup>
48.	Trucks	1100 <sup>50</sup>	none available <sup>51</sup>
49.	Cross Country Truck	2300 <sup>52</sup>	none available <sup>53</sup>
50.	Universal Carriers	300	none available <sup>54</sup>
51.	Boys ATR	5000	200+ <sup>55</sup>
52.	LMGs	10000	10000 <sup>56</sup>

<sup>48</sup> In Oct, the Army Council decided that 5 Mark VIBs would be available immediately, with 5 per month to a total of 40. Later, the number available was increased to 50. PRO FO 371/23295 E5706/143/44 MI.1 to FO 14 Aug; FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939; WO 106/5743 WO to GOCME 13 Jan 1940; and WO 287/141.

<sup>49</sup> Ordered from Britain. Order not filled. No details of French dispatch of 12 Citroen armoured-cars, but by Jan 1940, the Turks had them. PRO WO 287/141.

<sup>50</sup> Figure is from Orbay demands. Separate order made in May 1938 for 350 lorries. PRO FO 371/21930 E3135 Coote to FO 27 May 1938; and, FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1939. Other orders place with the Air Ministry for airfield servicing vehicles.

<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939.

<sup>52</sup> Separate order placed in May 1938 for 150. PRO FO 371/21930 Coote to FO 27 May 1938; and, FO 371/23292 E143/143/44 Loraine to FO 30 Dec 1939.

<sup>53</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Decided Oct 1939 that 200 were available immediately with 50 a month to follow thereafter. PRO FO 371/23867 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct. See also, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep; and, FO 371/23295 E5706/143/44 MI.1 to FO 14 Aug 1939.

<sup>56</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939.

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged
53.	MMGs	1000	1250 <sup>57</sup>
54.	HMGs	5000	none available <sup>58</sup>
55.	Rifles	150000	100000 <sup>59</sup>
56.	Grenades	1500000	500000+ <sup>60</sup>
57.	81mm Brandt Mortars	0	200 <sup>61</sup>
56.	Gas Masks	400000	400000 <sup>62</sup>
57.	SAA	108000000	30000000 <sup>63</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Decision taken in Jan 1940 to provide 500 Vick 3 MMG immediately with a possible 500 to follow. PRO WO 106/5743 WO to GOCME 13 Jan. Second consignment increased to 750 guns when this many were obtained second-hand from Belgium. WO 106/5743 WO to MAA 30 Jan; and, WO 106/5743 Board of Trade to DMO&P 5 Feb 1940.

<sup>58</sup> PRO ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>59</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>60</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939. Huntzinger promised 500,000 immediately and 500,000 p.a thereafter. See above, Chapter XI.

<sup>61</sup> PRO WO 193/560 File No. 68 Equipment for Turkey MAA to WO 20 Feb 1941.

<sup>62</sup> PRO FO 371/23295 E5482/143/44 op. cit.; and, DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 289 Huntzinger to Daladier 24 Jul 1939.

<sup>63</sup> British promised 15,000,000 from the UK with another 15,000,000 to follow from India. PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939; and, WO 106/5743 WO to GOCME 13 Jan 1940.

## Appendix C

### Turkish Weapons Demands: Deliveries

Ser	Weapon	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
1.	Destroyers	4	2 in Mar 1941 <sup>1</sup>
2.	Submarines	4	2 in Apr 1942 <sup>2</sup>
3.	Escorts	4	not delivered
4.	Minesweepers	2	delivered Dec 1939 <sup>3</sup>
5	Minelayers	2	delivered Nov 1940 <sup>4</sup>
6.	Sub-chasers	8	delivered after Jan 1941 <sup>5</sup>
7.	MTBs	10	delivered Jan-Jun 1941 <sup>6</sup>
8.	Mines	500/500	500 on 30 Sep 1939; 500 Feb-Apr 1940 <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Delivery promised: Sultanhisar (Denney) Jan 41; Demirhisar (Denney) Aug 41; Mauvenet (Vickers) Mar 41; and, Gayeret (Vickers) Apr 41. PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 19 Nov 1940. Mauvenet, Gayeret diverted to RN in Oct 1941: ADM 116/4876 NAA to FO 20 Oct 1941. Gayeret later damaged. Sultanhisar and Demirhisar delivered Mar 1942: ADM 116/4876.

<sup>2</sup> Delivery promised: Oruc Reis, Murat Reis Jan 41; Burek Reis, and Ulic Ali Reis Mar 41. PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940. Burek Reis and Ulic Ali Reis diverted to RN Oct 1941: ADM 116/4376 NAA to FO 20 Oct 1941. Oruc Reis and Murat Reis delivered Apr 1942: ADM 116/4875.

<sup>3</sup> PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>4</sup> Sivrihisar and Yuzbashi Hakki: constructed at Thorneycroft. Delivery promised 11 Nov 1940. PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>5</sup> Initially promised May 1940: PRO ADM 116/4198 Cont to Sect 12 Oct 1939. Delivery changed later to Jan 1941 for the first and remainder to follow: ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; and ADM 116/4198 Cont to Sect 12 Oct 1939.

<sup>7</sup> First 500 carried on S.S Clan Menzies. PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940. Second consignment followed at the beginning of the next year. 1200M of mine rail also delivered with

Ser	Weapon	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
9.	Vickers mines for submarines	120	delivered Jan-Jun 1941 <sup>8</sup>
10.	Depth charges	350/350	350 on 30 Sep 1939; 150 Feb-Apr 1940 <sup>9</sup>
11.	Torpedoes	32 new type	Delivered Jul-Dec 1941 <sup>10</sup>
		200 old type	50 delivered on 30 Sep 1939 <sup>11</sup>
12.	AS netting	4 1/2 miles	Shipped in Fall 1940 <sup>12</sup>
13.	Boom defence vessels	7	Delivered Mar 1941 <sup>13</sup>
14.	Boom defence depots	3	Delivered Mar 1941 <sup>14</sup>
15.	Trawlers	3	Fitting in Fall 1940 <sup>15</sup>
16.	15" guns	2	Never delivered
17.	13.5" guns	10	Never delivered <sup>16</sup>

the second consignment. See also, FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R9565/7378/44 24 Oct; ADM 116/4196.

<sup>8</sup> PRO ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Also delivered with these were 12 depth charge throwers.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Order of 200 reduced to 50 by Admiralty internal decision: PRO FO 371/23295 E6328/143/44 Bowker Minute; and, ADM 116/4196. Delivered on S.S Clan Menzies: ADM 116/4197 Sect to 1st Sea Lord 13 Nov 1940.

<sup>12</sup> PRO ADM 116/4197 op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



Ser	Weapon	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
18.	6" guns	14	Shipped Fall 1940
19.	4" guns	6	Shipped Fall 1940
20.	3" AA guns	2	Shipped Fall 1940
21.	21b pompoms	5	Shipped Fall 1940 <sup>17</sup>
22.	Spitfires	30/30	2 in Sep 1939; 1 more by Jan 1941 <sup>18</sup>
23.	Blenheims	40	36 delivered by May 1940 <sup>19</sup>
24.	Conversion kits	30	10 delivered by May 1940 <sup>20</sup>
25.	Lysanders	36	7 delivered by Apr 1940 <sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Delivery promised: 3 X 13.5" guns with turret in Jun 40; 2 X 13.5" guns in Nov 40; 3 X 13.5" guns in Mar 41; 2 X 15" guns at the end of 41; and 2 X 13.5" guns in Apr 42. Before the guns or turrets could be sent, the decision was made to retain them in the UK. PRO ADM 116/4494 COS(40)101 21 Apr 1941.

<sup>17</sup> PRO ADM 116/4197 op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Two Spitfires travelled to Turkey in 1939. One, on S.S. Lassell, was a trial model for Poland diverted to the Turks. A second, sent in Oct was a present to Turkey from the CAS. PRO AIR 8/296 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 18 Sep; and, AIR 8/262 SO to CAS 17 Oct 1939. When Elmhirst was in Ankara in Jan 1941, he noted that the Turks had obtained a third: CC ELMT Dir and Policies MidEast Summary of Staff Conversation Jan 1941. 60 Spitfires approved but not sent Apr 1940. CAB 80/9 COS(40)290 10 Apr 1940.

<sup>19</sup> PRO AIR 23/973 Memo HQRAFME 12 Dec 1940.

<sup>20</sup> CC ELMT Dir and Policies MidEast Summary of Staff Conversations Jan 1941.

<sup>21</sup> Promised 12 per month Dec 1939 - Feb 1940. Only 7 delivered by Apr 1940. Remaining aircraft followed by the end of the year. PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985; and, WO 208/1969 M.13/5696 Annex III Jan 1940.

Ser	Weapon	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
26.	Ansons	25	6 delivered by May 1940 <sup>22</sup>
27.	Battles	30	30 delivered by Apr 1940 <sup>23</sup>
28.	Hurricanes	30	30 delivered by Apr 1940 <sup>24</sup>
29.	Morane Coblenz 406s	60	30 delivered by May 1940 <sup>25</sup>
30.	Wellingtons	10	1 delivered by Jan 1941 <sup>26</sup>
31.	Hanriot H182	50	50 delivered by May 1940 <sup>27</sup>
32.	Skuas	30	None available
33.	240mm guns	24	Shipped Aug 1939 <sup>28</sup>
34.	25mm ATGs	250	190 delivered by May 1940 <sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> To have arrived Aug - Dec 1940, 5 per month. PRO AIR 23/973 Memo HQRAFME 12 Dec 1940; and, WO 208/1969 M.13/5695 Appendix III Jan 1940.

<sup>23</sup> 21 Battles were carried on S.S Clan Menzies and Lassell. PRO FO 371/23294 E4877/147/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 13 Jul; FO 424/283 R8281/7378/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 30 Sep 1939; CAB 80/9 COS(40)290 10 Apr; AIR 23/973 Memo HQRAFME 12 Dec 1940; and, CC ELMT Dir and Policies MidEast Summary of Staff Conversation Jan 1941.

<sup>24</sup> 15 Hurricanes went on S.S Clan Menzies. 15 followed later. PRO FO 371/23294 E4877/147/44 FO to Knatchbull-Hugesson 13 Jul; AIR 8/259 AMIO to DCAS 5 Aug; CAB 80/9 COS (40)290 10 Apr 1939; and, AIR 23/973 Memo HQRAFME 12 Dec 1940.

<sup>25</sup> PRO AIR 23/973 Memo HQRAFME 12 Dec 1940.

<sup>26</sup> CC ELMT Dir and Policies MidEast Summary of Staff Conversations Jan 1941.

<sup>27</sup> PRO AIR 8/296 AC & Source of Contracts to CAS Sep 1939.

<sup>28</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 487 Bonnet to Massigli 10 Aug 1939.

Ser	Weapon	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
35.	AA guns Bofors	24	24 delivered by Dec 1939 <sup>30</sup>
36.	3.7" AA guns (static)	12	4 delivered by May 1940 <sup>31</sup>
37.	3.7" AA guns (mobile)	120	8 delivered by Apr 1940 <sup>32</sup>
38.	155mm howitzers	24	Shipped Aug 1939 <sup>33</sup>
39.	105mm guns	12	Shipped Aug 1939 <sup>34</sup>
40.	18 pd guns	18	12 delivered by May 1940 <sup>35</sup>
41.	R.35 medium tanks	100	100 delivered by Apr 1940 <sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> PRO WO 193/560 MAA to WO 20 Feb 1941. 180 of these diverted from British requirements: WO 106/5743 Ironside to Çakmak 13 Dec; CAB 80/6 COS(39)164 14 Dec 1939; WO 106/7742 Notes of Mtg in CIGS Office 19 Jan; and, WO 106/5743 Allied Military Committee 25th Mtg 24 Jan 1940.

<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 371/23868 R8856/7378/44 16 Oct; CAB 67/2 CP(G)(39)75 7 Nov; CAB 80/4 COS(39)106 31 Oct; and, COS(39)140 2 Dec 1939.

<sup>31</sup> To have been delivered by Dec 1939. The British fell behind this schedule. In May, only 4 had been delivered. Remainder delivered by the end of the year. PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)30 R8949/7378/44 17 Oct 1939; also WO 208/1975 Debrief Larden/DDMI(1) Oct; and, WO 208/1972 Lewis Report 1941.

<sup>32</sup> Where to have been delivered 4 per month from Aug 1939 until Jan 1940, when schedule would be 8 per month thereafter to total of 120. The British fell behind this programme. By April 1940, only 8 had been delivered. All were delivered by Jan 1941. PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)30 R8949/7378/44 17 Oct 1939; CAB 80/5 COS(39)140 2 Dec 1940; WO 208/1975 Debrief Larden DDMI(1) Oct; and, WO 208/1927 Lewis Report 1941.

<sup>33</sup> DDF Series II, Vol XVII no. 487 Bonnet to Massigli 10 Aug 1939.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> PRO WO 193/560 MAA to WO 20 Feb 1941.

Ser.	Weapon	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
42.	Mark VIB light tanks	50	50 delivered by Feb 1940 <sup>37</sup>
43.	Citroen Kegresses Armoured Cars	12	12 delivered by May 1940 <sup>38</sup>
44.	Boys ATR	200+	200 delivered Sep 1939 <sup>39</sup>
45.	Hotchkiss LMGs	10000	5000 delivered Sep 1939 <sup>40</sup>
46.	Vickers MMGs	1250	1250 delivered by Feb 1940 <sup>41</sup>
47.	8mm Lebel rifles	100000	25000 delivered by May 1940 <sup>42</sup>
48.	Grenades	500000+	500000 delivered Spring 1940 <sup>43</sup>
49.	81mm Brandt Mortars	200	200 delivered in Spring 1940 <sup>44</sup>

<sup>36</sup> PRO WO 287/141; and, Serre, "L'Armee Francaise -- Note Sur les Cessions de Material à l'Etranger", Part III, p. 281-282. 50 despatched in Jan; 50 in Apr 1940.

<sup>37</sup> PRO WO 287/141.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Carried on S.S Clan Menzies. PRO FO 371/23867 MR(J)(39) R8985 17 Oct; and, ADM 1/9994 MR(J)(39)9 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>40</sup> Guns on S.S Clan Menzies and Lassell. PRO FO 424/283 R8281/7378/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 30 Sep; and, FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939. Guns accepted by Turks Feb 1940: WO 106/5743 Board of Trade to DMO&P 5 Feb 1940.

<sup>41</sup> PRO WO 106/5743 WO to GOCME 13 Jan; WO to MAA 30 Jan 1939; and Board of Trade to DMO&P 5 Feb 1940

<sup>42</sup> PRO WO 193/560 MAA to WO 20 Feb 1941.

<sup>43</sup> PRO CAB 80/9 COS(40)290 10 Apr 1940.

<sup>44</sup> WO 193/560 MAA to WO 20 Feb 1941.

Ser	Weapon	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
50.	Gas Masks	400000	400000 delivered 30 Sep 1939 <sup>45</sup>
51.	SAA	30000000	15000000 delivered <sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> 400000 on S.S Lassell for Poland from Britain. Diverted to Turkey to cover Huntzinger promise 30 Sep 1939.

<sup>46</sup> 15 million on S.S Clan Menzies. PRO FO 371/23868 MR(J)(39)34 R8985 17 Oct 1939. 15 million from India not available. WO 106/5743 WO to GOCME 13 Jan 1940.

**Assumptions:**

1. Where delivery dates are uncertain the latest possible delivery date is indicated. In the case of French orders, where it has not been possible to ascertain exact delivery date, if there is evidence that the Turks had the weapon in January 1941, It has been assumed that they must have had it prior to May 1940. In the case of Air weapons, the prohibition on export of Air weapons in June 1940 is taken as the cut-off. i.e. British aircraft in Turkish service in January 1941, unless there is proof otherwise, are assumed to have been in Turkish possession prior to June 1940.

Appendix D

Turkish Weapons Demands: Requested/Pledged/Delivered by  
June 1940

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
1.	Destroyers	8	4	0
2.	Submarines	8	4	0
3.	Escorts	4	4	0
4.	Minesweepers	2	2	2
5.	Minelayers	0	2	2
6.	Patrol Craft	2	0	0
7.	Sub-chasers	25	8	0
8.	MTBs	10	10	0
9.	Vickers Submarines mines	750	120	0
10.	Depth Charges	350	350/350	350/150
11.	Torpedoes	350	32 (new type)	0
12.			200 (old type)	50
13.	Gun Batteries for Yavuz	1 set	0	0
14.	AS netting	4 1/2 miles	4 1/2 miles	0
15.	Boom defence vessels	7	7	0
16.	Boom defence depots	3	3	0
17.	Trawlers	3	3	0
18.	15" guns	10	2	0
19.	13.5" guns	10	10	0
20.	6" guns	14	14	0
21.	4" guns	6	6	0
22.	3" AA guns	2	2	0
23.	2lb pompoms	5	5	0
24.	Spitfires	30/30	30/30	2
25.	Blenheims	12/18/10	40	36
26.	Conversion kits	50	30	10
27.	lysanders	36/36	36	37
28.	Ansons	50	25	6

Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
29.	Battles	30	30	30
30.	Hurricanes	15	30	15
31.	Morane Coblenz 406s	50	60	30
32.	Magisters	25	30	0
33.	Wellingtons	10	10	0
34.	Skuas	30	30	0
35.	Trainers	50	50	50
36.	240mm guns	24	24	24
37.	210mm guns	36	30	0
38.	ATGs	2850 total including:	250 total	190 total
	37mm ATGs	260	0	0
	2 pd guns	40	0	0
	misc types	2550	250 (25mm ATG)	190
39.	37mm AA guns	2388	0	0
40.	75mm AA guns	260	0	0
41.	Bofors AA guns	324	24	24
42.	3.7" AA guns (static)	0	12	4
43.	3.7" AA guns (mobile)	0	120	8
44.	Field guns	836 total including:	54 total	48
	155mm howitzers	24	24	24
	105mm howitzers	104	0	0
	105mm guns	12	12	12
	75mm guns	128	0	0
	18 or 25 pd guns	284	18 (18 pd guns)	12
	mountain guns	152	0	0
	105mm mountain howitzers	68	0	0
45.	Medium Tanks	500	50/50 (R.35s)	50/50
46.	Light Tanks	300	50 (Mark VIBs)	50



Ser	Weapon	Total Requested	Total Pledged	Total Delivered
47.	Armoured Cars	32	12 (Kegresses)	12
48.	Trucks	1100	0	0
49.	Cross Country Trucks	2300	0	0
50.	Universal Carriers	300	0	0
51.	ATR	5000	200 + (Boys)	200
52.	81mm Mortars	0	200 (Brandt)	200
53.	HMGs	5000	0	0
54.	MMGs	1000	1250 (Vickers)	1250
55.	LMGs	10000	10000 (Hotchkiss)	5000
56.	Rifles	150000	100000 (Lebel)	25000
57.	Grenades	1500000	500000 +	500000
58.	Gas Masks	400000	400000	400000
59.	SAA	108000000	30000000	15000000

#### Appendix E -- The Turkish Armed Forces in 1939

It is necessary to say something about the Turkish Armed Forces as they existed immediately prior, and during the first year of the war, as background for what has gone before. Discussion of the negotiations for material assistance, for example, if not viewed in relation to a military reality, are worthless. Similarly, consideration of the political dimension in a time of crisis unless placed within the military context is exceedingly perilous. On the other hand, the Turkish Armed Forces, in general lie outside the scope of the preceeding discussion. This appendix, therefore, is included for easy reference to material not generally available.

While secondary material on the Turkish Army is virtually nonexistent, there is enough in British archives to give a general picture of what the Turks had, planned and wanted in the years immediately prior to 1939. Material relative to the period previous to 1937 is particularly scarce. The Turks published nothing themselves and forbade conversations between Turkish officers and foreign Attachés. Foreigners were neither invited to exercises nor allowed freedom of movement. Air travel was forbidden, except "on one or two devious routes" and the coast was closed.<sup>1</sup> No matter how close Anglo-Turkish relations became, Eastern Anatolia

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<sup>1</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 Relations with Turkish Military Authorities Elmhirst 8 Mar; FO 371/19036 Aras to Loraine 9 Jan 1937; and, FO 371/19040 E3039/3039/44 Loraine to FO 11 May 1935. The prohibition against contact with Turkish officers extended to the agents of weapons manufacturers. In March 1935, Lander, the Vickers representative was deported for employing Turkish officers for part-time translation and "secretarial work". FO 371/19037 Helm Note 26 Mar 1935.

throughout and after our period continued to be a restricted area closed even to British officers. Baggallay, at the Foreign Office, and Loraine in Ankara did not think this reticence exceptional or even unjustified. They thought, to a large degree, that Turkish secrecy sprang from the fact "that they imagine -- evidently with justification -- that any information given to the British Military Attaché may find its way to other foreign military attachés".<sup>2</sup> Even so, in Turkey, military secrecy was a passion. Loraine complained of the "veil of secrecy" that the Turks were accustomed to drawing around all matters military.<sup>3</sup> Elmhirst judged this to be a legacy of Turkey's unfortunate history, dislike of foreigners and a desire "to conceal lack of modern equipment".<sup>4</sup> Whichever reason was uppermost, it was characteristic of early Republican Turkey that anything not first rate was not seen.

#### **The Army:**

The Turkish Armed Forces in 1939 were commanded by the same generation of men, and in many cases the same men, who had led it during the Revolution. At the head of the Armed Forces was Marshal Fevzi Çakmak. Çakmak was born in 1874 and graduated from the Military College in 1898. During the First World War, he fought in Macedonia and the Middle East. In 1918-1919 he was commander of the Sultan's forces, and in 1920, became Minister of War in

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<sup>2</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 E1578/315/44 Loraine to Oliphant 12 May 1937.

<sup>3</sup> PRO FO 371/19037 E854/854/44 Annual Report for 1934.

<sup>4</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 op. cit.

Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> Later in the year, with his friend İnönü, he joined the Nationalists in Ankara. When Atatürk and İnönü definitely entered politics in 1923, Çakmak came to the head of the Armed Services as Chief of Defence Staff. During the Mosul crisis, he had been leader of the war party.<sup>6</sup> By 1937, it was the general consensus at the British Embassy that he was subordinate only to Atatürk, and that his influence on Turkish Foreign Policy was at least equal to that of Dr. Aras.<sup>7</sup> After Atatürk's death, in military matters, Çakmak approached the President as a near equal.<sup>8</sup> The British Embassy reported that İnönü, upon assuming power, had been careful to obtain Çakmak's approval and to assure him that there would be no changes in the Army Command.<sup>9</sup> Group Captain Elmhirst, the Air Attaché in Ankara (AAA), thought the Marshal's most notable characteristic to be an abiding "contempt for foreigners".<sup>10</sup> By 1940, Çakmak was, among other things, the leader of the anti-Russian faction in the Armed Services. According to General Butler, head of one of the British Missions, the Russian

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<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E127/127/44 Loraine to Eden 1 Jan 1936.

<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E127/127/44 op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> PRO FO 371/20861 op. cit. This was the belief of Weygand who knew both Çakmak and İnönü well. M. Weygand, Memoires, Mirages et Realite, (Flammarion: Paris), 1957. p. 486.

<sup>8</sup> Weygand judged that with İnönü and Saraçoğlu, Çakmak made the third in a triumvirate making all of the important decisions in Turkey. M. Weygand, Memoires. Mirages et Realite, (Flammarion: Paris) 1957.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E7365/69/44 Loraine to FO 3 Nov 1937.

<sup>10</sup> CC ELMT 1/12 Modern Turkey Elmhirst Apr 1939.

threat was his "favourite theme".<sup>11</sup>

Çakmak's principle subordinates would make an excellent subject for a group biography. Almost all of them were born in, or near, 1880. Almost all had entered the Staff Academy about 1907. Most had spent the years of their early military service in Thrace or Syria. Thus, they became early members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and were Staff Captains -- as were İnönü and Atatürk -- in 1912. In this way, they were best placed to benefit from the Enver coup and the subsequent discharge of all officers of field grade and higher. The Turkish High Command was judged by British observers to be excellent, indeed, it would be strange if it were not -- the officers constituting it saw continual action from 1906 to 1926 and had been at the head of the Army since 1912.

The Chief of Army Staff, and Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS), General Gündüz, was the leader of the pro-German faction in the Army. He had attended the Berlin Staff Academy prior to the First World War. Gündüz had been Çakmak's Chief of Staff in the Civil War. In the Army he was liked and admired for his efficiency.<sup>12</sup> Gündüz's principle subordinates were General Fahrettin Altay, the Commander of Inspectorate Number One, which included the forces in Thrace, and General Kazim Orbay, the Commander of Inspectorate Number Three, which included the forces on the Eastern Frontier. Altay was the second most important

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<sup>11</sup> PRO CAB 80/7 COS 40(201) Staff Conversations in Turkey 4 Jan 1940.

<sup>12</sup> PRO FO 424/280 E127/127/44 op. cit.

Turkish soldier and a close associate of Çakmak. Orbay was known as pro-German and anti-Russian. He had an exceptional war record, and was the Marshal's brother-in-law.<sup>13</sup>

Defence spending was a significant proportion of national expenditure. This was the particularly the case after 1934 when annual defence spending tripled from 12,600,000 to 40,964,886 Lira.<sup>14</sup> In 1937, the published figures for global Government expenditure were 230 million Lira with 67 million going for national defence. By the calculations of the British Embassy, however, the expenditure had actually been closer to 400 million lira with more than a quarter of that going to national defence. Equipment acquisition, moreover, was provided for separately by supplements voted to the defence budget.<sup>15</sup>

The Turkish Army was considered by most observers to be far and away the best in the Balkans. It was also, barring the Soviets, the best in Western Asia. Even against a first class enemy the degree of resistance it could provide would be considerable. Elmhirst was only expressing the usual opinion of foreign observers when he wrote that the Army was "well led, trained on modern lines and loyal to the core and that it is capable of defending Turkish

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<sup>13</sup> Orbay had been commander of the Turkish Expeditionary Force to Galacia, and had fought the Russians at Przemyśl. He had returned to Turkey in time for Gallipoli and had moved from there to the Eastern Front where he became COS IX Army at Erzerum.

<sup>14</sup> PRO FO 371/19037 E854/854/44 Annual Report for 1934.

<sup>15</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 NAA to Loraine 6 May 1937.

soil against any forces an aggressor might bring to bear".<sup>16</sup> By way of comparison, a shame-faced King of Greece admitted to the British Ambassador in 1936 that his Army was such a great embarrassment to him that it was a mortification for him to have to attend manoeuvres.<sup>17</sup>

In Britain, until 1941, the prevailing high estimation of Turkish military capability remained informal and unwritten for the simple reason that most leading British soldiers had first hand experience of the Turkish Army. The CIGS, General Ironside, the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence (DMO&I), Major-General Kennedy, and the C in C MidEast, General Wavell, were all very familiar with the Turks from the last war. Ironside had commanded the Trebizond Field Force.<sup>18</sup> Kennedy was a veteran of Salonika and Mesopotamia.<sup>19</sup> Wavell had been on Allenby's Staff, and had served as a liaison officer with the Russian Army in the Caucasus.<sup>20</sup>

How much resistance could the Turks oppose to a first class enemy? In March 1941 when the situation had changed considerably

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<sup>16</sup> CC ELMT 1/12 Modern Turkey Elmhirst Apr 1939.

<sup>17</sup> PRO FO 371/R2373/2373/19 Waterlow (Athens) to Eden 22 Apr 1936.

<sup>18</sup> See, Ironside, High Road to Command. Diaries 1920-1922, (Leo Cooper: London) 1972.

<sup>19</sup> See, J. Kennedy, The Business of War, (Hutchison: London) 1959.

<sup>20</sup> See, R. Collins, Lord Wavell. A Military Biography, (Hodder & Stoughton: London) 1947; and, J. Connel, Wavell. Soldier and Scholar, (Collins: London) 1964.

for the worse, Lieutenant Colonel Kirkman,<sup>21</sup> an Intelligence Officer at the General Staff, prepared an estimate of probable Turkish resistance to an attack by a German force of twenty Divisions (three Armoured) supported by 1,500-2,000 aircraft.<sup>22</sup> It was his assessment, that if the Turks resisted the Germans, and received no support of any kind from the British, no significant German force could arrive on the Syrian frontier by the beginning of the following campaigning year. If the British were to provide support, especially Air support, he did not think the Germans would arrive at all.<sup>23</sup> Kirkman summarized his conclusions as follows:

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<sup>21</sup> S.O 2 M.I (J.I.S)

<sup>22</sup> Assumptions: the Germans would be operating from bases in Bulgaria; the Turkish East Flank would be secured -- i.e. the RN would continue to hold the Eastern Mediterranean; and the roads across Asia Minor would be closed 1 December to 1 April, during which time railroads would continue to operate at reduced capacity.

<sup>23</sup> PRO WO 208/1563 An Analysis of the Timings of a Possible German Advance on Syria and Iraq Via Turkey March 41.



Time Required for German Conquest of Turkey

**Case I -- Turkish resistance**

<u>Significance</u>	<u>Date 1</u>	<u>Date 2</u>
Zero Day	15 Aug	1 Sep
To complete concentration: time reqr -- 7 weeks	3 Oct	20 Oct
To force Catalca lines and Establish Bridgehead:		
a) without British air support -- 3 weeks at best	24 Oct	10 Nov
b) with British air support	-----indefinite-----	
To conquer Western Anatolia and advance to Syria:		
a) without British air support -- 5 weeks	28 Nov	Impossible
b) with British air support	-----indefinite-----	
To concentrate on the Syrian Frontier:		
a) 3 Divisions	1 March	
b) 4 Divisions	1 April	

**Case II -- If the Turks allowed passage**

<u>Significance</u>	<u>date 1</u>	<u>date 2</u>
Zero Day	15 Aug	1 Sep
To complete concentration: time reqr -- 7 weeks	3 Oct	20 Oct
To Move across the Marmora: time reqr -- 2 weeks	17 Oct	3 Nov
To move across Anatolia (1 division per week until 1 Dec; 1 division per month until April):		
a) 3 Divisions	7 Nov	24 Nov
b) 4 Divisions	14 Nov	1 Dec
c) 7 Divisions	1 Jan	1 Mar
d) 9 Divisions	1 Mar	Mid April

The moral of this story was obvious. If the Turks resisted the Germans, it was not probable that any enemy coming from the North would arrive on the borders of the British position in the Middle East in numbers significant enough to be dangerous.<sup>24</sup>

In the First World War, the Turkish Army had mobilized 2,700,000 men, with 650,000 men serving at its peak strength in 38 divisions.<sup>25</sup> During the Revolution, after the incorporation of the irregulars in 1922, Turkey fielded twenty-eight Divisions with an effective strength of about 300,000.<sup>26</sup> In 1939, the Turkish population, according to census figures, was 17,829,000. Every male citizen was liable for service from twenty to forty-six years of age. Actual call-up depended on the number required to fill out the ranks. In general, three-quarters (60,000 of 80,000) of each year's class of conscripts were called up each year for eighteen months service in the Infantry, two years service in other arms, and thirty months service in the Gendarmes.<sup>27</sup> Thus, at any one time, there would be two classes of conscripts with the Colours. With a core of professionals -- officers and senior noncommissioned officers were volunteer and professional -- this gave the Turkish

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Note that timings take no account of possible demolitions. Particularly promising as targets were the tunnels through the Taurus mountains, Malatya and Fevzipasa.

<sup>25</sup> See, Ahmed Emin, Turkey in the World War, (Yale: New Haven) 1930, p. 107-109 (for 1914 mobilization).

<sup>26</sup> PRO WO 287/141 Notes on the Turkish Army.

<sup>27</sup> PRO WO 287/141 op. cit.

Army a peacetime strength of 130-180,000 all ranks.<sup>28</sup> The Army was divided into eleven Corps of two Divisions each, three Cavalry Divisions, and seven Fortress Commands.

In 1939, the Turkish Armoured Corps was still in its infancy. In size and organization, it was typical of the Armoured Corps of Turkey's Balkan Entente and Sa'adabad Pact allies. In doctrine and training it was German. In equipment, in 1939, it was Soviet.<sup>29</sup> Based at Luleburgaz, the Armoured Corps was one Brigade strong, and functioned more as a school than as an operational unit.<sup>30</sup> By 1937, the Turks were experimenting as well with airborne and glider forces but these too remained in embryo.<sup>31</sup>

In 1939, as previously, the strength of the Turkish Army rested in its Infantry. In peacetime, there were normally twenty-four Infantry Divisions. By March 1937, it was the declared Turkish intention to increase the number to thirty.<sup>32</sup> By 1939, it had been

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<sup>28</sup> PRO WO 287/141 op. cit. 130-140,000 all ranks in the army with 30-40,000 Gendarmes. FO 371/19037 E854/854/44 op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> PRO WO 287/141 op. cit. In March 1939 the Turks had 150 tanks total: 100 T26 light tanks; and, 50 T37 tankettes.

<sup>30</sup> PRO WO 287/141 op.cit.

<sup>31</sup> In November 1937, as part of the National Independence Day air review, Elmhirst had seen parachute troops jumping from four DC 4s also towing six gliders. PRO FO 424/282 E6657/15/44 op. cit. Turkish experimentation with airborne, and glider-borne troops came only two years after such troops had first been employed -- by the Soviets at their 1935 manoeuvres. J. Herndon, "British Perceptions of Soviet Military Capability 1935-9", The Fascist Challenge, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>32</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 NAA to Loraine 6 Mar 1937; also, FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 4 Mar 1937.

decided that forty to forty-two Divisions were required.<sup>33</sup> In the Spring of 1939, the Turks began a slow and unobtrusive mobilization. On 1 May, the British Embassy reported that while no announcement had been made to this effect, the classes of 1934, 1935, and 1936, had been recalled to the colours. The class of 1938 had been retained, and that of 1939 called up six weeks early. In addition, all Reserve Officers were being recalled, and the selective recall of specialists begun. All units were brought to war strength. New Divisions were formed in Thrace.<sup>34</sup> There was limited reinforcement of the forces in Eastern Anatolia.<sup>35</sup>

By May, the Turkish Army had a strength of about 300,000 with 125,000 of these concentrated in Thrace, 25,000 around the Dardanelles, and 30,000 in the Antalya-Marson-Smyrna area.<sup>36</sup> Obviously the Turks were moving to counter the threat from the North and from the Sea against the Straits. This becomes more obvious when we note the refortification of the Bulgarian frontier and the construction of bridges over the Maritza in the direction

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<sup>33</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 M.13 5695 op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3482/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 6 May 1939.

<sup>35</sup> Until December 1939 Turkey denied that it was increasing the strength of its forces in the East. Turkey's lack of candour was due, Knatchbull-Hugesson thought "to the fixed policy of avoiding offense to the Soviet Government. After December 1939, the danger, he judged, was so acute that the Turks had stopped worrying about offending the Soviets. PRO FO 424/284 N103/30/38 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 19 Dec 1939.

<sup>36</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3250 MAA to WO 1 May 1939.

of Greece and the on-going refortification of the Straits.<sup>37</sup>

Turkish mobilization continued into 1940.<sup>38</sup> By March 1940, the size of the Army had increased to 1,300,000 all ranks. Unfortunately growth only served to highlight the Army's material deficiencies. A large number of these men had been called up for no strictly military purpose. Due to lack of mechanization, there was urgent need for porters, labourers and animals. In Marshal Çakmak's opinion, even modest mechanization would decrease the requirement for men 3:2, and for animals 3:1, with no loss of combat efficiency.<sup>39</sup>

In Peacetime, each Turkish Corps had thirty-six guns, with both of its Divisions having thirty-six of their own. In each Corps, there were also 216 machine-guns. Although Turkey had a large number of guns, the Turkish Artillery used a wide variety of types manufactured by several nations. Small arms too were of various types and origins. In 1939, the Turkish Army was in the process of reorganization into standard and handier Corps of two Division each, supported by a reorganized, rearmed and enlarged artillery component.

Each Turkish Division was composed of three Regiments of three Battalions. Each Battalion contained 800-1,500 men. Thus, the war

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<sup>37</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3482/143/44 op. cit.

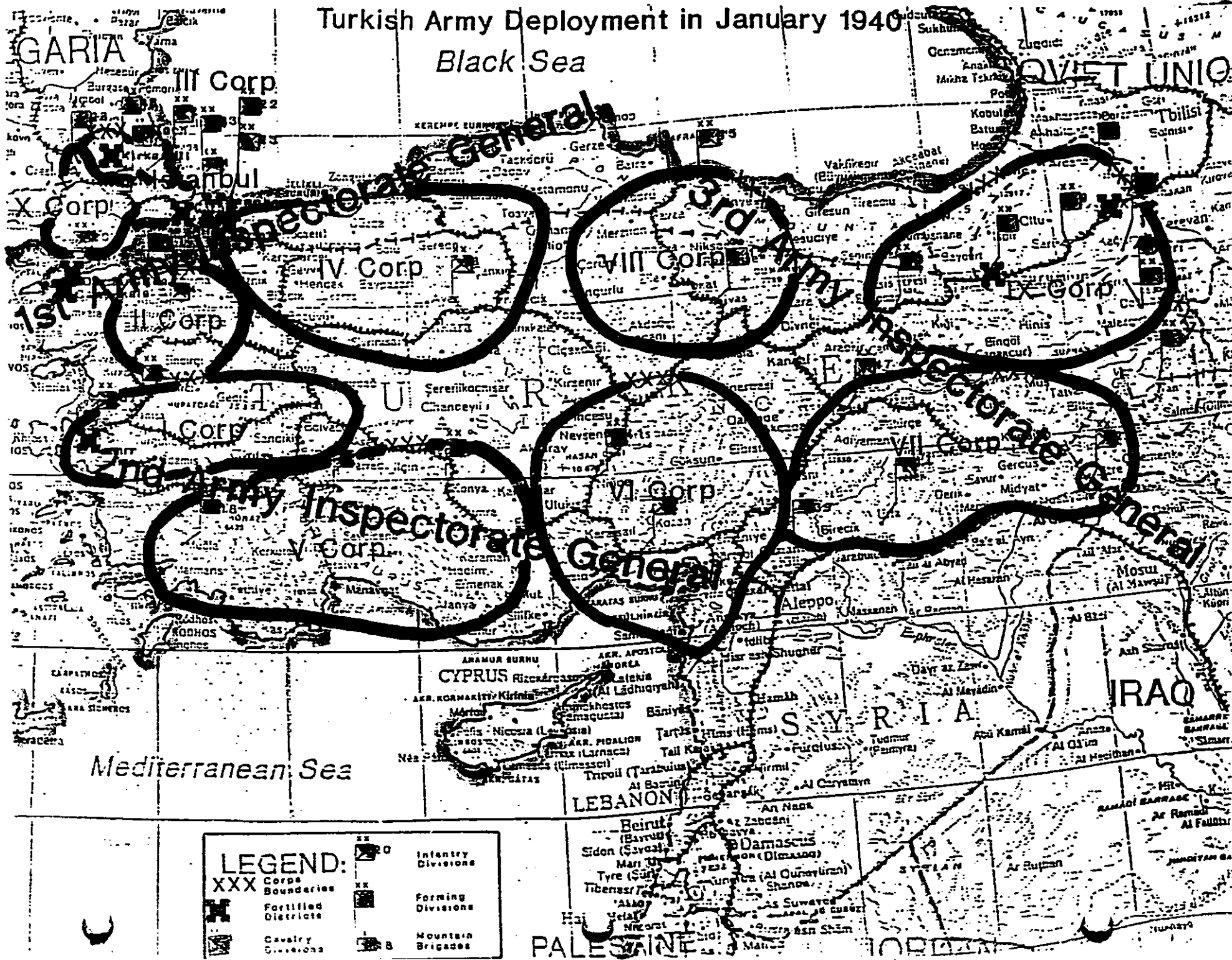
<sup>38</sup> PRO FO 195/2468/479 115/8/40 M. Fabri to Knatchbull-Hugesson 16 Feb; 115/10/40 MAA to Knatchbull-Hugesson 24 Feb; and, 115/16/40 Knatchbull-Hugesson Memorandum 1 Jul 1940.

<sup>39</sup> S. Aydemir, İkinci Adam, (Remzi Kitabevi: Ankara) 1967, Vol II, p. 130-136.

## Turkish Army Deployment in January 1940

# Black! Sea

SOVIET UNION



strength of a Turkish Division was about 12,000 men. In theory, each Regiment of Infantry contained a Battery of anti-tank guns. In 1939, only thirty Regiments were so armed; the remainder making-do with a battery of two 7.5cm guns.<sup>40</sup>

In August 1937, for the first time ever, Service Attachés were invited to the Turkish Autumn manoeuvres. The exercise took place in Western Thrace from 17-20 August. The local commander, General Altay, was the Exercise Director with one of his Corps commanders, General Salih Omertak, acting as Chief Umpire.<sup>41</sup> The Manoeuvres were intended as something of a showcase. No reservists were called up and the troops participating were drawn from the professionals of the Thracian garrison.<sup>42</sup> The Exercise was based upon the notion of an invasion of Thrace by a force landing on the Black Sea coast and advancing on Istanbul, Greece and Bulgaria being neutral.

Elmhirst, while not impressed by the tactics of the Turkish Air Force, was much impressed by the Turkish High Command, Turkish Staff work, and by those young officers he met. "I would submit" he wrote, "that it would be difficult to find any infantry superior to them in fighting value".<sup>43</sup> He noted that the Army was, apparently, planning to fight a war of manoeuvre rather than material. "I am

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<sup>40</sup> PRO WO 287/141 op. cit.

<sup>41</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E5432/528/44 Morgan to FO 12 Sep 1937. It was usually the case, after this, for the British Attachés to be invited to Autumn Manoeuvres. FO 371/23293 E3482/143/44 Knatchbull-Hugesson to FO 6 May 1939.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E5170 Morgan to Eden 29 Aug 37.

inclined" he said, "to doubt whether this is a good policy but would find it difficult to suggest any alteration in view of their present restricted resources".<sup>44</sup>

Elmhirst told the Turkish Air Minister that, in his opinion, the Air Force was tied too closely to the Army, and that if properly handled it could have prevented the landing. This last impression, that the Turks did not really understand Air power, was one Elmhirst confirmed in December by attending Air Manoeuvres in Thrace. The germ of his criticism was that, as was the case in most continental nations, the Turkish Air Force was used as airborne Artillery and looked upon solely as an auxiliary to the Army.<sup>45</sup>

The Military Attaché, Colonel Ross, also attended the Thracian Manoeuvres. Ross was most impressed by the personality of the Marshal himself. Of the Turkish Army, he was more critical than Elmhirst. The tactics he had seen he judged to be ten years out of date. There had been, for instance, no smoke or gas.<sup>46</sup> Ross identified the German influence on Turkish tactics, but thought that he had seen too much dash and not enough firepower. The Turkish Armour, in his opinion, had been employed too aggressively against improper objectives; moreover it had not been able to preserve formation. One might think that Ross' critique showed more

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E189/78/44 Loraine to Oliphant 24 Dec 1937.

<sup>46</sup> The fact that there was no smoke is strange, as the Turks were later known to use it extensively. WO 287/141 op. cit. Perhaps the Turks were anxious not to obscure the view of their foreign guests.



clearly the failings of the contemporary British than of the Turkish Army. Although Ross thought that the Turkish Army might be "good enough for a Balkan power", what would be required if it were to be more than this was a "really energetic foreign mission" to teach the Turks "really modern warfare". "No doubt" he concluded, "the Army is a powerful instrument in the hands of a good General Staff. What it lacks is the modern touch and so long as it has xenophobic chiefs" he added, "this state of affairs will continue".<sup>47</sup>

#### **Straits's Defence:**

Straits refortification was not complete in 1939; indeed, it was not complete in 1945. The Turks believed that they could hold and repel a landing, but lacked the heavy Artillery necessary to repel a naval attack on the Straits, particularly if it included battleships -- like the Littorio and Vittoria Veneto layed down in 1933, and the Roma and Imperia, building from 1937.<sup>48</sup>

By the end of 1937, the Turks had determined their needs and were attempting to get artillery from Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Britain. To obtain 240mm and 220mm guns, orders for twelve of each were placed with Skoda and Krupp. In this way, the Turks hoped to get one complete order of each whatever the political situation. Unfortunately for the Turks, they did not foresee the case where

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<sup>47</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E5431/528/44 op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> See, M. Knox, Mussolini Unleashed 1939-1941 (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1982. p. 19-21.

Germany absorbed Czechoslovakia.<sup>49</sup> By the beginning of the war, only two of the 240mm guns had been delivered by Germany.<sup>50</sup> From Britain, the Turks hoped to get even larger guns -- 15" guns in particular. What the Turks did have, was some old Krupp guns and some batteries of mobile 8" guns moved from the defences of Izmit.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the Torgut Reis (Breslau) and other obsolete vessels, had been moored in the Sea of Marmora as floating batteries.<sup>52</sup> Brigadier Lund, the Deputy Director of Military Intelligence (DDMI), toured the Dardanelles defences in July 1939 and found them well layed out, well surveyed and constructed -- the only thing lacking was the big guns.<sup>53</sup>

**The Navy:**

The Chief of Naval Staff, Captain Ihsan Ozel, was an experienced naval officer trained in German submarines in World War One. In February 1938, Captain Parker, the Naval Attaché in Ankara (NAA), talked to him about plans for Turkish Naval expansion. The Turks, it appeared, had very definite ideas about how they intended to use their Navy, and how they saw it developing in the coming years. Ozel said that the Turks hoped to expand their fleet by two 10,000 ton 8" Cruisers capable of thirty-five knots (one in 1942;

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<sup>49</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E1295 Loraine to FO 24 Feb 1937.

<sup>50</sup> PRO WO 208/1969 M.13 5695 Anglo Turkish Staff Conversations -- Exchange of Information Jan 1940.

<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 371/23293 E3250 MAA to WO 1 May 1939.

<sup>52</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 Dardanelles Defences NAA 15 Feb 1938.

<sup>53</sup> PRO CAB 16/183A DP(P) Anglo-Turkish Staff Conversations Chatfield 18 Jul 1939.

one in 1945), twelve Destroyers, and thirty Submarines.<sup>54</sup> Turkey did not look to Britain for all of this, nor did it look for it all immediately. The Turks, Ozel told Parker, hoped to complete their programme in ten years.<sup>55</sup> After this, there would be no new building except for replacement.<sup>56</sup>

By 1938, four Destroyers were building in Italy.<sup>57</sup> Four the Turks had bought already from Italy in 1931.<sup>58</sup> Six Submarines Turkey already had. Five more were layed in 1934, and one, the Echevarrieta, was purchased ready-built from Spain.<sup>59</sup> Two Submarines, by 1938, were building in Germany, and another two in Holland.<sup>60</sup> The new Golden Horn shipyards could produce two Submarines a year, and the Turks had launched the first of these already.<sup>61</sup> What was looked for from Britain in the short-term, was four Destroyers immediately, four more later, and ten Submarines

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<sup>54</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 The Turkish Navy NAA 23 Feb 1938; Conversation with Turkish Naval Attaché DNI 6 Jan 1938. In Mar 1937, Ozel had told Parker much the same, though he spoke then of eight destroyers, and twenty submarines. See also, FO 371/21930 E188/188/44 Loraine to FO from Aras 31 Dec 1937.

<sup>55</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 Enclosure I MAA to Loraine to FO 23 Feb 1938.

<sup>59</sup> PRO FO 371/19037 E854/854/44 Annual Report for 1934.

<sup>60</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 Turkish Rearmament. Reason for Orders to be Placed in UK DNI Jan 1938.

<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 Enclosure I MAA to Loraine to FO 23 Feb 1938.

over time.<sup>62</sup>

Captain Parker tried to convince the Turks that it would be better for them to build one Battle-Cruiser of 17,500 tons than two 8" cruisers.<sup>63</sup> Ozel would not accept Parker's arguments. Turkey he said, needed two large ships around which to form two Squadrons of one Cruiser, four Destroyers, and twelve Submarines each -- one for the Black Sea and one for the Mediterranean.<sup>64</sup> Nor could Ozel see the British logic in building one large ship from an economic point of view because such a vessel would require two Cruisers, in any case, for escort.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the 8" Cruisers were intended as counter-weights for the 7.1" Cruisers of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, and the 8" Cruisers of the Italian Mediterranean Fleet.<sup>66</sup> Lastly, influenced by the Germans as they were, the Turks did not see their Fleet's primary duty as being the engagement of an enemy's major surface units, but rather, as raiding his commerce. Two heavy Cruisers would be twice as effective in this role as a single Battle-Cruiser -- or so war games conducted at the Naval

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<sup>62</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 The Turkish Navy, op.cit.

<sup>63</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 op. cit. One reason Parker was attempting to change Turkish building plans was because under existing naval treaties and bilateral agreements, only Italy would be able to build 8" Cruisers for the Turks. FO 371/20865 E3007 M.02008/37 Phillips (Adm) to FO 3 Jun; FO 424/280 A9962/4983/45 Eden to Loraine 17 Dec 1936.

<sup>64</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 Enclosure I MAA to Loraine to FO 23 Feb 1938.

<sup>65</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 4 Mar 1937.

<sup>66</sup> PRO FO 371/20865 E3007 M.02008/37 op. cit. The Turkish delegation at the disarmament conference told Phillips that 8" cruisers were desired for this reason.

Staff College had seemed to suggest.<sup>67</sup> The Turks, however, did not entirely disregard Parker's suggestion. By February 1938 they were talking about buying both the two 8" Cruisers and a Battle Cruiser; the later intended as a replacement for the aging Yavuz in 1950-1960.<sup>68</sup>

#### **The Air Force:**

The Chief of Air Staff, Major Sefik Çakmak, was the son-in-law of the Marshal, and was the Anglophile leader of the most pro-British of the Services. At forty-three, he was also the youngest Chief of Staff in Turkey.<sup>69</sup> The Turkish Air Force was the best in the Balkans. It was divided into three, later five, Brigades based at Eskisehir, Izmir, and Erzincan. Airfields existed at Eskisehir, Izmir, Merzifon, Yesilkoy, Ankara (civil), Kutahya, Diyarbakir, Corlu, Adana, and Elazig but required surfacing if they were to be used by modern aircraft.<sup>70</sup> In 1935, at the beginning of our period, the Turkish Air Force had been composed of 148 aircraft almost entirely of obsolete type.<sup>71</sup> Turkey was, however, already making strenuous attempts to modernize, but was achieving only moderate success.

In November 1937, Group Captain Elmhirst, the Air Attaché,

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<sup>67</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 op. cit.

<sup>69</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E1510 Elmhirst to Loraine 9 Mar 1938.

<sup>70</sup> PRO WO 287/141 op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> PRO FO 371/19035 E5926/G Harvard to Air Min 2 Oct 1935.

observed a fly past at the Independence Day celebration.<sup>72</sup> Taking part were thirty PZLs (Polish: arrived January 1937), sixteen Curtiss Hawks (American: 1934-1935), four Heinkel IIIs (German: September-October 1937), four Martin 139Ws (American: September-October 1937), thirty-two Bruegut 19 B.2s and 19/7s (French: 1928-1929) and ten Smoliks (Czech: 1925-1926). Participating also were forty-two training aircraft -- six Focke-Wulfe Weihses, six Curtiss Fledglings, and twenty-six Gothas. Elmhirst judged, that excluding about ten Bregauts at Diyarbekir and some flying boats at Izmir, he had seen everything the Turks possessed. If this were so, and it seems probable, the Turks had at the beginning of 1938 a total first line Air strength of forty-six modern Fighters, eight modern Bombers, and fifty-two Bomber-Reconnaissance aircraft.<sup>73</sup>

Elmhirst judged the fly past to have been a credible performance, much better than the Bulgarian or Greek Air Force could have done, but doubted that the Turkish High Command -- a favourite complaint of his -- knew how to use Air power.<sup>74</sup> To fight a first class enemy, Elmhirst thought, the Turkish Air Force would require training and instruction at all levels.<sup>75</sup> Elmhirst

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<sup>72</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E6657/15/44 Elmhirst to Loraine 11 Nov 1937.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., On 29 October 1938 Elmhirst witnessed a similar spectacle. By that date, most of the obviously obsolescent aircraft had been replaced, and the Turkish possessed 18 Martins, 18 HE IIIs, 10 Blenheims and 31 Vultee attack bombers. The Turks had a total of 139 first line aircraft, all new, and all good types. Elmhirst was impressed by the improvement in the space of one year. PRO FO 371/21927 E6624/78/44 AAA to Loraine to FO 4 Nov 1938.

<sup>74</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E6657/15/44 op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> CC ELMT 1/12 op. cit.

continued to be inclined to rate the potential of the Turkish Air Force highly. In March 1938, he visited the Izmir airbase. He found everything "well arranged and scrupulously clean". Such aircraft as there were, were well maintained. The only thing lacking, he thought, were good aircraft.<sup>76</sup>

By the Spring of 1937, plans were in existence to expand the Turkish Air Force to a first line strength of 300 aircraft in order to be ready for war at the end of 1938.<sup>77</sup> The number 300, suggests that Turkey was aiming at more than Air superiority over its Balkan neighbours. It seems probable that it had in mind the Dodecanese, and perhaps the thirty squadrons the Germans might be able to operate from Bulgarian Airfields. A portion of these 300 could be produced at the P.Z.L factory at Kayerseri but the Turks recognized that this type was obsolete and wanted more advanced aircraft.<sup>78</sup> Turkey would have liked, if possible, to obtain their entire Air requirement from the United Kingdom. If this proved impossible, then Turkey preferred to get at least its Fighters from Britain and would look to the United States for its Bombers.<sup>79</sup> If this too proved impossible, then the Turks would take what they could get from whomever would supply them.

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<sup>76</sup> PRO FO 371/21927 E1510 op. cit.

<sup>77</sup> PRO ADM 116/4195 The Turkish Air Force AAA 15 Feb; FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 op. cit.; FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 4 Mar 1937; and, FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 Enclosure III Loraine to Cadogan 23 Feb 1939.

<sup>78</sup> PRO FO 371/21930 E1218/188/44 Enclosure III op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 4 Mar 1937.

The greatest weakness of the Turkish Air Force, however, was not lack of machines but of trained personnel. Machines can be improvised: mechanics cannot. There were 450 pilots in the Turkish Air Force in 1940, but a reserve of only fifty. The Flight Training School (FTS) established at Eskisehir could produce another 200 annually. Mechanics were a greater problem. In Turkey, in 1940, there were only 350 skilled aircraftsmen, of whom 100 were permanently employed at the aircraft factory at Kayseri.<sup>80</sup> For training of pilots and aircraftsmen, the Turks would have to look to the nation providing the planes. Of course this made Britain the mentor of choice.

#### Programs for Expansion:

The expansion programs of the three Services were germane to much that followed. By 1939, as has been seen, the Turks had determined to expand their Army by ten Divisions. We have seen something too of the 1937 Air and naval expansion programs. When the armament requirements for all three programs are combined, we note the following totals:

Weapon	Number Required	Calculation
Rifles	120,000	12,000 X 10 Divisions
MGS	2,160	216 X 10 Divisions
Artillery	540 guns	36 X 10 Divisions
		36 X 5 Corps
AT guns (37mm)	150	3 X 50 Regiments
Destroyers	4 immediately	
	4 later	
Submarines	20 over 10 years	
Cruisers	2 by 1945	

<sup>80</sup> PRO WO 287/141 op. cit.



Aircraft	300 immediately
15" guns	10
240 mm guns	12
220 mm guns	12

Turkish requests for material support in 1939 were largely determined by, and are therefore most explicable in relation to, these expansion programs.

#### Planning:

Until 1937, Turkish planning had been based on the desire to be able to fight any possible enemy without assistance. The most significant potential enemy was Italy and Turkish planning, in the main, was driven by this threat.<sup>81</sup> Single-handed defence came to mean defence of Turkey's coasts and the Straits. Captain Parker, NAA, wrote in March 1937, that the Turkish CNS had given him to understand that the Turks understood their defence as consisting mainly of the prevention of disembarkation on their coasts or on the Aegean Islands.<sup>82</sup> Land defence of Thrace and the Caucasus were scarcely considered. The main role in this was allocated to the Army with the Navy and Air Force playing supporting roles. The Navy would be restricted to maintenance of coastal communications, cooperation in the prevention of landings in the Aegean, and to

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<sup>81</sup> Even in 1939, the Turks were making provision for possible Italian landings on their Mediterranean coast. At Mersin, for example, police were questioning factory owners regarding their ability to move their operations quickly inland. PRO FO 371/23292 E2361 Knatchbull-Hugesson to Halifax 31 Mar 1939.

<sup>82</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 NAA to Loraine 6 Mar; FO 371/20865 E1399/528/44 Loraine to FO 4 Mar 1937.

making hit and run raids.<sup>83</sup>

Izmir and the Straits were to be given fixed defences in a five year plan.<sup>84</sup> Other parts of the coast would be defended by mobile forces stationed at central locations with roads radiating outward to the coast.<sup>85</sup> These forces would reinforce fixed point defences already established in 1938.<sup>86</sup> Inland garrisons were connected by a railway system geared to coastal defence which Atatürk himself had helped to plan. Eventually, it was hoped to have a system of military railways based on two East-West parallels and four North-South traverses.<sup>87</sup> After 1937, the Turks were pushing to link their rail system into the Iraqi network. They hoped, in this way, to obtain a direct connection to a safe oil supply outside the range of hostile aircraft, outside the borders of uncertain nations (i.e. Syria), and to link themselves by land to Britain's MidEast bastion.<sup>88</sup>

But by 1937, the Turks were obviously aiming at more than security within their own borders. Dr. Aras told Loraine, in March, that when the Turkish armaments plan was completed, Turkey would

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<sup>83</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 4 Mar 1937.

<sup>84</sup> In 1939 construction of these defences was just beginning. Lund toured the defences of Izmir in Jul 1939 and judged them "not very formidable". PRO CAB 16/183A op. cit.

<sup>85</sup> PRO FO 424/282 E1565/528/44 op. cit.

<sup>86</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 op. cit.

<sup>87</sup> PRO FO 371/19037 E854/854/44 op. cit.

<sup>88</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 25 Feb 1937. An excellent idea, this was not accomplished before the war.

possess a larger and much better armed land force than any Balkan nation. It would be, in fact, "a small great power".<sup>89</sup> Turkish power would become the most important single factor in the policy of its neighbours. Turkey would be able to ensure, if necessary to enforce, Balkan peace. Aras told Loraine:

The Turkish Government, after the most searching study, had reached the conclusion that the greatest danger to peace came from weak powers, not from strong powers, and that weakness was a crime against the collectivity of nations that wished for peace; for weakness constituted of itself an invitation to interference, to attempts at domination, and to territorial covetousness on the part of strong ambitious, and expansionist states.<sup>90</sup>

Turkey would protect itself, he said, but also hoped that it could "render it impossible, so far as lay in Turkish power, for the Balkans to go to war".<sup>91</sup> Once Turkey had finished its preparation, no Balkan power could go to war without risking annihilation.

Thus, Turkish policy in our period should be viewed in the light of strategic aspirations which were ambitious, if defensive, and a rearmament program which strongly influenced the attitude of the Turkish military both before and during the Staff Conversations of the crucial year Spring 1939-Spring 1940.

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<sup>89</sup> PRO FO 1011/64 Loraine to Eden 3 Mar 1937.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

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Pound -- (CC DUPO)  
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Note: CC = Churchill College Cambridge

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