

THE *MISSOURI* VISIT TO TURKEY:
AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON COLD WAR DIPLOMACY

On April 5, 1946, an American naval squadron sailed into the harbor of Istanbul, Turkey. Aboard the flagship, the *U. S. S. Missouri*, were the remains of the late Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Mehmet Munir Ertegun, and the visit was, ostensibly, a courtesy to the Turkish government. The battleship's arrival, however, coincided with a period of political tension in the Near East and observers concluded that the presence of American warships in the Eastern Mediterranean reflected Washington's concern over the situation.

In addition to Great Power disagreement in Iran and increasing guerrilla activity in Greece, the preceding months had witnessed a growing confrontation between Turkey and the Soviet Union over the Dardanelles. The Soviet Union wanted control of this strategic waterway to protect her Black Sea littoral and to guarantee access to the Mediterranean. Turkey sought to retain the control of the Straits provided by the Montreux Convention of 1936 and considered Russian ambitions a threat to its security¹.

At the Potsdam Conference of July, 1945, the United States accepted Russian contentions that the Montreux Convention needed revision. While favoring Turkish control of the Dardanelles, American officials suggested additional guarantees regarding the transit of Russian vessels and restrictions on the passage of foreign warships into the Black Sea. The United States opposed Soviet demands for military bases in the Straits and a dominant voice in the control of the waterway².

After the Potsdam Conference the Soviet Union applied diplomatic and military pressure to Turkey. The Turks, convinced that Russian demands cloaked broader ambitions, increased their military preparedness and appealed to the United States and Great Britain for support. Against this background the arrival of the *Missouri* assumed an importance beyond that of a humanitarian gesture. The Turks interpreted the visit as a symbol of American

1. Ferenc A. Vali, *Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey*, (Baltimore, 1971) 172-173.

2. The American position at Potsdam is outlined in «Memo Regarding the Montreux Convention», 6/30/45, *The Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)*, Vol. I, 1945, (Washington, 1960) 1013-1015.

support and assumed that the United States had decided to oppose Russian policy in the Near East¹. Reflecting this attitude, the President of Turkey, Ismet Inonu, hailed the naval visit as «a new and brilliant manifestation of Turkish-American friendship», and he applauded «the strengthening of mutual friendship and confidence between our two countries»².

Students of American diplomacy have suggested that the *Missouri's* visit to Turkey was a milestone in postwar foreign policy. Viewing the visit within the context of the international situation in 1946, they maintain that the return of the remains of the Turkish diplomat was an excuse to display American power and express support for Turkey in her confrontation with the Soviet Union. The presence of the most powerful and famous warship in the United States fleet was a calculated gesture by Washington. As an example of gunboat diplomacy, the *Missouri's* mission was the symbol of a new, tough policy toward Russia and the first move in a strategy that would culminate in the Truman Doctrine³.

These studies share a similar understanding of the formation and conduct of foreign policy⁴. They assume that policy flows from the purposive acts of monolithic, rational governments and that, since governments supposedly perform serious acts for serious reasons, important results must have important causes. This approach overlooks the fact that governments are «black boxes» composed of differentiated structures and actors. Because of specialization of function, each organization considers a problem in terms of its own appraisal of national and organizational interests and goals. Large, potentially crucial acts may result from innumerable smaller actions at various levels of the policy apparatus. Rather than working for a calculated solution to an isolated problem of national interest these actors pursue a variety of only

1. Wilson to the Secretary of State, 4/12/46, *Foreign Relations*, 1946, Vol. VII, (Washington, 1969) 822-823; U.S. Naval Forces Europe, War Diaries, 4/8/46, Naval History Division, Department of the Navy, Operational Archives, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. (henceforth referred to as *Naval Archives*).

2. Ismet Inonu to Harry S. Truman, 4/6/46, Official File 86 (Turkey), *The Harry S. Truman Papers*, Independence, Missouri.

3. Both revisionist and nonrevisionist historians agree in their analysis of the origins of the *Missouri* mission. Gabriel and Joyce Kolko argue that the mission was designed solely as a calculated manifestation of American power, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*, (New York, 1972) 233. Ferenc Vali agrees that the voyage was a demonstration against Soviet policy in the Near East, *Bridge Across the Bosphorus*, 125. For similar conclusions see John C. Campbell, *Defense of the Middle East*, (New York, 1960) 33 and Howard M. Sachar, *Europe Leaves the Middle East*, (New York, 1972) 354, 376.

4. The analysis in this paragraph is heavily indebted to the seminal work of Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (Boston, 1971) passim.

partially compatible conceptions of national objectives. Policy results from a process of conflict, compromise, and at times confusion among officials who represent diverse perspectives and interests. Foreign policy decision-making is a «political» process and its analysis requires not only a consideration of action and its consequences but also the identification of relevant actors, their interests, and their motives.

By the end of the Second World War the geographic offices were the principal determinants of policy within the State Department. Describing these offices, Dean Acheson commented, «the departmental division having jurisdiction over an incident became the basic instrument for the formulation and execution of policy. Having a supposed monopoly of knowledge on the subject matter, it advised the Secretary on the action to be taken in the case at hand—thus becoming the formulator of policy—and, after the Secretary's decision, had charge of transmitting instructions to the field»¹.

The State Department's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (NEA) was the custodian of Middle Eastern policy. Before the war this office had languished as a bureaucratic backwater, a poor cousin to the more influential Divisions of European Affairs and American Republics. During the war its position improved but the Middle East remained a secondary concern of American diplomacy. The foreign service officers in NEA chafed under this neglect. Believing that the Near East was, politically and economically, an important factor in international affairs, they wanted the United States to assume greater responsibility for the stability and development of the region².

With the approach of peace and the decline of British and French influence in the Middle East, NEA saw an opportunity to reorient American policy. A political and economic commitment in the region would serve the national interest and enhance the status of NEA in the State Department. By the summer of 1945 the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs was calling for an assertive Middle Eastern policy. To his superiors, Loy Henderson, the Director of the Office, stressed the strategic importance of the region, the weakened condition of the European powers, and the unsettling nature of Arab nationalism. Henderson called for a policy free from associations with European states and aligned with the aspirations of the Arab states³.

To secure the friendship of the local regimes and symbolize America's

1. Dean Acheson, *Present At The Creation: My Years At The State Department*, (New York, 1969) 15.

2. Interview with Loy Henderson, 5/30/73, Washington, D.C.

3. Henderson to Acheson, 711. 90/9-2845, *Department of State Archives*, Record Group 59, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Henderson to Vaughan, 11/10/45, *Foreign Relations, 1945*, Vol. VIII, (Washington, 1969) 10-11.

commitment, NEA advocated a program of financial and technical assistance. In August, 1945, it proposed a special fund of \$ 25 million for the Middle East. The discretionary fund would increase American influence and demonstrate concern for the social and economic problems of the Arab states¹. The Middle Eastern specialists also endorsed an Arab request for military training missions and suggested that the American legations in the region be elevated to embassy status².

As the dominant state in the Near East Turkey received special attention. The Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs supported Turkey in her conflict with the Soviet Union. While willing to accept modifications in the Montreux Convention, NEA opposed any plan to alter Turkish control of the Dardanelles³. This position partly reflected concern over Soviet ambitions in the Middle East. Throughout most of his career Loy Henderson had specialized in Russian affairs. He distrusted the Communists and urged a firm policy toward the Soviet Union. Henderson and his colleagues opposed concessions which would strengthen Russia's position in the Near East. This concern, however, can only be understood in terms of American intentions in the region. To assert influence in the Middle East the United States had to secure close relations with local governments. For the officers in NEA this meant support for the political interests of Arab regimes even at the risk of offending European allies⁴. Support for Turkey reflected a concern for Russian expansion but it also indicated an attempt to secure Turkish friendship. Similar support for Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia against British and French pressure suggests that anticommunism was not the principal determinant of American Near Eastern policy⁵.

By early 1946 the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs was increasingly concerned with Turkey. Loy Henderson knew that the Turks expected a tangible manifestation of support and without it they would lose faith in the United States⁶. The ambiguity in United States-Turkish relations was only part of a general stalemate in Near Eastern affairs. The ambitious plans for

1. Acheson to the Secretary of State, 10/9/45, «Annex», *Foreign Relations*, 1945, Vol. VIII, 45-48.

2. Murray to Long, 890.01A/8-1444, *Department of State Archives*. For a discussion of the proposed military mission see *Foreign Relations*, 1945, Vol. VIII, 1199-1203.

3. Interview with Loy Henderson, 5/30/73.

4. Interview with Loy Henderson, 5/30/73.

5. For NEA's attitude toward Syria and Lebanon see Henderson to Matthews, 11/13/45, *Foreign Relations*, 1945, vol. VIII, 1208-1209. For American activity in Saudi Arabia see Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945*, (New York, 1968) 294-298.

6. Henderson to Acheson, 761. 67/1-246, *Department of State Archives*.

a new policy had not materialized. Budgetary restrictions eliminated the discretionary fund while the proposal for military missions failed to arouse interest. By spring, 1946, Henderson was still searching for a way to affirm America's interest in the Middle East¹.

While the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs worried about American influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, higher officials in the State Department were preoccupied by the deterioration of relations with Russia. After the failure of the Foreign Ministers Conference in London in September, 1945, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes concluded that a conciliatory approach to the Soviet Union was useless. Voicing a growing impatience with Moscow, Byrnes declared that, «we are facing a new Russia, totally different from the Russia we dealt with a year ago... now that the war is over they are taking an aggressive attitude and stand on political and territorial questions that is indefensible»².

World events encouraged disillusion. In early 1946 disputes in Iran and Manchuria burst into crises. On February 9, Russian Premier Joseph Stalin, in a rare public speech, emphasized the hostility between capitalism and communism. The belligerent speech coincided with the exposure of a Soviet espionage ring in Canada and the suggestion by J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that similar groups were operating within the United States³. By the end of February the Truman Administration was psychologically prepared for George Kennan's «long telegram». Stressing the ideological nature of Communist foreign policy, the American chargé d'affaires in Moscow warned that the Soviet Union would never alter its policy in response to conciliatory moves by the United States. The report had a great effect on the Administration. By detailing the incompatibility of American and Russian objectives, Kennan provided the intellectual justification for a reorientation of policy⁴.

Secretary of State Byrnes was especially impressed with the need for a new policy. Criticized for his earlier moderation, the Secretary wanted to make it clear to the Russians and the American public that he would no longer compromise. Byrnes revealed his new approach on February 28, 1946, in a speech before the Overseas Press Club in New York. While reiterating America's commitment to the United Nations Charter, Byrnes warned that, «we will not and we cannot stand aloof if force or the threat of force is used contrary to

1. Matthews to Henderson, 11/17/45, *Foreign Relations*, 1945, Vol. VIII, 1214-1215; memo by Henderson, 5/20/46, *Foreign Relations*, 1946, Vol. VII, 782-783.

2. Quoted in John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, (New York, 1972) 266.

3. George C. Herring, *Aid to Russia, 1941-1946*, (New York, 1973) 260.

4. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 303-304.

the purposes and principles of the Charter... If we are to be a great power we must act as a great power, not only in order to ensure our own security but in order to preserve the peace of the world»¹. Byrnes had decided to stand firm against the Soviet Union and he needed only an opportunity to demonstrate that firmness. The opportunity would come in the Eastern Mediterranean at the instigation of the Department of the Navy.

By 1946 the Navy Department was increasingly interested in the Mediterranean. This interest reflected two strands of thought within the navy; the first represented by the Secretary of the Navy, James V. Forrestal, and the second by the career officer corps.

James Forrestal favored a tough policy toward the Soviet Union. Even before the end of the war he believed that America would face an expansionist Russia in the postwar era. Soviet imperialism was the principal threat to peace and since this expansion was ideologically motivated it could never be satisfied by concessions. To cope with this threat Forrestal felt that the United States had to maintain a strong military posture².

The Secretary of the Navy argued that seapower was the key. While the army and air force were confined to land, the navy could roam the oceans, protecting vital sea lanes and carrying the conflict to the enemy. Forrestal wanted an American fleet in every ocean to deter aggression and show the flag³. The Mediterranean was especially important. Forrestal considered the area ideal for naval diplomacy. Washing the shores of three continents, the Mediterranean allowed a naval power to outflank the European land mass and penetrate into the Near East. The region contained the largest petroleum reserves in the world and promised to be the scene of Great Power competition. The Secretary believed that the decline of British and French influence in the Middle East would create a power vacuum which the Soviet Union would exploit. An American fleet in the Mediterranean would counter Russian designs and protect the national interest in this strategic region⁴.

Russian expansion was not the sole determinant of Forrestal's interest

1. *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. XIV (March 10, 1946) 355-358. For Byrnes' response to political criticism see Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 282-283, 290-292.

2. Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, (New York, 1951) 8-12, 14; Vincent Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943-1946*, (Chapel Hill, 1966) 101.

3. Testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, 3/12/46, Box 29: House Appropriation Hearing, *James V. Forrestal Papers*, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. See also Postwar Navy Presentation, 6/19/45, Box 33, *Forrestal Papers*.

4. Forrestal to the Secretary of State, 12/11/44, Box 22: Middle East Oil, *Forrestal Papers*; Arnold Rogow, *James Forrestal: A Study of Personality, Politics, and Policy*, (New York, 1963) 179; Millis, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 156.

in the Mediterranean. Demobilization also influenced his plans for postwar naval policy. After the Japanese surrender in August, 1945, there was public pressure to «bring the boys home». Congressional eagerness to reduce military expenditures combined with this public attitude to threaten the naval establishment. The exodus of experienced personnel and the prospect of budget reductions forced the navy to lay-up hundreds of ships and close overseas bases. The proposed reorganization of the armed services which Forrestal feared would subordinate the navy to the army and air force worsened the situation. These developments jeopardized Forrestal's plans for a dominant naval role in postwar defense policy and threatened the status and morale of his department. He had to demonstrate that the navy played a valuable part in national defense and that it was particularly suited to the challenge of the postwar era¹.

Career naval officers shared their Secretary's concern. Believing that the navy had proved itself in World War II, they sought an expanded role in postwar defense policy. Senior officers were determined that naval strength would not «waste away once the apparent need for it has diminished»². The officers, however, perceived several threats to their ambitions; an economy-minded Congress, a President who (unlike Franklin D. Roosevelt) was unsympathetic to the navy, an air force claiming that air power made navies obsolete, and a War Department pushing a unification program which threatened to reduce the navy to an auxiliary service³.

The prospect of a limited naval program threatened the status and future of the officer corps. Declining naval strength in Europe was foreboding. From a peak complement of 122,900 men in May, 1944, Naval Forces Europe fell to 17,370 men by September, 1945. Reductions in the Mediterranean were especially severe. Support bases at Oran, Palermo, and Naples closed and vessels returned to the United States for redeployment or lay-up. By February, 1946, American naval strength in the Mediterranean consisted of one light cruiser and two destroyers with no supporting shore establishments. This force was responsible for supporting United States foreign policy in the region, representing American naval interests, disposing of surplus property, supporting American occupation forces in Europe, and protecting American property and lives throughout the Mediterranean⁴.

1. Rogow, *James Forrestal*, 214; Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy*, 99, 106.

2. Interview with Admiral Robert L. Dennison (ret.), 6/13/73, Washington, D.C. Admiral Dennison was Director of the Navy Department's Office of Politico-Military Affairs and a close advisor to Forrestal. For quotation see, Presentation on Postwar Navy, 6/7/45, Box 23: Postwar Navy (2), *Forrestal Papers*.

3. Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy*, 180.

4. James C. Risk, «Bases», Eighth Fleet, Command File, World War II, *Naval Archives*;

Admiral H. K. Hewitt, Commander of Naval Forces Europe, was distressed by the deterioration of his command. Hoping to reverse the drain he proposed, in the fall of 1945, an extensive program of visits by American warships to European ports. Hewitt felt that the program would generate good will, provide fleet units with experience in European waters, and stimulate recruiting by demonstrating the lures of foreign travel. Most importantly, the program would also require the deployment of additional warships to the European fleet¹.

In December, 1945, Admiral Hewitt successfully argued his case before Secretary Forrestal and Admiral Chester Nimitz, the Chief of Naval Operations. On January 6, 1946, Nimitz ordered an additional heavy cruiser and two destroyers to European waters². Elated with his success, Hewitt returned to his headquarters in London to organize a schedule of naval demonstrations. By early spring he had arranged for the cruiser *Helena* to visit Newcastle and Edinburgh and for the destroyers *Cone* and *Glennon* to visit Newport and Belfast. Another force composed of the cruiser *Houston* and two destroyers was detailed for a voyage to Norwegian ports³.

Naval Forces Europe was soon engaged in an extensive program of courtesy visits and naval maneuvers. The program arose from a need to protect a parochial, organizational interest. In its early stages it was never a response to perceived threats from the Soviet Union. Unlike their Secretary, the career naval officers never seriously worried about Russia. They had little respect for the Russian navy which restricted its activity to coastal patrol. The Office of Naval Intelligence, in a major evaluation of Soviet capabilities prepared in January, 1946, reported that Russia was limited to land operations within Eurasia. While admitting that Russia could improve her navy in the future, the report concluded that, «the Red Fleet is incapable of any important offensive or amphibious operations... techniques, tactics, and equipment are far below the Anglo-U.S. standard»⁴.

Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, «Narrative of U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, 1 September 1945 to 1 October 1946», 1-4, 9-10, 72-74, *Naval Archives*; U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, War Diaries, Operation Plan, Annex A, 2/15/46, *Naval Archives*.

1. Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, «Narrative of U.S. Naval Forces, Europe», 80, *Naval Archives*.

2. Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, «Narrative of U.S. Naval Forces, Europe», 80-81, *Naval Archives*.

3. U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, War Diaries, 4/1/46, 4/23/46, *Naval Archives*.

4. «Soviet Capabilities and Possible Intentions», 1/21/46, Box 24: Russia, *Forrestal Papers*. For evidence that naval officers did not share their Secretary's concern for Soviet ambitions see, Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy*, 223; interview with Admiral Robert L. Denison, 6/13/73.

Such skepticism influenced assessments of Russian intentions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Naval concern over the status of the Straits was minimal. Since passage through the Dardanelles could be controlled by naval power in the Aegean, navy officers concluded that physical control of the Straits was of little military interest. Moreover, since naval intelligence indicated that Russian policy in the Near East would pursue diplomatic rather than military alternatives, the Soviet Union posed no immediate threat in the region¹.

The Eastern Mediterranean, however, became the focus of naval interest as a result of an unforeseen initiative from the State Department. The remains of the Turkish Ambassador to Washington, Mehmet Munir Ertegun, had reposed in Arlington National Cemetery since his death in November, 1944. On January 25, 1946, Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson consulted President Truman about the disposition of the remains. Recalling that the ashes of the late British Ambassador, Lord Lothian, had been returned to Scotland aboard an American cruiser, Acheson suggested that a similar gesture be made to Turkey. He indicated that it would be in keeping with established diplomatic practice and would be especially appropriate in the case of the Turkish Ambassador who had been Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Washington. The Undersecretary in no way connected the gesture with political events in the Near East and proposed it merely as an act of courtesy².

The Navy Department informed Acheson that a cruiser would be available and on February 1, 1946, the Chief of Naval Operations signalled Admiral Hewitt that the President had approved the use of a cruiser to return the remains of the Turkish Ambassador³. The commanders in Europe were excited. The proposal complemented their program of naval visits and promised the assignment, if only temporarily, of additional units to the Mediterranean. Capitalizing on this opportunity, Rear Admiral Jules James, Commander Naval Forces Mediterranean, prepared an itinerary for the cruiser which included visits to French, Italian, and Greek ports⁴.

Unforeseen circumstances, however, forced a change in plans. Because of demobilization, lay-ups for repair, and the commitment of ships to appear-

1. Interview with Admiral Robert L. Dennison, 6/13/73; Chief of Naval Intelligence, «International Developments of Naval Interest», 12/21/45, 3/29/46, 4/26/46, Command File, *Naval Archives*.

2. Acheson to Truman, 1/25/46, Official File 86 (Turkey), *Truman Papers*. This memo bears the notation, «approved 1/25/46, Harry S. Truman». This is the only evidence of Truman's participation in the *Missouri* mission.

3. Chief of Naval Operations to Commander, Naval Forces Europe, 2/1/46, in «U.S.S. *Missouri*: Dispatches Relating to Mediterranean Tour, 1946», *Naval Archives*.

4. Commander, Naval Forces Mediterranean to Commander, Naval Forces Europe, 2/19/46, «U.S.S. *Missouri*: Dispatches», *Naval Archives*.

ances in British and Norwegian ports, there was a shortage of cruisers in the Atlantic. Facing a «tight cruiser situation», Admiral Nimitz notified Admiral Hewitt on February 9, 1946, that the navy was considering a unit of the Atlantic battleship division for the mission and indicated that the *Wisconsin* would be the choice¹. Circumstances again intervened. In early 1946 the active battleship strength of the Atlantic Fleet consisted of two units, the *Wisconsin* and the *Missouri*. In accordance with standard maintenance procedures, the *Wisconsin* was due to enter port on April 1, for a routine overhaul. Since the Mediterranean voyage was set for early April the *Wisconsin* would not be available. By default the *Missouri* was designated for the mission².

While the navy searched for a warship the original proposal for an expression of international courtesy evolved into a plan to demonstrate American military power. Forrestal realized the opportunity inherent in the selection of a battleship. Since capital ships usually sailed with an escort the *Missouri* could be accompanied by cruisers and destroyers. This force would be a step toward a Mediterranean fleet and would exemplify Forrestal's concept of gunboat diplomacy. A naval demonstration into the Eastern Mediterranean would reveal to the Soviet Union the range of American power and assert America's interest in the Near East. A task force led by the *Missouri* would also enhance the navy's image. An extended voyage by the most famous and powerful warship in the fleet would keep the navy in the public's eye and emphasize the glamour and importance of seapower at a time when the navy faced pressure from the partisans of unification and demobilization³.

On February 28, 1946, Forrestal asked Secretary of State Byrnes to support a plan to dispatch a task force to the Mediterranean. Byrnes endorsed the proposal⁴. Since Acheson first suggested the mission in January, there had been a change in the political climate in Washington resulting in a hardening attitude toward the Soviet Union⁵. Forrestal's plan provided an opportunity to demonstrate the reorientation of American policy. By accepting it, Byrnes could also silence those critics of his earlier policy of compromise. It is more

1. Chief of Naval Operations to Commander, Naval Forces Europe, 2/1/46, 2/9/46, «U.S.S. *Missouri*: Dispatches», *Naval Archives*.

2. Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet to Chief of Naval Operations, 2/14/46, «U.S.S. *Missouri*: Dispatches», *Naval Archives*. For battleship strength see, «Monthly Composition of Task Forces», Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Operations Division, *Naval Archives*.

3. Forrestal was very much aware of the publicity value of naval operations and, as his papers indicate, manipulated fleet units for this purpose. For general guide-lines see, Forrestal to Nimitz, 9/6/44, Box 48: Unidentified (2), *Forrestal Papers*; Millis, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 155.

4. James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, (New York, 1958) 351.

5. *Supra*.

than coincidence that the Secretary of State accepted Forrestal's proposal on the same day that he revealed his new attitude before the Overseas Press Club.

Despite Byrnes' endorsement, State Department support for a task force depended upon the approval of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs. The Middle Eastern officers eagerly supported their Secretary. Unconcerned with the problems of the Navy Department or the geopolitical formulations of the Secretary of the Navy, they considered a task force an answer to their own needs. The ceremonial return of the Ambassador's remains would reaffirm U.S.-Turkish friendship while the visit of a task force would bolster Turkish confidence in American support. More importantly, a naval force in the Eastern Mediterranean would be the symbol so long desired by NEA. It would enhance American prestige in the Near East and demonstrate to Britain, France, Russia, and the Arab regimes America's interest in the region. With this in mind, Loy Henderson hoped to extend the itinerary to include Beirut, Alexandria, and appearances in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf¹.

The plan for a major naval demonstration collapsed, not for lack of support, but for lack of ships. Demobilization had forced the Navy to reduce operations. Patrol and occupation duties in the Far East combined with the demands of the military repatriation program to strain naval resources. The Chief of Naval Operations could not allocate the vessels to organize a task force for the voyage. The *Missouri* finally sailed into Istanbul accompanied only by the cruiser *Providence* and the destroyer *Power*².

The origins of the *Missouri* mission suggest that previous interpretations of the voyage are misleading. The mission cannot be understood solely as a calculated gesture aimed at the Soviet Union. The voyage was the culmination of a series of independent initiatives within the State Department and the Navy Department reflecting the parochial concerns of four actors: the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Navy, and the naval officer corps. Acheson's innocent suggestion coalesced these initiatives into a single program: a naval demonstration in the Mediterranean. Each actor considered the proposal a solution to its particular

1. Interview with Loy Henderson, 5/30/73. The American legation in Lebanon was «most desirous» of scheduling a naval visit to Beirut believing it would foster goodwill. Commander, Naval Forces, Europe to Chief of Naval Operations, 2/13/46, «U.S.S. *Missouri*: Dispatches», *Naval Archives*.

2. Robert G. Albion and Robert H. Connery, *Forrestal and the Navy*, (New York, 1962) 186-187. The *Providence* and the *Power* were already in the Mediterranean as part of the 3 ship Mediterranean squadron. The *Missouri* voyage did not substantially reinforce the American naval presence in the region. See, «Monthly Composition of Task Forces», Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Operations Division, *Naval Archives*.

problem; each endorsed the proposal for different reasons; and each expected to reap different benefits. As a result the mission had five, only accidentally related, goals; return the remains of an honored diplomat, symbolize American interest in the Middle East, publicize the utility of seapower, reinforce American naval strength in Europe, and indicate a new policy toward the Soviet Union.

The origins of the *Missouri* mission also suggest an alternative perspective on Cold War diplomacy. Historians have analyzed this period in terms of calculated actions by rational actors. Assuming that diplomatic behavior reflects intention or plan they translate the fundamental question, «Why did X happen?» into the question, «Why did this nation do X?» The transformation encourages a search for singlefactor explanations and unified, purposeful behavior¹.

To identify purpose, analysts observe the consequences of an action and then examine preceding events for decisions or attitudes that «explain» the consequences. In the light of subsequent Soviet-American tension in the Eastern Mediterranean in the summer and fall of 1946 the *Missouri* mission seems a milestone in American policy. The fact that American officials like James Byrnes and James Forrestal expressed anti-Soviet attitudes in this period encourages the conclusion that the voyage was an element in a developing policy. The absence of opposition reinforces the image of unified action.

The rationalist image, however, obscures important differences among policy-makers. The *Missouri* case demonstrates that support for a policy does not imply consensus upon the purposes or expected results of the policy. Indeed, the same actor may possess a variety of motives in supporting an initiative. Rationalist historians also fail to consider the impact of random phenomena which prejudice the outcome of policy. Such phenomena provide opportunities, restrict alternatives, and structure action beyond the expectations of policy-makers.

Nations do pursue both long and short term goals in foreign policy. The controversy over the origins of the Cold War reflects the search for patterns of diplomatic behavior. Generalization, however, depends upon an understanding of particulars. Because it oversimplifies the policy-making process, the rationalist approach inadequately describes events and is a poor guide to generalization. An approach sensitive to the political-bureaucratic determinants of policy-making provides greater insight. At the very least it more accurately describes diplomatic activity. When applied to the events of the critical period 1945-1947, it may lead to a reevaluation of the origins of the Cold War.

1. Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 252-253.