

THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY:  
AMERICAN POLICY IN THE STRAITS QUESTION  
(1914 - 1963)

Throughout the Nineteenth Century, American interests in the Ottoman Empire, which centered in the missionary - educational enterprise and a somewhat developing commerce, were peripheral in character. American policy in the question of the Turkish Straits, the foundations of which were laid in that century, rested on the general principles of freedom of the seas and, therefore, of freedom of transit and navigation in the Straits, both for war and commercial vessels. The United States was not a party to any of the great treaties which governed the Straits, although it had its own primary treaties of 1830 and 1862 and, while it was prepared to acquiesce in the various treaty restrictions, as indicated in 1871, it did not necessarily recognize the right of the Sublime Porte to close the Dardanelles.<sup>1</sup> No basic change occurred in the development of American policy at the outbreak of World War I. When the Grand Vizier informed Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr., of the German closure of the Dardanelles on September 27, 1914, he was advised that, nevertheless, the United States "did not admit" the right of the Ottoman Government to close the Dardanelles in time of peace.<sup>2</sup>

*American Policy During World War I*

Essentially, the United States had not wanted to see the war spread to the Ottoman Empire and, among other things, it was concerned with the possibility that the capitulatory régime might be abolished and was fearful for the Armenian and other Christian minorities. When the Ottoman Empire was brought into the war through the attack of the German-

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1. See the author's "The United States and the Problem of the Turkish Straits: The Foundations of American Policy (1830 - 1914)," *Balkan Studies* 3 (1962), 1 - 28.

2. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914 Supplement. The World War*, 77, 113 - 114. Hereafter cited as *U. S. Foreign Relations*.

Ottoman fleet against Russian Black Sea ports on October 28 - 29, 1914, it was clear to Mr. Morgenthau, as he informed Washington much later, that real authority in Constantinople lay, not in the hands of the Sultan, but of the triumvirate of Enver, Talaat and Cemal Paças, of the Party of Union and Progress.<sup>3</sup> Alarmed and depressed at the possible forcing of the Dardanelles, when the British fleet attacked on February 19, 1915, preparations had been made to move the capital to Eskişehir, but with the failure of that campaign, the triumvirate had become "dizzy with success", and justly claimed that they had compelled the Allies to employ 500,000 troops to try to force the Dardanelles and to use a tremendous fleet for the purpose.<sup>4</sup> They had become very touchy and wanted to give the Germans no "credit for the defense of the Dardanelles." After the futile Anglo - French attempt on March 18, 1915, the Ottoman authorities "became convinced of the almost impregnability of the Dardanelles" and began, according to Morgenthau, "to develop the plan of exterminating the Armenians to punish them for their alleged perfidy towards the Turks in November and December 1914 at the Caucasus boundary."

Shortly after the entry of Turkey into the war negotiations leading to the so - called secret agreements for the partition of the Ottoman Empire were undertaken.<sup>5</sup> The United States had no part in and very little knowledge of these agreements at the time, although it was to be much concerned with them at the Paris Peace Conference. Under the Anglo - Franco Russian agreements of March - April 1915, suffice it to say, Imperial Russia was to come into possession of the Straits, as reported to the Department of State as early as November 4, 1915.<sup>6</sup>

With the entry of the United States into the great conflict in April 1917 there was much more interest in the fate of the Ottoman Empire, al-

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3. See his despatches of November 4, 18, 1915 in *U. S. Foreign Relations. The Lansing Papers, 1914 - 1920*, I, 762 - 766, 766 - 769.

4. See especially Alan Moorehead, *Gallipoli* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1956), *passim*, for a classic account of the campaign.

5. Harry N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History, 1913 - 1923* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1931), Chs. IV - V.

6. See Ambassador Penfield's despatch from Vienna on November 4, 1915 in *Lansing Papers*, I, 640 - 641, and that of Ambassador Page (Rome) of August 21, 1915 in *ibid.*, 723 - 724. Page felt that "the most probable solution of the whole matter will be that in the end Constantinople will be left in the hands of the Porte with a modest hinterland and the city and the Straits will be neutralized and put under the protection of the Powers; otherwise it will almost certainly prove ... an apple of discord, and no one knows what difficulties will arise over it at the close of the present war."

though the United States did not declare war against it, even if diplomatic relations were formally severed.' Secretary of State Lansing, aware of Turkish irritation at German arrogance, reported a belief that if the triumvirate were appropriately approached by promises of bribery, they might allow some submarines to enter the Dardanelles and destroy German vessels, and that if the Turks were relieved of their fear of the Germans, they might be willing to make peace on very favorable terms.<sup>9</sup>

By early 1916 the United States had received some detailed, if not always accurate data concerning the secret treaties partitioning the Ottoman Empire, with hints from Rome, Vienna and London, as noted above. Following a conference in London, Col. E. M. House declared that he, Lloyd George, Grey and Asquith, on February 14, 1916, had "cheerfully" divided up the Empire, with the discussion hanging for a long while on the fate of Constantinople, Lloyd George and Balfour being quite unenthusiastic about giving it to Russia, and Grey and Asquith believing that if that were not done, "material for another war would always be at hand". House suggested neutralization.<sup>10</sup> The Russian Revolutions in 1917 were to bring additional factors into the picture, and when Balfour visited Washington during April - May 1917, there was considerable discussion of the general problems of peace and of the future of the Ottoman Empire. During talks on April 28, it was agreed that Constantinople and the Straits should be internationalized, although Col. House pointed out on April 30 that this would involve serious implications as to the internationalization of other waterways, including the Suez and Panama Canals. But neither President Wilson nor Mr. Balfour thought that "the two questions had much in common."<sup>10</sup>

With the advent of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917, the denunciation and the publication of the "secret treaties" relating to the partition of the Ottoman Empire, the world came to know something of the realistic understandings concerning the future of Asia Minor and the Arab world. Meanwhile, there were a number of very interesting developments

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7. See the despatch of Ambassador Abram I. Elkus, who succeeded Morgenthau at Constantinople, March 2, 1917, in *ibid.*, I, 787 - 791.

8. Memorandum to President Wilson, May 17, 1917; *ibid.*, II, 17 - 19.

9. Charles Seymour, *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 181.

10. *Ibid.*, III, 43 - 45. See also *Lansing Papers*, II, 23; Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour, First Earl of Balfour, K. G., O. M., F. R. S., 1906 - 1930* (New York, Putnam, 1937), II, 144 - 151; David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1916 - 1917* (Boston, Little, Brown, 1934), III, 449 - 500; *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1918*, I, 38 - 39, 44; E. A. Adamov, *Konstantinopol i Proliviy* (Moscow, 1925 - 1926), I, 395 - 396.

concerning the problem of the Straits. Public statements of peace aims in the war indicated something of Allied thinking, and, on January 5, 1918, in a statement to the Labor Conference, Lloyd George noted that, while the Allies were not fighting to deprive the Turkish people of their homelands, the Straits should be "internationalized and neutralized."<sup>11</sup> Three days later, on January 8, President Wilson noted in his "Fourteen Points" address that the Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire should be assured "a secure sovereignty," while other nationalities should be assured of "an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development." The Turkish Straits, however, should be "permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees."<sup>12</sup> By October 1918, an official commentary on the Fourteen Points, which dealt in detail with the Turkish problem, recommended internationalization of Constantinople and the Straits.<sup>13</sup>

#### *The Paris Peace Conference: American Policy*

When the Paris Peace Conference formally opened on January 18, 1919, the policies to be adopted concerning the future of the Near and Middle East were already well outlined, both in the secret agreements of 1915-1917 and in the public declarations which had followed during the last year of the war. The problems raised by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire were so serious and the conflict of interests so fundamental and vital, however, that it was not until four and one half years later, with the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923, that the Powers reached some basic solutions.

The positions of the Great Powers represented at Paris seemed clear at the outset, and this seemed particularly so of France, which insisted on the integrity of the war agreements, under which Syria would fall to France, to say nothing of Lebanon, Cilicia and perhaps Palestine. The

11. Lloyd George, V, 70. On the persistence of Russian and Soviet aspirations see Ivar Spector, *The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1958* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1959), Ch. 4.

12. Ray Stannard Baker and W. E. Dodd, *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (New York Harper, 1927), III, 160-161. Point X. See also the proposals for an international mandate over Constantinople and the Straits by Secretary Lansing, September 21, 1918 in Robert Lansing, *Peace Negotiations* (Boston, 1921), 192-197.

13. David Hunter Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris, with Documents* (New York, Apple, 1928), II, Document 85, pp. 428-457; Seymour, IV, 199-200.

Americans were engaged in conversations as to their attitude and, interestingly enough, from the beginning there were suggestions as to the internationalization of Constantinople and the assumption of an American mandate over the region of the Straits. However, when Lord Eustace Percy, of the British Delegation, on December 2, 1918, suggested to David Hunter Miller, President Wilson's Legal Adviser, that the principles as to internationalization of the Turkish Straits would also apply to the Panama Canal, Mr. Miller considered this an attempt "to show difficulties" in the way of the "idealistic principles of the United States."<sup>14</sup>

The Intelligence Section of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, on January 21, 1919, three days after the formal opening of the Conference, outlined its recommendations concerning the Turkish settlement and, among other things, proposed establishment of an international state in the region of Constantinople and the Straits, under a League of Nations mandate, with boundaries to include the entire coastline of the Straits and the Sea of Marmara. The Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles were to be "permanently opened as a free passageway to the ships of commerce of all nations, under international guarantees."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the British Delegation presented a number of memoranda outlining the British position on the eve of the Paris Conference.<sup>16</sup> These, too, called for "free passage" of the Black Sea Straits, under international control, as stipulated in Wilson's Twelfth Point, and declared that freedom could be assured only by removing the waterway from Turkish sovereignty, "dismantling all fortifications, and introducing some external authority to secure maintenance of the desired conditions", under a League of Nations mandate.

Formal discussion of the Ottoman problem began essentially on January 30, in connection with a study of the mandate principle, and a resolution was finally adopted to the effect that Palestine, Syria, the Arab countries to the east of Palestine and Syria, Armenia, Cilicia, and perhaps additional areas of Asia Minor be separated from the Ottoman Empire, and

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14. *Miller Diary*, I, 27 - 28, 74.

15. *Ibid.*, IV, Document 246, pp. 249 - 265. Col. House, evidently, was thinking in similar terms, and even of making Constantinople the seat of the League of Nations. Finally he disapproved of the latter idea, however, because of the climate. He had counted on being the U. S. Representative to the League of Nations, "so he plumped for Geneva, where he had always been comfortable" (Arthur D. Howden Smith, *Mr. House of Texas* (New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1940), 164 - 165.

16. Prepared largely by Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee, the basic document of these memoranda is *Statement of British Policy in the Middle East for Submission to the Peace Conference* (if required), February 18, 1919. 18 pp.

placed under League of Nations mandates, without prejudice to the settlement of other parts of the Empire.<sup>17</sup> In the ensuing days, there was much consideration of the partition of the Empire, with representatives of its various peoples expounding their views. There was considerable sentiment in favor of the United States assuming a mandate, particularly over the region of Constantinople and the region of the Straits as well as for Armenia, despite the reluctance of President Wilson to support such an idea before the United States Senate.<sup>18</sup> On May 21, Mr. Lloyd George reiterated his proposal for an American mandate for Constantinople, the region of the Straits, Armenia and Cilicia, but President Wilson questioned American willingness to assume these burdens, and declared that if the United States did, it would not object to a French adviser for the Sultan. Lloyd George objected that, if the United States could not take a mandate over Anatolia, it would be better for the Sultan "to clear out of Constantinople."<sup>19</sup> The Ottoman Delegation, led by Damad Ferid Paşa, which appeared before the Council of Ten on June 17, needless to say, protested bitterly against any separation of Constantinople and the Straits from the Empire, to say nothing of other aspects of the developing Allied plans.<sup>20</sup> When Lloyd George raised the Turkish issue again on June 25 - 26, in view of President Wilson's impending departure for home, the President agreed to present the plan for an American mandate for Constantinople and the Straits to the Senate, noting, among other things, that Constantinople was "not a Turkish city; other races were in the majority."<sup>21</sup>

There was, of course, further discussion in the United States Delegation after the President's departure, following signature of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. It is particularly interesting to note Mr. Herbert Hoover's reflections on July 1 at a meeting of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary, when he opposed an American mandate over the Armenian "poor house", and felt that it would be "a terrific burden and public act of charity for the United States to take a mandate over the city of Constantinople and the region of the Straits." As a port, according to Mr. Hoover, Constantinople served "no useful purpose except as the gateway to the Black Sea, a coaling station, and as a home for pilots." Since it

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17, *U. S. Foreign Relations. Paris Peace Conference 1919*, III, 785 - 790, 807; XI, 1, 5; *Miller Diary*, IV, 130 - 131, 302 - 304. Hereafter cited as *PPC*.

18. *PPC*, 579 - 583; Paul Mantoux, *Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre. 24 mars - 28 juin 1919* (Paris, 1955), II, 58 - 63.

19. *PPC*, V, 755 - 768, 779 - 781.

20. *PPC*, V, 509 - 512; VI, 576 - 589, 617, 888 - 891.

21. *PPC*, VI, 675 - 677, 711 - 713.

was no longer necessary for ships even to stop in the port, Mr. Hoover considered that its population would soon drop from 2,000,000 to 200,000, or its people, as a matter of charity, would soon have to be supported by a Great Power. France "would be the logical power to receive a mandate over this city because of the future associations which France would undoubtedly have with Russia."<sup>22</sup>

There were no indications, however, that the United States would soon make any decision in favor of a mandate, and the American delegation drifted along during the late summer and the fall of 1919, having considerable difficulties in getting instructions from Washington. On August 28, the King-Crane Commission presented its Report to the American Delegation, recommending, among other things, establishment of an international Constantinopolitan State, separate from Turkey, under a mandatory, and called for an American mandate.<sup>23</sup> In studying the problem of a Constantinopolitan State, the commission considered it necessary to have a clear understanding of the nature of the proposed state, which should be administered under a permanent mandatory of the League of Nations. There should be a "reasonable territory" on both sides of the Straits, all fortifications should be abolished, and the area should be open "to all people for any legitimate purposes." It was also thought that it would be a natural place "for great educational and religious foundations." While the Turkish people should be free to stay, Constantinople would no longer be the capital of Turkey. It was necessary to insure the permanent freedom of the Straits and to remove the plot and counter-plot on the Golden Horn. Turkish development, it was felt, would be assisted in this way, and establishment of an international state would avoid future difficulties among rival powers seeking "to possess or control the Straits", and, in the end, the entire world would "gain from a permanent solution of this vexing world problem." But the Report had little or no influence at Paris. Nor did the Report of the Harbord Mission, which was completed in October.<sup>24</sup>

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22. *PPC*, XI, 261 - 262. Precisely what Mr. Hoover had in mind is not at all clear. Neither an examination of shipping in the port of Istanbul nor of its population (ca. 1,000,000) bear out this prophecy. In 1962, for example, some 40,375,591 tons of commercial shipping passed the Straits, about 993,705 tons being American.

23. *PPC*, XII, 745 - 863. See also Harry N. Howard, *The King-Crane Commission: An American Inquiry in the Middle East* (Beirut, Khayats, 1963), 369 pp.

24. Major-General James G. Harbord, *Conditions in the Near East. Report of the American Military Mission in Armenia*. 66th Congress. 2nd Session. Senate Document No. 266, 44 pp. *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1919, II, 841 - 874.

Conversations continued both in Washington and Paris.<sup>26</sup> But on November 26, a memorandum from the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, which insisted on the need "of a definite Turkish policy" for the United States, bearing in mind the King - Crane and Harbord Reports, went without response of any kind from Washington.<sup>26</sup>

*From Sèvres to Lausanne*

The United States took no part in the negotiations which led to the abortive Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920, and which was ultimately rejected by the Turkish Nationalists who, basically, also rejected the idea of an American mandate, whether over Anatolia or the region of Constantinople and the Straits, although there was some discussion of the idea, especially at the Nationalist Congresses at Erzerum in July and Sivas in September 1919. The Sivas Congress, in a Declaration which foreshadowed the Turkish Pact of January 28 - April 23, 1920, looked toward independence, not an American mandate or international control. Provided the security of Constantinople were assured, however, the Pact called for the opening of the Straits "to the commerce and traffic of the world," on the basis of Turkish agreement with "all other interested governments concerned."<sup>27</sup>

As the discussions continued at Paris, Clemenceau thought it a mistake to eliminate the Turks from Constantinople, while leaving the Straits under Allied control. Lloyd George objected to leaving them in the city, which should be under an international force.<sup>28</sup> From the Washington vantage point, the United States, not directly involved in the negotiations, was interested in maintenance of the "open door" in the Near East,

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25. Lord Grey reported from Washington on October 18 that, while the United Kingdom should be willing to see an American mandate over Constantinople and the Straits, there were difficulties. Mr. Morgenthau had suggested to him an Anglo-American or international control at Gibraltar and suggested that the United States should agree to a similar control at Panama. *British Documents, First Series, IV, 826 - 827.*

26. See American Commission to Negotiate Peace. *Memorandum on the Policy of the United States Relative to the Treaty with Turkey.* Hotel de Grillon, Paris, November 26, 1919.

27. For convenient text see J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record, 1914 - 1956* (Princeton, N. J., D. Van Nostrand, 1956), II, 74 - 75.

28. See especially the Lloyd George - Clemenceau discussions in London during 1919; *British Documents, First Series, II, 727 - 733, 773 - 774; IV, 938 - 966, 966 - 979, 992 - 1000; 1016 - 1025.*



particularly for American oil interests, preservation of the capitulatory rights, and problem of Armenia. But the idea of a mandate was rejected by the Senate on June 1, 1920.

Consulted relative to the project for the Treaty of Sèvres, Secretary of State Colby, on March 24, 1920, noted<sup>29</sup>

With pleasure that the question of warships and the régime of the Straits in war time are still under advisement as this Government is convinced that no final decision should or can be made without the consent of Russia.

A month later, on April 24, the Allies concluded the San Remo agreement, providing for the maintenance of the Sultan at Constantinople, the right of the Allies to occupy European Turkey and the zone of the Straits, the creation of an Armenian state with access to the Black Sea, and the abandonment by Turkey of Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine and the Aegean Islands. Two days later the Allies were glad to have the American views of the prospective treaty, but they were not prone to delay matters in order to have them.<sup>30</sup> Among other things, the Colby note of April 26 had discussed the problem of the Straits, and the Powers noted the United States view relative to Russian representation on the Commission of the Straits, and hoped and believed that the American Government would accept the provisions as to freedom of the Straits. But the Ottoman Government was not at all happy with the Allied position and protested bitterly on May 11, particularly because of the provisions concerning Constantinople and the Straits, although it had to sign the Treaty of Sèvres on August 10, 1920.<sup>31</sup>

Under the Treaty of Sèvres, the Straits were open, in peace and war, "to every vessel of commerce or of war and to military and commercial aircraft, without distinction of flag" and, theoretically internationalized, while being placed effectively under Allied control. While Sèvres represented the high water mark in British and Allied policy concerning Turkey, it proved abortive, for the Turkish Nationalists simply rejected it and continued the fight against the Greeks until the fall of 1922.<sup>32</sup> Ultimately

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29. *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1920*, III, 748 - 753; Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, II, 807 - 808.

30. *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1920*, III, 753 - 756.

31. *Observations of the Ottoman Empire on the Conditions of Peace*. Ottoman Delegation to the Peace Conference. From Damad Ferid Pasha to Millerand, President of the Peace Conference. June 25, 1920. E. S. H. Bulletin No. 637. American Embassy, Paris, July 1, 1920. See also *Observations générales présentées par la délégation ottomane à la Conférence de la Paix*, July 8, 1920, 47 pp.

32. For the Treaty of Sèvres, see United Kingdom, Foreign Office, Treaty

an armistice was signed at Mudania on October 11, 1922, and the ground was prepared for another conference, to meet at Lausanne from November 1922 to July 1923, to prepare a new general treaty and a new convention of the Straits.

During the fall of 1922, the British Government had approached the United States, as it had members of the Commonwealth, relative to defense of the Straits, but, of course, the United States had no intention of becoming involved in this aspect of the problem. Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, was also interested in American participation in the Lausanne Conference, and especially in elaborating a Convention of the Straits. While the United States was interested in freedom of the Straits, in accordance with long standing principles, as Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes advised Ambassador Sir Auckland Geddes on November 10, 1922, it would never accept a mandate over the Near East and it would have no part in any international commission to supervise the Straits. On the other hand, the General Board of the Navy, on November 10, considered the "natural solution of the question" to be "complete freedom of the Straits for all vessels of war" as well as merchant vessels, and urged that if an international commission were established, the United States should have representation equal to that of other powers.<sup>33</sup>

When the Lausanne Conference, one of the most important diplomatic gatherings immediately following World War I, met on November 20, 1922, it was confronted with three basic theses concerning the Straits:<sup>34</sup> 1) the British position, designed to preserve the freedom of the ancient waterway, under an international régime which, in fact, would preserve the dominant influence of British sea power; 2) the Turkish project, insuring Turkish sovereignty, but providing a restricted freedom; and 3) the Soviet plan, insisting on Turkish sovereignty, but closing the Straits to warships,

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Series No. 11 (1920). *Treaty of Peace with Turkey, Signed at Sévres, August 10, 1920*. Cmd. 964; Hurewitz, II, 81 - 90.

33. See especially *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1923, II, 893 - 897, 952 - 955. The General Board also noted the importance of the Straits to Russia and stated that no solution which imposed "an artificial barrier between so great a power and the sea" could "contain within it the elements of permanency—of stability."

34. See République Française, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. *Documents Diplomatiques. Conférence de Lausanne sur les affaires du proche-orient (1922 - 1923). Recueil des Actes de la Conférence. Première série. Tomes I - IV. Deuxième série. Tomes I - II*. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, Turkey No. 1 (1923). *The Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922 - 1923*. Cmd. 1814. See also Roderic H. Davison, "Middle East Nationalism: Lausanne Thirty Years After," *VII Middle East Journal* 3 (Summer 1953), 324 - 348.

with the Black Sea remaining virtually a Soviet *mare clausum*.<sup>35</sup> The American position, to be presented by the American observers, seemed fairly well outlined at the outset, although Ambassador Richard Washburn Child announced that the United States would take no part in the negotiations, sign no documents or assume any engagement, but would be present at all discussions, and expected to be treated on a footing of perfect equality with all other delegations. In seeking instructions on December 1, 1922, the American Delegation saw no trend to contravene the principle of freedom of the Straits for commercial shipping in time of peace and indicated its previous instructions to seek no such freedom during war. But the question of the passage of warships and of the administration of the Straits might arise, and instructions were requested as to the American attitude, "with special consideration of the bearing upon waterways such as the Panama Canal of any precedents" which it might be attempted to establish at Lausanne. In reply, Mr. Hughes, who saw no "proper comparison with the Panama Canal in this matter", called for freedom of the Straits, but noted that there could be no assurances that the United States would participate in an international commission, although the United States did not object to control by others, if it were not discriminatory.<sup>36</sup> But since the United States could not be represented a control board, it would have to be contented "with proper treaty arrangements", and there was no inclination to fall in line with the recommendations of the General Board of the Navy on November 10.

Discussion of the Straits question began on December 4, with the presentation of the Turkish position by Ismet Paça [Inönü].<sup>37</sup> Ambassador Child stated the American view on December 6:<sup>38</sup>

Our position is based upon that policy of our Government which stands for complete and constant freedom, without special privilege, for our commerce and for the commerce of other

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35. The basic Soviet position had already become very clear in the Soviet-Turkish treaties of Moscow and Kars (March 16, October 13, 1921) and the Turco-Ukrainian treaty of January 2, 1922, providing for the elaboration of a convention by Turkey and "the Black Sea Powers."

36. *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1923, II, 910-913.

37. *Cmd. 1814*, pp. 127-142, 151-154; Ali Fuad, *La Question des Détroits* (Paris, 1928), 138-140; Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (New York, 1930), I, 406-409; Eric Brüel, *International Straits* (Copenhagen, 1947), II, 359-380. See also Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Years: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1946* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1952), I, 99, for an estimate of Ismet Inönü.

38. *Cmd. 1814*, pp. 145-146.

nations... We cannot accept the position that the future of commerce in the Black Sea is the exclusive affair of the States border upon it...

While the United States favored the principle of the Straits, according to Mr. Hughes' instructions of December 3, it was quite unwilling to assume any obligations with respect to guaranteeing the observance of this principle.<sup>39</sup> As Child reported on December 6, the drift at Lausanne, thanks to Allied negotiations with the Turkish Delegation, was toward strict limitation of both military and naval armaments in the Black Sea, water passages, the sea of Marmara, and the islands in the vicinity of the Straits.<sup>40</sup> Freedom of commerce was, of course, to prevail. İsmet Paşa accepted the Allied proposals on December 8, with a reservation as to the security of Constantinople and as to Turkish control over the islands at the entry of the Dardanelles, although Chicherin, the Soviet Representative, opposed the compromise, and adverted to the American position at Panama and the British at Suez in justification of the Soviet position.<sup>41</sup>

While the United States did not favor it, a new Allied project of January 18, 1923, stipulated an international commission, with guarantees in the Straits.<sup>42</sup> The Turkish Government essentially accepted the draft convention by January 31, despite Soviet objections.<sup>43</sup> But the Lausanne Conference broke up on February 4, when the Turkish Delegation refused to sign the draft general treaty, largely because of its provisions relative to the capitulatory régime.<sup>44</sup> Nor was Turkey prepared to cede Mosul to the British mandated territory of Iraq, although it had conceded in Western Thrace, in Gallipoli, and in the matter of the internationalization of the Straits.

In the end, the Conference resumed in April and the general treaty,

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39. *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1923, II, 912 - 913.* Hughes considered that an international commission "would provide an opportunity for busybodies and be a constant source of irritation" (*ibid.*, 916 - 917).

40. *Ibid.*, 917 - 918.

41. *Cmd. 1814, pp. 156 - 163.*

42. *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1923, II, 919 ff.*

43. *Cmd. 1814, pp. 449 - 450; U. S. Foreign Relations, 1923, II, 831 - 833.* In an open letter to the Second International on December 4, 1922, the Comintern noted that it was only through the Turkish renunciation of the right to occupy Constantinople and to cross the Dardanelles, and the renunciation of the right to self-determination, that Europe had been saved from a new war (Jane Degras, *The Communist International, 1919 - 1943. Documents, Vol. I, 1919 - 1922* (London, Oxford [RIIA], 1956), 406 - 407).

44. *U. S. Foreign Relations, 1923, II, 966 - 967.*

with the new Convention of the Straits, was signed on July 24, 1923.<sup>45</sup> The United States was not a signatory to the Convention, but did sign a separate instrument on August 6, 1923, which provided for "complete liberty of navigation and passage" in the Straits, on a most-favored-nation basis, in conformity with the rules established in the Lausanne Convention.<sup>46</sup> This treaty, in turn, was rejected by the Senate in 1927. But a *modus vivendi* was established and in October 1927, diplomatic relations between the United States and Turkey were formally established with the designation of Joseph C. Grew as the first American Ambassador to the Republic. The American-Turkish treaty of October 1, 1929 finally provided for most-favored-nation treatment of American vessels in Turkish waters, on a reciprocal basis, a principle which was reiterated in the Reciprocal Trade Agreement of April 1, 1939.<sup>47</sup>

#### *The United States and the Montreux Convention*

While the Turkish Government had gained a very substantial victory at the Lausanne Conference, and the Convention of the Straits was well applied, it was none too happy with the international régime of the Straits, particularly with the provisions concerning the international régime and the security provisions of the Convention. But Turkey's protests against the Convention did not become especially audible until the breakdown of confidence in the collective security system under the League of Nations during the years 1931-1936. The Turkish Government broached the problem of revision at the League of Nations Conference on Reduction and Limitation of Armaments in 1932, but it was not officially raised until the spring of 1933, and it was not until 1936, following Germany's march into the Rhineland on March 7 that the question became genuinely active.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, informal soundings were taken in 1934, not only with the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union and members of the Balkan

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45. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, Turkey No. 16 (1923). *Treaty of Peace with Turkey, and Other Instruments Signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923*. Cmd. 1929.

46. *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1923, II, 1151-1171.

47. For texts see Treaty Series No. 813 (1930), and Executive Agreement Series No. 163 (1940); *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1929, III, 803-842. These principles are somewhat reminiscent of the treaties of 1830 and 1862.

48. League of Nations. *Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments*. *Conference Documents*, II, 366, 400, 476, 486-487.

Entente, but with the United States as well.<sup>49</sup> On April 10, 1936, the Turkish Government requested revision of the Lausanne Convention in the interest of its sovereignty and security, with a view to rearming the region of the Straits. Since the primary interest of the United States at the time appeared to be in the preservation of commercial freedom of the Straits, a question which was not to be raised, the United States saw no reason for formal representation, even with observers, at the Montreux Conference of June 22 - July 20, 1936, which grew out of the Turkish request.<sup>50</sup> The United States, however, accepted the Montreux Convention, which reaffirmed the principle of freedom of transit and navigation for commercial vessels, without limit of time, although it imposed restrictions on the rights of warships, and recognized the special position of the Soviet Union in the Black Sea.<sup>51</sup>

The Montreux Convention was well received, and the Soviet Government, almost in particular, hailed it as a great diplomatic victory for the USSR, despite the later strictures during World War II to the contrary, although all its desiderata relative to the Black Sea were not achieved.<sup>52</sup> The United States Government was well pleased with the preservation of the principle of freedom of commerce in the Straits. Dr. Aras, the Turkish Foreign Minister, had a talk with Ambassador MacMurray on his return to Istanbul on July 24, was in a triumphant mood, and indicated that "Turkey had got from the Conference every substantial thing that she had wanted — which satisfactory result had been achieved in spite of very serious difficulties", a result partly ascribed "to the constant friendly support of the British Delegation". On the other hand, while he did not blame either France or the USSR, Dr. Aras did enlarge on the difficult situation created by the Franco-Soviet insistence that the Straits be kept open for the uses of Franco-Soviet alliance, an obvious reference to Article XIX of the new Convention, a situation which Turkey could never have accepted, and he noted that Turkey had no intention of adhering to a mutual assistance treaty such as that envisaged in that article. Dr Aras resented the absence of Italy from the conference and reiterated that the

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49. For the American position see *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1934, II, 971 - 990; 1935, I, 1026 - 1046; 1936, I, 503 - 529.

50. *Ibid*, 1936, I, 503 ff.

51. *Actes de la Conférence de Montreux concernant le régime des Détroits. 22 juin - 20 juillet 1936. Compte-rendus des séances plénières et du procès-verbal des débats du comité technique* (Liège, Belgium, 1936), 310 pp. See also Harry N. Howard, *The Problem of the Turkish Straits* (Washington, USGPO, 1947), 1 - 12, 25 - 28.

52. Litvinov statement of July 20, 1936 in *Conférence*, 181 - 182.

Convention "fully and impartially" preserved "the free commercial navigation of the Straits" and, indeed, further facilitated it "by a slight alleviation of the existing charges for certain services to navigation."<sup>53</sup>

Ambassador MacMurray considered the Aras statement concerning Great Britain most significant, because of its indication of the Turkish intention "to manifest an attitude of complete satisfaction, and indeed, of solidarity, with that of Great Britain." On July 31, Dr. Aras submitted the new Convention to the Grand National Assembly, noting that one of its essential characteristics was that it restored "full and complete sovereignty" over the region of the Straits and recognized the Turkish "right to fortify the Straits", which the defence of the Republic clearly demanded. In the period which immediately preceded the outbreak of the World War II, Nazi Germany sought adherence to the Montreux Convention, and Turkey drew closer to the United Kingdom and France, a manoeuvre which eventuated into the Anglo-Turkish-French understandings of May and June 1939 and finally culminated in the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance on October 19, 1939.<sup>54</sup>

#### *American Policy in the War Years (1939-1945)*

At the intercontinental crossroads it was natural that the position of Turkey should have been of much concern to both sides in the conflict, including the United States, although this is hardly the place to discuss all the manoeuvres in and around or the pressures upon that country.<sup>55</sup> A nonbelligerent ally of Great Britain and France, as the war moved down through the Balkan Peninsula during 1940 and 1941, there was much interest in the attitude of Turkey, almost especially with the Italian attack on Greece on October 28, 1940, and the advance of German forces into Rumania and then Bulgaria, with the ultimate aggression against Yugoslavia and Greece on April 5-6, 1941.<sup>56</sup> President Roosevelt was much concerned with these developments and, during January-February 1941, sent Col. William J. Donovan to this troubled region to stimulate resistance to

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53. *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1936, III, 526-528.

54. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, Turkey No. 4 (1940). *Treaty of Mutual Resistance between His Majesty in Respect of the United Kingdom, the President of the French Republic and the President of the Turkish Republic*. Angora, October 19, 1939. Cmd. 6165. See also *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1939, I, 484-486, 489.

55. Harry N. Howard, "Germany, the Soviet Union, and Turkey During World War II," XIX Department of State *Bulletin* 472 (July 18, 1948), 63-78.

56. See *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1940, I, 526-528, 542-610; 1941, III, 668-669.

the Nazis, and Turkey and the United States appeared in essential agreement on the outlook toward the war.<sup>57</sup> Turkey, however, remained a non-belligerent until the end of the war, although American entry into the conflict in December 1941, without doubt, had a positive influence in Ankara, and the defense of Turkey was declared vital to that of the United States under the Lend-Lease Act.

There was little difficulty, as such, concerning the question of the Straits, despite questions raised from time to time relative to the passage of German warships, but considerable trouble about the problem of Lend-Lease supplies and the Turkish supply of chrome to Germany.<sup>58</sup> While certain pressures were brought, particularly after the Moscow and Tehran Conferences, and during 1944, relative to active Turkish belligerency, it is now clear that, in the last analysis neither the United States, nor the United Kingdom, nor even the Soviet Union, actually desired Turkish entry into the "shooting war," while the Turkish Government, in the event of actual hostilities, was anxious about sufficient supplies and equipment and desired to avoid both Nazi conquest and later Soviet "liberation."<sup>59</sup> Stalin showed little interest in the matter at Tehran in November 1943, although there had been some discussion of it at the earlier Moscow meeting in October. At the Cairo Conference, in December 1943, President Roosevelt was little interested, did not blame the Turkish leaders for not wanting to get "caught with their pants down", and General Marshall feared that supplies for Operation Overlord would be diverted and that the Turks would "burn up all our logistics". When President Roosevelt put the question to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in July 1944, General Marshall's reply was in the negative.<sup>60</sup>

*Yalta, Potsdam and the Debate on the Straits (1945-1946)*

Turkey's declaration of war, on February 23, 1945, which came soon after the Yalta Conference, was largely formal in character. That Conference

57. *Ibid.*, 1941, I, 282; Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York, Macmillan, 1948), II, 928; William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (New York, Harper, 1953), 393-401; *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1941, III, 821 ff.

58. Hull, II, 1365-1368.

59. See especially *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943* (Washington, USGPO, 1961), 117, 123-127, 144-146, 147 ff, 158, 164-167, 174-175, 180 ff, 190 ff, 491-497; *U. S. Foreign Relations*, 1943, I, 513-781 (Moscow Conference).

60. *Ibid.*, 655 ff; Robert E. Shwrtwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York, Harper, 1948), 771-776, 799-803; Hull, II, 1375.



was, of course, busy with a number of things and it was not until February 10, the day before it ended, that any reference was made to the problem of the Straits.<sup>61</sup> Marshall Stalin wanted to "say a few words about the Montreux Convention regarding the Dardanelles," which he regarded as "outmoded." Although the Montreux Convention had been hailed as "a great victory of Soviet diplomacy," and more particularly by Foreign Minister Litvinov at Montreux, Marshal Stalin felt that it "strangled" the USSR, and noted that it had been achieved at a time "when the relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union were not perfect."<sup>62</sup> There was no further substantive discussion of the problem, although brief reference was made to it by the Foreign Ministers on February 11, in connection with the preparation of the communiqué and protocol, in accordance with which it had been agreed that they would consider Soviet proposals for revision and report to their Governments. The Turkish Government was to be informed "at the appropriate moment".

During the months which followed, the Soviet Union brought severe pressures upon Turkey, both for the cession of the Kars-Ardahan area and for a new régime of the Straits, with substantial control over the area, including bases in the Straits, along lines which had been sketched out in the Hitler - Molotov - Ribbentrop discussions in November 1940. Indeed, on March 19, 1945, the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow, Selim Sarper, was informed that the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of December 17, 1945 was no longer in accord with requirements, and a new one would have to be elaborated. Naturally the United States and the United Kingdom were informed of the Soviet demands, and there was much concern as to where they might lead, and fear lest they mean the conversion of Turkey into a satellite along the lines of the developing structure in Eastern Europe.<sup>63</sup> The Soviet position was substantially repeated to Ambassador Sarper during conversations with Molotov on June 7 and 18, 1945.<sup>64</sup> When Amba-

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61. Department of State, *The Conference at Malta and Yalta 1945* (Washington, USGPO, 1955), 498 - 506, 771 - 782, 897 - 906, 910 - 918, 931 - 933, 940, 982; Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference* (Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1949), 267 - 269.

62. See also V. Potemkin, *Istoria Diplomatii* (Moscow, 1941 - 1945), 3 vols. French edition: *Histoire de la Diplomatie* (Paris, 1946 - 1947), III, 586.

63. Walter Millis (Ed.), *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, Viking, 1951), 38 - 39; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs. Year of Decisions* (New York, Doubleday, 1955), I, 74 - 76, 79 - 82.

64. Department of State, *Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)* (Washington, USGPO, 1960), II, 1017 - 1026, 1029 - 1030, 1043 - 1044 (hereafter cited as *PC*); Stephen G. Xydis, "The 1945 Crisis Over the Turkish Straits." *Balkan Studies* 1 (1960), 65 - 90;

sador Baydur called on Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew on July 7 to discuss the matter and was advised that the Turco-Soviet conversations had been a "friendly exchange of views and that no concrete threats had been made". Mr. Baydur inquired whether it would have been considered friendly if the Soviet Union had demanded the cession of Boston and San Francisco.<sup>65</sup>

There was considerable discussion of the problem at Potsdam, especially when Mr. Churchill noted on July 22 that the United Kingdom favored revision of Montreux Convention, through agreement of the signatories, with the exception of Japan and he had already indicated his readiness to welcome "an arrangement for the free movement of Russian ships, naval or merchant, through the Black Sea and back". But he also impressed Marshal Stalin on the importance of not alarming Turkey. Mr. Molotov noted the conversations with Ambassador Sarper, recalled the Turco-Soviet Treaty of March 16, 1921, and then adverted to the Ottoman-Russian treaties of 1805 and 1833, with which neither Mr. Churchill nor Mr. Truman, of course, was familiar, as precedents for the Soviet position.<sup>66</sup> During the conversations on July 23, Stalin complained that, under the Montreux Convention, "a small state supported by Great Britain held a great state by the threat and gave it no outlet", and he could imagine the commotion in Great Britain if a similar situation obtained at Gibraltar or in the United States relative to the Panama Canal.<sup>67</sup>

President Truman, who also favored revision of the Montreux Convention, thought the Straits should be guaranteed by all, since many of the wars during the past 200 years had been concerned with waterways, and he believed one way of preventing conflicts was to arrange for free passage of commerce through the Straits on a basis similar to that which prevailed on American waters. He presented a paper outlining his views for free and unrestricted navigation of "inland waterways" under international guarantees.<sup>68</sup> This was a far-reaching proposal, which would have

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"New Light on the Big Three Crisis over Turkey in 1945," XIV *Middle East Journal* 4 (Autumn 1960), 416-432. *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947: Prelude to the Truman Doctrine*. Institute for Balkan Studies, No 60, 1963), Chs. III-X.

65. Grew, II, 1470-1473; *PC*, I, 1044-1047.

66. *PC*, II, 256-259, 266-267, 1427-1428; Herbert Feis, *Between Peace and War. The Potsdam Conference* (Princeton, 1960), 295.

67. *PC*, II, 302-305, 312-314.

68. *PC*, II, 304, 654-656; Truman, I, 377-378; Admiral William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, 409. See also Harry S. Truman, "Truman Urges New Look at Foreign Policy," *The Washington Post*, April 28, 1963. It may be observed that Senator George D. Aiken outlined a project for internationalization of the Panama Canal

covered not merely the Straits, but other waterways of similar import, including canals (Panama, for instance) and international rivers, but there was no further discussion of this broad project after July 24, although the question was to be referred to the Council of Foreign Ministers for further examination. In the end, according to the Protocol, the question of the Straits was to be considered in consultation with the Turkish Government.<sup>69</sup>

In the months which followed the Potsdam Conference, there was increasing Soviet pressure on both Greece and Turkey, with a view to achieving even wider aims in the Eastern Mediterranean, and in the same general direction, the Soviet Union staked out a claim for a Soviet trusteeship over Tripolitania.<sup>70</sup> In a statement of October 27, 1945, in line with the traditional American policy, President Truman repeated his Potsdam thesis as to freedom of the seas and "equal rights to the navigation of boundary rivers and waterways and of rivers and waterways which pass through more than one country."<sup>71</sup> On November 2, the United States advised the Turkish Government of its hope that the problem of the Straits would be settled in a manner which would "promote international security", show "due consideration for the interests of Turkey and all Black Sea riparian powers", and "secure the free use of this important waterway to the commerce of all nations". The United States proposed an international conference to consider revision of the Montreux Convention, in which it would be willing to participate, and suggested as a basis for an equitable solution :<sup>72</sup>

1. Opening of the Straits to merchant vessels of all nations at all times;
2. Opening of the Straits to the transit of warships of Black Sea Powers at all times;
3. Except for an agreed limited tonnage in peace time, passage

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in February 1960 (*New York Times*, February 3 - 4, 1960), following a trip to Latin America in November 1959). President Eisenhower, on the other hand considered this a proposition "I would not even think of" (*New York Times*, November 5, 1959).

69. *PC*, II, 338, 365 - 367, 371, 1439 - 1440, 1496 - 1497, 1673, 1600; Truman, I, 384 - 386; Feis, 300, 301.

70. *PC*, II, 1048 - 1061; James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York, Harper, 1947), 94 - 96; *Forrestal Diaries*, 97; Benjamin Rivlin, *United Nations Action: Italian Colonies* (New York, Carnegie Endowment, 1950), 10 - 17.

71. Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. 331 (October 28, 1945), 654. See also President İnönü's statement of November 1, 1945 in Turkish Embassy (Washington) Press Release (1945).

72. Howard, *The Problem of the Turkish Straits*, 47.

through the Straits to be denied to the warships of non - Black Sea Powers at all times, except with the specific consent of the Black Sea Powers or when acting under the authority of the United Nations; and 4. Modernization of the Montreux Convention through substitution of the United Nations System for that of the League of Nations and the elimination of Japan as a signatory.

The British Government agreed to the American principles on November 21, and the Turkish Government, despite certain misgivings, accepted the note as a basis for discussion on December 6, provided Turkish independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity were not infringed.<sup>73</sup>

President Truman reiterated his position on January 21, 1946 and, by this time, there was an awareness in high places of Soviet intentions relative to Turkey and the Straits, and the President felt that, unless the USSR were faced "with an iron fist and strong language" another war was in the making. He doubted that "compromise" would work any longer. The President thought the United States should let its position in Iran, in view of the Soviet threat, be known in no uncertain terms, and should insist on "the internationalization of the Kiel Canal, the Rhineland - Danube waterway and the Black Sea Straits".<sup>74</sup> But the pressure on Turkey continued, and Prime Minister Saracoglu declared in January 1946 that, while Turkey would participate in a Straits Conference and accept decisions which did not infringe on its sovereignty or integrity and that the United Nations could succeed only if it had the full support of the United States, Turkey would protect itself even if this meant war.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, the Turkish Government was continually assailed in the Soviet press and radio and the unofficial claims, especially to the Kars - Ardahan region in Eastern Anatolia, to Turkish territory were pursued with encouragement on the part of Soviet Government.<sup>76</sup> President Truman repeated the American position again on April 6, 1946 in his Army Day Address, noting, among other things, that "no nation, great or small" had legitimate interests in the Near and Middle East which could not be "reconciled with the interests of other nations".<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the skies continued to darken over Turkey.

73. M. Epstein (Ed.), *The Annual Register* (London, 1946), 214; Turkish Embassy, Washington, D. C., Press Release No. 1, February 1, 1946; Truman, II, 96.

74. William Hillman, *Mr. President: The First Publication from the Personal Diaries, Private Letters, Papers and Revealing Interviews of Harry S. Truman* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952), 22 - 23; Truman, II, 551 - 552.

75. Turkish Embassy, Washington, D. C., Press Release, February 1, 1946.

76. *New York Times*, February 1, 1946; *Pravda*, February 25, 1946.

77. Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. 354 (April 14, 1946), 622; Forrestal,

But it was not until August 7, 1946 that the Soviet Government inaugurated the great debate on the question of the Straits, with a note to the Turkish Government calling for revision of the Montreux Convention, charging the Turkish Government with malfeasance in the administration of the Straits during the war, and proposing a "new régime" of the Straits.<sup>78</sup> The "new régime" provided for 1) opening of the Straits to all merchant ships and 2) to the warships of the Black Sea Powers at all times, with 3) restricted passage for the warships of non-Black Sea Powers; 4) establishment of a new régime under the control of Turkey and other Black Sea Powers, with 5) a joint system of defense. These were principles, of course, which were reminiscent of the Ottoman-Russian treaties of December 23, 1798, September 23, 1805, July 8, 1833, and of the treaties of Moscow and Kars (1921) and the Turco-Ukrainian Treaty of January 2, 1922. They were also in line with the Hitler-Molotov-Ribbentrop discussions of November 1940 and, if implemented, would have brought Turkey under Soviet control.<sup>79</sup>

The import of the Soviet position was at once apparent, and the United States firmly replied on August 19, reiterating its position of November 2, 1945 and noting that a régime of the Straits was not the exclusive affair of the Black Sea Powers, a view fully supported by the United Kingdom on August 21. Similarly, the Turkish Government, on August 22, which responded to the Soviet changes as to its alleged war misconduct, was prepared for a revision of the Montreux Convention, but rejected a Turco-Soviet régime of the Straits and a joint defense system, as incompatible with its sovereignty and dignity. The Soviet Government repeated its position on September 24 and elaborated on its proposals as to a new régime and joint defense, and noted the Potsdam agreement concerning direct discussions concerning the Straits. Both the United States

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141, 171. See also the Bevin statement in the House of Commons, June 4, 1946; *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series*, Vol. 423, cols. 1836 - 1837.

78. The notes hereafter cited may be examined in Howard, *The Problem of the Turkish Straits*, 47 - 68. See also I. Vasiliev, *O turetskom "neitralitete" vo vtoroi mirovoi voine* (Moscow, 1951), 104 - 108. At the same time, the Soviet Government published its propaganda documentary brochure against Turkey: Arkhivnoe Upravlenie Ministerstva Inostrannikh Del Soiuza SSR. *Dokumentii Ministerstva Inostrannikh Del Germanii*. Vipusk II. *Germanskaia Politika v Turtsii (1941 - 1943)*. OGIZ - Gospolitizdat 1946.

79. See also the remarks of Friedrich Engels in 1890 on the significance of such a development in Paul Blackstock and Bert F. Hoselitz, *The Russian Menace to Europe. By Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. A Collection of Articles, Speeches, Letters and News Despatches* (Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1952), 29.

and the United Kingdom contested the Soviet position in their replies of October 9.<sup>80</sup> The Turkish Government reaffirmed its earlier position on October 18, once more stressing its willingness to revise the Montreux Convention, but rejecting the Soviet demands. This substantially ended this phase of the discussion, and on October 26, the Soviet Union advised the United Kingdom that it did not share the British view as to the direct conversations envisaged at Potsdam, although it was "premature to consider the question of calling a conference to establish a new régime for the Black Sea Straits".

### *Recent Developments in the Problem*

There were no further communications on the subject after October 26 and no formal discussion of the issue as such. Nevertheless, the Soviet pressure on both Greece and Turkey remained and took on a somewhat ominous form during 1946-1947, the response to which was the formulation of the Truman Doctrine, on March 12, 1947, and the consequent programs of aid to Greece and Turkey.<sup>81</sup> On April 19, 1950, *Krasnii Flot*, official organ of the Soviet Navy, declared that the Montreux Convention should be revised, since it had ceased to accord with the interests of the Black Sea Powers. Secretary of State Dean Acheson commented on April 21, 1950 and, reviewing the position which the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Turkey had taken in 1945-1946, concluded: "There the matter stands".<sup>82</sup> While it could have raised the question of revision in 1951, in accordance with the five-year period stipulated in the Convention, the Soviet Government made no effort to do so. There was little doubt at the time that the Soviet Union had suffered a diplomatic defeat, largely because of the unity of the Turkish Government and its

80. In general see Hurewitz, II, 268 - 271; Forrestal, 192 - 193; Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks* (New York, Viking, 1955), 63 - 64. The question came up for brief discussion at the Paris Peace Conference on October 10, 1946, when Molotov compared the Soviet desiderata with the United States and United Kingdom positions at Panama and Suez (New York Times, October 11, 1946, text). See also Kazimiers Grzybowski, "The Soviet Doctrine of *Mare Clausum* and Policies in Black and Baltic Seas," XIV *Journal of Central European Affairs* (January 1955), 339 - 353.

81. See especially XVI Department of State *Bulletin Supplement* 409A (May 4, 1947); 827 - 909: *Aid to Greece and Turkey: A Collection of State Papers*; U. N. Docs. A/C.1/SR. 82, 83 for the Vyshinsky attack against Turkey on October 18, 22, and 24, 1947 and the reply of Ambassador Sarper, in the Political Committee of the UN General Assembly.

82. Department of State Press Release No. 387 (April 21, 1950).

people in resisting its demands, the premature revelations of the real Soviet aims concerning the Straits, and the appearance of the United States as a formidable factor on the world stage, with important interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

While no problem, technically, arose concerning the Straits in the ensuing years, there were some important developments in the direction of regional defense. In October - November 1951, along with France, the United Kingdom and the United States, Turkey proposed a project for the establishment of a Middle East Comamnd, a move which proved abortive, for probably understandable reasons.<sup>83</sup> On February 15, 1952, both Greece and Turkey became members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.<sup>84</sup> A year later, on February 28, 1953, Turkey joined with Greece and Yugoslavia in a new Balkan Entente but, while a Treaty of Alliance, Political Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed on August 9, 1954, at Bled, the new grouping did not, in fact, prove very significant in the sense of regional security. The so - called Baghdad pact, the beginning of which went back to 1954 - 1955, appeared, for a time, on much sounder ground, and it became the object of bitter Soviet attack.<sup>85</sup>

The United States, during this period, considered Turkey one of its staunchest allies, as Mr. Dulles noted during his visit to that country in May 1953. A few days after the Dulles visit, however, on May 30, 1953, Foreign Minister Molotov, in a new overture to Turkey, advised the Turkish Ambassador that the Soviet Government had been considering its relations with neighboring states and, among other matters, the status of Soviet - Turkish relations. The Soviet note referred to the denunciation of the treaty of December 17, 1925 and to the discussions which had followed during which, on June 7, 1945, as a price for the negotiation of a new treaty, which would have converted Turkey into a Soviet satellite, the Soviet Union had asked for the retrocession of the Kars - Ardahan district and a new régime of the Straits. Now, however, the Soviet Government felt that the Turkish Government had been unduly grieved in these matters, indicated that the Governments of Armenia and Georgia had found it possible "to renounce their territorial claims on Turkey," and declared

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83. Department of State, *American Foreign Policy, 1950 - 1955: Basic Documents* (Washington, USGPO, 1957), II, 2180 - 2187. See also General Bradley's statement on the strategic significance of Turkey in S. Ex. Rept. No. 1, 82d Cong., 2d Sess. *Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of Greece and Turkey*, pp. 11 - 12.

84. *American Foreign Policy*, II, 1233 - 1239.

85. Hurewitz, II, 415 - 421, for example.

that the USSR had reviewed its policy as to the Straits and considered it possible to protect the USSR's security in connection with the Straits on terms equally acceptable to both the USSR and Turkey.<sup>86</sup> Consequently the Soviet Union had "no territorial claims on Turkey."<sup>86</sup>

The Turkish Government duly informed the United Kingdom, the United States and France of the Soviet manoeuvre and indicated its intention of advising the North Atlantic Council, and there appeared to be no doubt that it was designed to weaken both NATO and the new Balkan Entente. While the United States made no official comment on the Soviet move, on June 11 the Turkish Foreign Ministry acknowledged that it had received the note, and the Turkish press gave a resounding response. The Turkish Government did not reply until July 18, expressing its satisfaction at the renunciation of territorial claims, nothing that the Soviet concern for good relations corresponded with its own desires, and stressing that "the question of the Black Sea Straits", as the Soviet Government well knew, was "regulated by provisions of the Montreux Convention". To keep the discussion going, evidently, on July 20, the Soviet Government sent another note, which had a special bearing on Turco-American relations, for it complained concerning the prospective visit, during July 22-27, of ten United States warships to Istanbul, to be followed by a visit, of 22 British warships during July 27-August 3, which the Soviet Government considered a "kind of military demonstration". But, on July 24, the Turkish Government noted that these were courtesy visits under Articles 14 and 17 of the Montreux Convention, and their frequency was but a "happy evidence of the friendly ties uniting Turkey with countries to which the invited fleets" belonged. The Soviet Government reiterated its position on July 31, when it also pointed out that 33 warships, of 197,000 displacement, had visited Turkey in 1950, 49 (378,000 tons) in 1951, and 69 (587,727 tons) in 1952, to say nothing of the 60 (300,000 tons) which had passed the Straits during the first 7 months of 1953.<sup>87</sup> It therefore felt that its request for additional information had been justified. There was no special response to the Soviet note, but on August 8, Premier Ma-

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86. For the Soviet-Turkish exchange see especially Council on Foreign Relations, *Documents on American Foreign Relations 1953*, pp. 165-169; Harry N. Howard, *The Development of United States Policy in the Near East, South Asia, and Africa During 1953* (Department of State Publication 5432), 277-279.

87. See République Turque. Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. *Rapports Annuels sur le Mouvement des Navires à Travers les Détroits*, 1946 ff, for detailed data. Only in 1962, when it had 95,000 tons, did the Soviet Union report its warship tonnage in the Black Sea.



lenkov reiterated that the Soviet Union had no territorial claims and noted the Soviet desire for good neighborly relations.<sup>88</sup> The Soviet "peace offensive" continued. The Soviet Government took no steps to denounce the Montreux Convention, as it might have done, on November 9, 1954, with the result that, in accordance with Article 28, that instrument was to endure until two years after any specific date of denunciation by any of the signatories.

Few questions have arisen since that time relative to the Straits. While the Turkish Government supported the American position during the Suez crisis in 1956, in view of its own "nationalization" of the Straits in 1936, perhaps, and of the possibility that it wanted no reflection on that fact, Turkey raised no question of principle following Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal Company.<sup>89</sup> In 1957, the Turkish Government fully supported the Eisenhower Doctrine for defense of the Middle East,<sup>90</sup> in line with its consistent policy. During the Syrian crisis of August - October 1957, Turkey was once more under Soviet pressure, not dissimilar to that which had been applied in reference to the Straits in 1945 - 1946, as Secretary of State Dulles well pointed out.<sup>91</sup> The Turkish Government became somewhat concerned with the elaboration of principles pertaining generally to the régime of the high seas during 1954 - 1956 by the International Law Commission, in view of the suggestions concerning transit and navigation of straits, and it may be noted that the later Conference on the Law of the Sea, 1858 - 1960, failed to reach basic agreement, especially as to territorial waters.<sup>92</sup>

There appeared to be no basic changes in policy or interest relative to the Straits in Turco - American relations in the later years, whether before the *coup d'état* of May 1960 or subsequently.<sup>93</sup> Despite Soviet war-

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88. Council on Foreign Relations, *Documents on American Foreign Relations 1953*, 138 - 139.

89. Department of State, *The Suez Problem, July 26 - September 22, 1956* (Washington, USGPO, 1956), 120 - 123.

90. Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents 1957* (Washington, USGPO, 1961), 837.

91. *Ibid.*, 1046 - 1048.

92. See especially U. N. Doc. A/2934: Report of the International Law Commission Covering the Work of Its Seventh Session, 2 May - 8 July 1955: Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents 1958* (Washington, USGPO, 1962), 249 ff.

93. See, for example, *The New York Times*, May 23, 27, 29, 1960. It may be observed that, during 1946 - 1962, American assistance to Turkey totaled no less

nings, Turkey entered into a defense agreement with the United States on March 5, 1959, under which the United States undertook to take appropriate action, including the use of armed force in the event of aggression against Turkey, and reaffirmed its promise of economic and military assistance.<sup>94</sup> There were differences of view, no doubt, concerning strategic concepts, the problem of NATO bases and Polaris submarines.<sup>95</sup> While there appeared little question that, in the nuclear age of instantaneous communications, the Straits no longer had quite the importance which they possessed during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, there was no doubt that they were of vital significance to Turkey, its independence and its territorial integrity.<sup>96</sup>

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than \$ 3,869,300,000, with \$ 1,581,300,000 devoted to economic and \$ 2,288,000,000 to military assistance.

94. United States of America. *Treaties and other International Acts Series* 4191. March 5, 1959. Identical agreements were signed with Pakistan and Iran.

95. On May 20, 1963, the Soviet Government sent a note to the United States, the United Kingdom and 14 Mediterranean countries, including Turkey, urging that the Mediterranean region be declared a nuclear-free zone. The note was well timed for the opening of the North Atlantic Council in Ottawa, Canada. *New York Times*, May 22, 1963.

96. *Washington Post*, March 24, April 23, May 9, 1963; *London Economist*, February 9, 1963, p. 498.