

THE TURKISH STRAITS AFTER WORLD WAR II: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

I

SOME HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union is a newcomer to the Eastern Mediterranean or the Middle East. Imperial Russia had a primary interest in the Ottoman Empire, especially after the annexation of the Crimea (1774-1783),¹ in the approaches to Southern Russia from the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, through the Straits into the Black Sea, and in the commercial and naval exit from the Black Sea into the "open sea," and the urge to the sea remained a primary *motif* of Russian policy. From its inception, the Soviet Union has had a basic interest in "the Northern Tier" of the Middle East (Greece, Turkey and Iran) for similar reasons. While the year 1955 marks a watershed in Soviet expansion toward the Arab East, it would be inaccurate to consider that period as marking a breaking point or a new departure in policy and interest in the Middle East as a whole. As Louis Fischer pointed out forty years ago, "the natural and political geography of the Black Sea and the Straits was left unchanged by the revolution of November, 1917," even if the "life interests of Russia" no longer appeared to require "the extension of Russian territory to the edge of the Mediterranean."² There are continuities in Imperial Russian and Soviet policy along the Northern Tier of Greece, Turkey and Iran, of which it would be well to be aware, whatever the changes in regime, direction and ideology.

While the antecedents of Russian and Soviet policy reach back through the centuries, with Imperial Russian policy and interest clearly registered in the Russian-Ottoman treaties of 1774 (Küçük Kaynarca), 1798, 1805 and 1833 (Hünkâr Iskelesi), it is well briefly to recall the more immediate past of World War II when, in a basic sense the Soviet Government sketched out some fundamental guidelines for policy as to Turkey and the Middle East. The policy was set forth in particular during the Hitler-Molotov-

1. Alan W. Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1772-1783* (Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press, 1970), 180 pp.

2. Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (London, Cape, 1930), I, 399.

Ribbentrop discussions during November 12, 13, 1940, when the Soviet Government, as a price for possible entry into the Axis, with which it was then closely associated, demanded a new regime of the Turkish Straits, with land, naval and air bases in that area, and declared that the center of gravity of Soviet policy and interest lay south of Baku and Batum, in the general direction of the Persian Gulf—an area which clearly encompassed the Arab world as well. The Soviet position did not change with the end of World War II. To the contrary, Soviet ambitions were pressed at all points along the Northern Tier of the Middle East in Greece, Turkey and Iran, and during 1945-1946 there were demands for a trusteeship over Libya and for a commercial base in the Dodecanese Islands.³

Ignored in the past, American concern with and interest in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East go back some 200 years, even before the foundation of the United States.⁴ Until 1939, the beginning of World War II, the American interest centered essentially around the *missionary-educational-philanthropic enterprise*, which dates from the early Nineteenth Century, when the first American missionaries went out to the area, especially in the regions of Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem and Istanbul. The *commercial-economic interest*, dating from the Eighteenth Century, was more aspirational than actual prior to World War II, and there was a general absence of *political or strategic interest*, whether in the global or regional sense, despite concern for the peoples of the Middle East and the peace, security and stability of the area during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

In principle, the enduring American *politico-strategic interest* in the area may be dated from December 3, 1941, when President Roosevelt, in extending Lend-Lease Assistance to Turkey, almost on the eve of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, declared the defense of Turkey vital to that of the United States. The concept was extended to the Middle East as a whole in 1944, although the United Kingdom was to "carry the ball" and bear the major military burdens in the area during World War II.⁵ In practice, however,

3. See H.N. Howard, "Germany, The Soviet Union and Turkey During World War II," *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. XIX, No. 472 (July 18, 1948), 63-78; "The United States and Turkey: American Policy in the Straits Question (1914-1963)," *Balkan Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (1963), 225-250; "The Entry of Turkey into World War II," *Belleten*, Vol. 31, No. 122 (April 1967), 221-275.

4. In general, see John A. DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East 1900-1939* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1963), 447 pp.

5. The Department of State, *The Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers*. 1941, III, 928-929; 1944, V, 1. Hereafter cited as *USFR*.

the enduring American military commitments came only after World War II, in response, essentially, to the Soviet thrust along the Northern Tier in Greece, Turkey and Iran. The Truman Doctrine (March 12, 1947) marks the nodal point in this development, while the entry of Greece and Turkey into NATO (February 15, 1952) and the bilateral agreements with Turkey and Iran (March 5, 1959), in association with CENTO and the Eisenhower Doctrine (1957), embody the direct and specific commitments. While the United States has maintained the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea since 1946—the most powerful fleet ever assembled in the inland sea—with a naval ancestry in a Mediterranean squadron dating back to 1816, and has an Air Force training mission in Saudi Arabia, small naval units in the Persian Gulf, and some 10,000 troops in Turkey, it has no military commitments other than those briefly noted above.⁶

Whatever Soviet or American interest in the past, questions now arise as to the basic interests of the two super Powers in Turkey and the Middle East as a whole. A British writer, Laurence W. Martin, of the Institute for Strategic Studies, has argued that the area is “a declining asset to the West in its traditional role of line of communication,” but he suggests that, for the Soviet Union, “as a power of rising capability and ambition, the Middle East must take an increasing interest as a way to break out finally from its long encirclement.”⁷ An Israeli writer, Walter Laqueur, presses the point much further, and tells us that the area “has long ceased to be geographically important; there are no crossroads in the air age.” While military bases may be “desirable,” they are not “essential,” since the ICBM “has changed all that,” and the oil is of no consequence to the United States. Nevertheless, we are advised, the fate of the area as a whole will remain “a matter of supreme concern to all American policy-makers,” for if it became “an exclusive Soviet sphere of interest the repercussions on the world situation would be immediate and far-reaching. It would decisively shift the balance of power and would have incalculable consequences all over the world.”⁸

6. H. N. Howard, “US Interest in the Middle East,” *The Military Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (January 1970), 64-76.

7. See Laurence W. Martin, “The Changing Military Balance,” in J. C. Hurewitz, ed., *Soviet-American Military Rivalry in the Middle East* (New York, Praeger, 1969).

8. Walter Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East: The Soviet Union in the Mediterranean, 1958-1968* (New York, Macmillan, 1969), 188-189. See also William D. Smith, “Oil: A World of Deepening Strive,” *The New York Times*, June 21, 1970, Section 3, pp. 1, 10.

II

DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN AND SOVIET INTEREST

During the long history of the Ottoman Empire, Russo-Ottoman relations were often marked by war and hostility, and the fact that some thirteen conflicts were fought since the Seventeenth Century left an enduring impress on the relationship. Leaving aside the Slavophil dream of the conquest of Constantinople, which provided a certain motivation to Imperial Russian secular policy, the Russian Empire appears to have pursued two basic aims relative to the Ottoman Empire: (1) the achievement of a dominant position in the Ottoman Empire, through close alliance which would establish a secure and unassailable Russian position or, failing that, the partition of the Ottoman Empire and the acquisition of the necessary strategic positions for the protection of the Russian and imperial interest; and (2) the attainment of a secure commercial and naval passage to and from the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea through the Turkish Straits, while barring that route to the naval forces of nonriparian powers, primarily Great Britain and France, but also Germany in the later years. The Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi July 8, 1833, which has an important bearing on Soviet policy relative to Turkey to this day, is one of the nodal developments in Russian policy in the Nineteenth Century, even though it was of short duration.⁹ Imperial Russia drove through the Balkans toward Constantinople and the Straits during the Russo-Ottoman conflict of 1877-1878, and in the so called "secret agreements" of 1915 it sought fulfillment of its ambitions relative to Constantinople and the Straits, but failed to achieve its aims.

As already observed, Imperial Russia achieved commercial access to the Turkish Straits on a permanent basis through the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (July 21, 1774). Within the next century there was a very significant development of Russian commerce through the Straits, especially in the grain trade, which was particularly important in the Russian balance in international trade. During the decade of 1830-1840, there was a very rapid growth and development in the economy of southern Russia and the port of Odessa became

9. See especially Serge Goriainov, *Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles. Etude historique sur la question des Détroits. D'après la correspondance diplomatique déposée aux archives centrales de Saint-Petersbourg et à celles de l'Empire* (Paris, Plon, 1910), *passim*; A. N. Mandelstam, *La politique russe d'accès à la Méditerranée au XXème siècle*. (The Hague, Académie de droit international, *Recueil des cours*, Vol. 47 (1934), I, 603-798; P.E. Mosely, *Russian Diplomacy and the Opening of the Straits in 1838 and 1839* (Cambridge, Harvard, 1934), 178 pp; J.C. Hurewitz, "Russia and the Turkish Straits: A Revaluation of the Origins of the Problem," *World Politics*, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (July 1962), 605-632; "The Background of Russia's Claims to the Turkish Straits," *Belleten*, Vol. 28, No. 111 (1964), 459-503.

particularly important in the Russian export and so remains today. By 1880 it was estimated that some 50 per cent of the total Russian export commerce went out of the Black Sea and the Turkish Straits and no less than 80 per cent of the grain trade. When the Ottoman Government closed the Straits for some six weeks (April-May) 1912 during the Italo-Turkish War concerning Tripoli (Libya), Russian merchants suffered the loss of millions of rubles, a development which led Russian statesmen to seek solutions of the Straits problem through the achievement of security of passage, not merely by treaty guarantees, but, possibly through control of the region of the Straits. The Russian Political Conference, composed of unofficial representatives at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, estimated that, by 1914, 40 per cent of the total Russian exports, 54 per cent of maritime exports, 74 per cent of the cereals, 88 per cent of petroleum, 93 per cent of the manganese, and 61 per cent of the iron were exported *via* the Black Sea through the Straits to the outside world.

The Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917 did not alter the enduring significance of the Black Sea and the Turkish Straits, although in the earlier years, for very understandable reasons, Soviet commerce in the area dropped considerably in importance. In 1913, for example, the last year before the onset of World War I, some 1,428,435 tons of Russian shipping went through the Straits, and it was not until 1935 that this figure was reached and exceeded (1,614, 564 tons), the average figure during 1920-1939 being well below 1,000,000 tons.¹⁰ American tonnage was so insignificant as to be unlisted in 1913, but grew somewhat during the interwar period of 1920-1939, from 266,679 in 1920 to 275,543 in 1938, with the highest tonnage (589,778 tons) in 1922. British, Italian and Greek commercial shipping operating in the Straits maintained a dominant position during the period prior to World War II.

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, President Wilson stood for internationalization of the Turkish Straits under an international regime, with freedom of transit and navigation of those waters, largely in accordance with principles which had been enunciated as early as May 5, 1871 and which, in fact, went back to the first American-Ottoman Treaty of May 7, 1830.¹¹ The

10. See Harry N. Howard, "Germany, The Soviet Union and Turkey During World War II," Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. XIX, No. 472 (July 18, 1948), 73-76, for tables. As late as 1939 shipping of the USSR, Bulgaria and Rumania constituted only 1.7, 7.7 and 3 per cent respectively of the total registered net tonnage passing through the Straits, while percentages for other users were: France 2.7, Great Britain 14, Greece 8.5, Italy 14.7, Turkey 30, the United States 2.8 and Yugoslavia 0.7.

11. Among other things, see James T. Shotwell and Francis Deak, *Turkey at the Straits*

Soviet Government did not participate in the Paris Conference. It did take part in the Lausanne Conference, following the Greco-Turkish War, during 1922-1923, especially as to the Straits. Prior to the Lausanne Conference, indeed, in the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Kars (October 13, 1921) and the Ukrainian-Turkish Treaty of January 2, 1922, the Soviet position as to the elaboration of a new Convention of the Straits, by Turkey and the Black Sea States, in a way which would not infringe on Turkish sovereignty or security, it was said, and in terms which clearly foreshadowed the positions of 1936 and 1945-1946, was clearly set forth.¹² While the Soviet Union, during this period, had desired, as it did in 1945-1946, the elaboration of a Convention by Turkey and the Black Sea Powers and, up to a point, supported the Turkish position, which looked toward complete sovereignty over Constantinople and the Straits, basically the Soviet Union desired to establish the Black Sea as a Soviet *mare clausum*, both in the interest of its own security and of maintaining a dominant influence over Turkey.

The United States, which sent observers to the Lausanne Conference, stood by its well-established principles as to freedom of commerce, transit and navigation in the Straits, although it opposed establishment of an international regime over the area. Immediately prior to the opening of the Conference, on November 10, 1922, the General Board of the Navy submitted a basic statement, which noted the importance of the Straits, called attention to their significance to Russia, and declared: "No solution that imposes an artificial barrier between so great a power and the sea can contain within it the elements of permanency,—of stability." It also called for equal representation of the United States in any international commission which might be established—a position which Secretary of State Hughes rejected—and recommended freedom of navigation and transit both for commercial vessels and ships of war."¹³

(New York, Macmillan, 1940), 196 pp; H.N. Howard, "The United States and the Problem of the Turkish Straits: The Foundations of American Policy (1830-1914)," *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 3 (1962), 1-28; "The United States and Turkey: American Policy in the Straits Question (1914-1963)," *ibid.*, Vol. 4 (1963), 225-250.

12. H.N. Howard, *The Problem of the Turkish Straits*, 21.

13. *USFR*, 1923, II, 893-897. See also Roderic H. Davison, "Turkish Diplomacy at Lausanne," in Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert, eds., *The Diplomats, 1919-1939* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University, 1953), 172-209. The discussions at Lausanne may be followed in United Kingdom, Turkey No. 1 (1923). *Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922-23*. Cmd. 1814; Ministère des affaires étrangères. République française. *Documents Diplomatiques. Conférence de Lausanne sur les affaires du proche-orient. (1922-1923). Recueil des actes de la conférence* (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1923), 6 volumes.

Turkey acquiesced in the establishment of an international Straits commission, with guarantees of freedom of transit and navigation, since its security did not appear to be threatened thereby and, despite its own reservations, the Soviet Union ultimately signed the new Convention on August 14, 1923. The United States was not a signatory, although it negotiated an American-Turkish Treaty on August 6, 1923, which reserved American rights as to transit and navigation in the Straits under the Lausanne Convention. That treaty, however, was neither approved nor ratified, and it was not until October 28, 1931 that a new Treaty of Establishment and Sojourn was signed, and not until February 15, 1933, that the exchange of ratifications took place.¹⁴

While the Lausanne Convention enshrined the principle of freedom of transit and navigation for commercial vessels in the Turkish Straits, it did not sufficiently provide for the security of the waterway. With the rise of Hitler in Germany, and the threat of possible trouble, the Turkish Government, especially after 1932, sought revision of the Lausanne Convention to secure sovereignty over the area, with the full right to arm the area. Having secured the support of the USSR and Turkey's allies in the Balkan Entente (Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia) and the reluctant support of Great Britain and France, Turkey submitted a formal note on the subject on April 10, 1936.

The result of the Turkish overture was the calling of the Montreux Conference, June 22-July 20, 1936, which elaborated a new Convention of the Straits, under which Turkey, essentially, "nationalized" the Straits. The United States took no part at all in the Conference, and sent no official observers, since its sole expressed interest at the time lay exclusively in the maintenance of the principle of freedom of navigation and transit of the Straits for commerce, practically as embodied in the Treaty of May 7, 1830 and the statement of policy of May 5, 1871. Both Great Britain and France conceded the principle of Turkish sovereignty over the Straits, however, reluctantly. Despite the later strictures which the USSR was to level at the new Convention and the Turkish Government relative to the Straits, the Soviet Union considered the Montreux a great diplomatic victory, although the *desiderata* as to converting the Black Sea into a genuine Soviet *mare clausum* were not achieved, and remained for further consideration and demand during 1945-1946. The Soviet Government claimed that the Black Sea differed from other sea, inasmuch as there

14. Among other things see, Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 2 volumes, *passim*; Roger R. Trask, "Joseph C. Grew and Turco-American Rapprochement, 1927-1932," *Studies on Asia*, 1967, pp. 139-170.

was no exit at the other end, and on the closing day of the Conference, Maxim Litvinov both celebrated the Soviet victory and stated the limitations of the achievement:

The Conference has recognized, although in an insufficient way, the special rights of the riparian states of the Black Sea in the Black Sea in connection with the passage of the Straits, as well as the special geographical situation of the Black Sea, in which the general conceptions of the absolute freedom of the seas could not be entirely applied.

While freedom of commercial passage was recognized without limitation of time, with the exception of the warships of Black Sea states, there were limitations on the transit of warships and of their passage into the Black Sea.¹⁵

III

WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

During World War II, as observed at the outset, the Soviet Union was much concerned with the problem of the Turkish Straits, and in November 1940, as a price for possible adherence to the Axis, essentially demanded control of the Straits. That remained the Soviet position throughout the war, whatever the diplomatic facade, as it did in the period immediately following the war. At the Yalta Conference, on February 10, 1945, Marshal Stalin spoke of the Montreux Convention as "outmoded," and complained that it "strangled" the Soviet Union. It was agreed that the problem should be studied with a view to possible revision and that the Turkish Government should be informed "at the appropriate moment."¹⁶ During the following months, the USSR brought increasingly severe pressures upon Turkey, both for the cession of the Kars-Ardahan area in Eastern Anatolia and for a new regime of the Straits, with substantial control over the area, including bases in the Straits, along lines sketched out in the Molotov-Hitler-Ribbentrop talks of November 12-13, 1940. Moreover, on March 19, 1945, the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow,

15. For the discussions see *Actes de la Conférence de Montreux concernant le régime des Détroits. 22 Juin-20 Juillet 1936. Compte-rendus des séances plénières et des débats du comité technique* (Liège, Belgium, 1936), 310 pp. The American position relative to the Conference may be followed in *USFR*, III, 503-529. For a Turkish analysis see Feridun Cemal Erkin, *Les Relations Turco-Soviétiques et la Question des Détroits* (Ankara, 1968), 540 pp. especially Chs. 2-3. See also V. P. Potemkin, *Istoria Diplomatii* (Moscow, 1941-1945), 3 vols. (French translation, *Histoire de la Diplomatie*, Paris, Librairie de Médecis, 1946-1947), III, 586.

16. Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, Viking, 1951), 38-39; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs. Year of Decisions* (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1955), I, 74-75.

Selim Sarper, was informed that the Turco-Soviet nonaggression agreement of December 17, 1925 no longer met current requirements, and a new one would have to be negotiated. Both the United Kingdom, as an ally of Turkey, and the United States were informed of the Soviet demands, and there was much concern as to where they would lead, and fear that they might mean the conversion of Turkey into a Soviet satellite along the lines of the developing Soviet security structure in Eastern Europe.¹⁷ The Soviet position was substantially repeated to Ambassador Sarper during conversations with Molotov on June 7 and 18, 1945, when he rejected them, at first, out of hand, and then on instructions.¹⁸ Ambassador 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," and Mr. Baydur inquired whether it would have been considered friendly if the Soviet Union had demanded the cession of Boston and San Francisco.¹⁹

President Truman, who also favored revision of the Montreux Convention, thought the Straits should be guaranteed by all. He believed one of the ways 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. At the Potsdam Conference, during July-August 1945, when the problem of the Straits was under consideration, President Truman outlined his views concerning free and unrestricted navigation of "inland waterways" under international guarantees. This was a far-reaching proposal, which would have 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 referred to the Council of Foreign Ministers for further consideration. On the other hand, both Molotov and Stalin denied bringing any pressure upon Turkey, insisted that there was nothing new in the Soviet proposals, antecedents of which went back to the treaties of 1798, 1805 and 1833, and made invidious comparisons with other waterways. In the end the question of the Straits, it was agreed, was to be examined in consultation with the Turkish Government.²⁰

Following the Potsdam Conference, there was increasing Soviet pressure

17. *USFR*, 1945, VIII, 1236; *USFR, Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)*, 1945, I, 1010-1054.

18. Erkin, 300-305.

19. Joseph C. Grew, II, 1470-1473.

20. *USFR, Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)*, II, 304, 338, 365-367, 371, 1439-1440, 1496-1497, 1573, 1600; Truman, I, 377-378, 384-386.

on both Greece and Turkey, with a view to achieving even wider ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and in the same general direction, the Soviet Union staked out a claim for a trusteeship over Tripolitania. In line with traditional American policy, on October 27, 1945, 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." On November 2, the United States proposed an international conference, in which it was willing to participate, and, as a basis for an equitable solution, suggested opening of the Straits to merchant vessels of all nations at all times; opening of the Straits to the warships of Black Sea Powers at all times; denial of passage of warships of non-Black Sea Powers, except for an agreed limited tonnage in peace time, unless with the consent of the Black Sea Powers or when acting under the authority of the United Nations; and modernization of the Montreux Convention, through the substitution of the United Nations for the League of Nations and the elimination of Japan as a signatory. The British Government agreed to these principles on November 21, and the Turkish Government, despite reservations and misgivings, especially as to complete freedom for the warships of the Black Sea Powers and as to the Black Sea, accepted the note as a basis for discussion on December 6, provided Turkish sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity were not infringed.²¹

While the Soviet Union pressed its claims relative to the Straits, and sought to transform Turkey into a Soviet satellite, it also made informal claims to the Kars-Ardahan area. But it was not until August 7, 1946 that the USSR inaugurated the great debate on the question of the Straits, with a note to Turkey calling, not so much for revision of the Montreux Convention as for the elaboration of an entirely new convention, and charging the Turkish Government with malfeasance in the administration of the Straits during World War II. The proposed new convention would provide for (1) opening of the Straits to all merchants 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 regime under the control of Turkey and the Black Sea Powers, with (5) a joint system of defense. These proposals, of course, were reminiscent of the treaties of 1798, 1805, 1833, 1921 and 1922, and were completely in line with the Nazi-Soviet discussions of November 1940. If implemented, Turkey would have fallen under Soviet domination.²²

21. For backgrounds in the development of the American position see *USFR*, 1945, VIII, 1219-1293; Erkin, 312 ff. See also Howard, *The Problem of the Turkish Straits*, 47.

22. See the claims set forth in the Tiflis *Kommunisti*, December 14, 1945; *Pravda*, Feb-

The import of the Soviet position was at once quite evident. At a meeting at the White House on August 15, 1946, the Secretaries of State, War and Navy presented a memorandum to the President, which set forth the American view as to the importance of the issues:

... When the Soviet Union has once obtained full mastery of this territory (the Near and Middle East), which is strategically important from the point of view of resources, including oil, and from the point of view of communications, it will be in a much stronger position to its objectives in India and China.

We, therefore, feel that it is in the vital interests of the United States that the Soviet Union should not by force or through threat of force succeed in its unilateral plans with regard to the Dardanelles and Turkey. If Turkey under pressure should agree to the Soviet proposals, any case which we might later present in opposition to the Soviet plan before the United Nations or to the world public would be materially weakened; but the Turkish Government insists that it has faith in the United Nations system and that it will resist by force Soviet efforts to secure bases in Turkish territory even if Turkey has to fight alone. While this may be the present Turkish position, we are frankly doubtful whether Turkey will continue to adhere to this determination without assurance of support from the United States.²³

In their view, the United States now had to decide to "resist with all means at our disposal any Soviet aggression and in particular, because the case of Turkey would be so clear, any Soviet aggression against Turkey." Indeed, "the best hope of preserving peace" was the conviction that "the United States would not hesitate to join other nations in meeting armed aggression by the force of American arms."

At the meeting with President Truman on August 15, a very firm position was adopted, and the Turkish Government was advised on August 16, in view of the delicacy of the situation, "to assume a reasonable, but firm, attitude," and told that the American position of firm support had been "formulated

ruary 25, 1946, and *The New Times*, February 1, 1946. For the observations of former, Secretary of State Deen Acheson, see his *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, Norton, 1969), 199-200. See also the remarks of Friedrich Engels in 1890 on the significance of such a development, in Paul Blackstock and Bert F. Hoselitz, eds., *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.

23. *USFR*, 1946, VII, 840-842; Erkin, Ch. IX.

only after full consideration had been given to the matter at the highest levels.”²⁴ The reply to the USSR, on August 19, reiterated the position of November 2, 1945 and noted that a regime of the Straits was not the exclusive affair of the Black Sea Powers. In measured terms, the United States declared that Turkey “should continue to be primarily responsible for the defence of the Straits,” and it warned:

Should the Straits become the object of attack or threat of attack by an aggressor the resulting situation would constitute a threat to international security and would clearly be a matter for action on the part of the Security Council of the United Nations.²⁵

The United Kingdom adopted a similar position on August 21. On August 22, the Turkish Government, which responded to the Soviet charges as to alleged misconduct during the war, was prepared for a revision of the Montreux Convention, but rejected a Turco-Soviet regime of the Straits and a joint defense system, as incompatible with its sovereignty and dignity.²⁶ The Soviet Government reiterated its position on September 24, elaborated on its proposals as to a new regime and joint defense, and noted the Potsdam agreement concerning direct discussions concerning the Straits. Among other things, the new Soviet note laid special stress on the position and status of the Black Sea, and it invited “the attention of the Turkish Government to the special situation of the Black Sea as a closed sea.”²⁷

But the problem of the Turkish Straits also came up indirectly by this time at the Paris Peace Conference. During a discussion of the problem of the Danube on October 10, Foreign Minister Molotov declared:²⁸

At Potsdam President Truman and Mr. Byrnes had widened the scale of discussion by taking up the question of the regime for the Danube, the Rhine and the Black Sea Straits at one time. The previous Danube regime established in 1856 was the expression of imperialism and while Mr. Bevin had said that Great Britain had abandoned the imperialism of the 19th century a regime similar to the previous imperialistic regime was now put forward. It was not possible for the Soviet Union to accept this project. Why was there such concentration on nondiscrimination for the Danube when there were

24. Acheson, 194-196; Forrestal, 192-193; Truman, II, 95-98; Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks* (New York, Viking, 1955), 63-64; *USFR*, 1946, VII, 826-849.

25. *USFR*, 1946, VII, 852-855.

26. *Ibid.*, 852-855.

27. *Ibid.*, 860-866.

28. *USFR, Paris Peace Conference: Proceedings*, 1946, III, 761-762; *New York Times*.

other important waterways, specifically, the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal?

But, while the Soviet position was understandable, if Mr. Molotov were really speaking of political security in the region of the Black Sea, since the Turkish Straits "were considered as vital to the security of Russia as was the Panama Canal to the security of the United States,"²⁹ the larger issue involved, unquestionably, was that of the territorial integrity and political independence of Turkey, to say nothing at all of the destiny of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Moreover, it may be well to note, in view of the comparisons made with the Panama and Suez Canals and other international waterways, that the Soviet Government and Soviet spokesmen have stressed, not the similarities in those waterways, but the almost unique position of both the Black and the Baltic Sea as "closed seas," and have sought, not freedom, but Soviet domination of these waters, and their approaches, as part and parcel of Soviet policy throughout Eastern and Southeastern Europe and the Middle East, as well.

Both the United States and the United Kingdom rejected the Soviet position on October 9, and the Turkish Government reaffirmed its own position on October 18, once more stressing its willingness to revise the Montreux Convention, but rejecting the Soviet demands relative to joint defense of the Straits and the establishment of a Soviet *mare clausum* in the Black Sea. The Turkish Government could not "understand how the right of defense of the Soviet Union" could "be exercised in Turkey, in defiance of the rights of sovereignty of this country."³⁰ The discussion was now substantially and formally concluded, and on October 26, 1946, the Soviet Union advised the United Kingdom that it did not share the British view as to the direct consultation envisaged at Potsdam, although it was premature "to consider the question of calling a conference to establish a new regime for the Black Sea Straits."

Meanwhile, the United States Government had come to the considered judgment that the Soviet moves were designed:³¹

29. October 11, 1946.

27. J. C. Campbell, *The United States in World Affairs, 1945-1947*, p. 151. How old Russian policy is in this respect may be gleaned from Baron M. de Taube, *La politique russe d'avant guerre et la fin de l'empire des Tsars (1904-1907)* (Paris, Leroux, 1928), *passim*; Erik Bruel, *International Straits* (London, Sweet and Maxwell, 1947), II Pt. 1.

30. *USFR*, 1946, VII, 874-893.

31. *Ibid.*, 894-897. Memorandum on Turkey Prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, October 21, 1946, drafted by John D. Jernegan.

to weaken Turkey with the objective of bringing it under the direct influence of the USSR and enabling the Soviet Union to use Turkey both as a defense against possible outside attack from the Mediterranean and as a springboard for political and military expansion by the USSR into the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East.

Execution of such a policy by the Soviet Union "would have the most serious consequences." Strategically, Turkey was the most important factor in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. By its geographical position, Turkey constitutes the stopper in the neck of the bottle through which Soviet political and military influence could most effectively flow into the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. A Russian-dominated Turkey would open the floodgates for a Soviet advance into Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, all of which are at present still relatively free from Russian activities and direct Russian pressure because of their relative remoteness from the sphere of Soviet dominance. It would also dangerously, perhaps fatally, expose Greece and Iran, two countries whose governments are already having the greatest difficulty in standing up to the Soviet Union and its agents. None of the nations mentioned has a government or social order so stable and united as Turkey, and none could be expected to stand against Soviet pressure after Turkey had gone down.

From the purely military point of view, it was the judgment of the War and Navy Departments that, "if the Soviet Union attained military dominance of Turkey (as would be the case if it were permitted to share in the defense of the Straits), there would be grave doubt whether the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East could be considered tenable for the non-Soviet powers." But the political consequences might be even more far-reaching:

Because Turkey is so obviously a key point and is so obviously under powerful Soviet pressure, all other nations, large, and small, which fear the spreading power of the USSR are watching the current diplomatic struggle with the most intense concern. Any weakening which resulted in even partial attainment of the Soviet objectives in Turkey would have a disastrous effect upon these nations, influencing them to come to terms with the Soviets and abandon support of the United States in its efforts to see that the principles of the United Nations are upheld throughout the world. Such a

development would produce a considerable weakening in the comprehensive security situation of the United States.

While Turkey appeared to be firmly determined to resist Soviet pressures, and possessed a "relatively effective military force," it was obvious that Turkey could not "stand in the face of the USSR if left entirely alone." It was, therefore, the policy of the United States to give Turkey diplomatic, moral, economic, and military assistance. For similar reasons, American assistance to Greece was soon to be inaugurated.

IV

THE DEVELOPING AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

In the view of American officials, as noted above, the developments during 1946 had "brought to the fore the vital importance of Turkey in the international picture," since it was one of the few nations on the periphery of the Soviet Union which was "not under effective control of the USSR," despite the "unmistakable signs" to bring Turkey—to say nothing of Greece—under control. It was urged that the United States support Turkey and, in turn, the Turkish Government felt that it should adopt a reasonable posture concerning the Straits. Feridun Erkin, the Secretary-General in the Turkish Foreign Ministry, gave thought to the possible development of a regional security arrangement among the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey and the Soviet Union for defense of the Straits in wartime. If the USSR proved "reasonable," one course of action would be open. But if no change occurred in the Soviet attitude, and the pressures continued, the future looked "dreary indeed for Turkey," since the economic burden of maintaining large military forces against Soviet threats was already creating serious problems in that country. Unless some genuine settlement could be made relieving Turkey of Soviet pressure, it would have to appeal to the United States for economic assistance since the country could not continue to carry the burden indefinitely.³²

Nevertheless, the Soviet pressures on both Greece and Turkey, to say nothing of Iran, remained and took on a somewhat ominous form during late 1946 and early 1947, the response to which was the formulation of the Truman Doctrine, on March 12, 1947 and the consequent aid programs to Greece and Turkey. During a meeting in the White House, on February 22, 1947, when it was decided that both Greece and Turkey must be helped, Mr. Acheson observed that Soviet pressures on Greece, the Straits and Iran had

32. *Ibid.*, 898-899; Erkin, 369 ff.

brought the situation to a point "where a highly possible Soviet breakthrough might open three continents to Soviet penetration." Great stakes were in play, and, with the announced inability of the United Kingdom to bear the burden, the United States alone was "in a position to break up the play."³³ Assistance was soon to begin under the Truman Doctrine for both Greece and Turkey, but the pressures were to continue all along the Northern Tier.³⁴

While no official demands for revision of the Montreux Convention were now to be made, on April 19, 1950, the Soviet naval organ, *Krasnii Flot*, declared that the Convention should be revised since it had ceased to accord with the interests of the Black Sea Powers. The Soviet Union made no effort to raise the question of revision in 1951, when it could have done so in accordance with the Convention (Article 29). While no important problems, technically, arose concerning the Straits during the ensuing years, there were significant developments in the direction of regional defense. Along with France, the United Kingdom and the United States, Turkey proposed a project for a Middle East Command, a move which proved abortive, for probably understandable reasons.³⁵ Turkey had participated in the proposal only on the understanding that it would be accepted into membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and on February 15, 1952, on their own volition, both Greece and Turkey became members of NATO. In a statement of January 15, 1952 to the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate, General of the Army Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, discussed the military significance of Greece and Turkey, indicating that it was impossible "to overstate the importance of these two countries," which occupied "strategic locations along one of the major east-west axes."³⁶

Greece... presents a barrier along the overland route from the Bal-

33. See Acheson, 219; Truman, II, 103-109. See also *Department of State Bulletin Supplement*, Vol. XVI, No. 409A (May 4, 1947), 827-909: *Aid to Greece and Turkey: A Collection of State Papers*. On longer range aspects see Basil Laourdas, ed., "Greece Since the Second World War: On the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Truman Doctrine." A Symposium at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, April 10-12, 1967." *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1967), 217-520.

34. See, for example the Vyshinsky-Sarper flareup at the United Nations during September 18, October 22-24, 1947 in U.N. Docs. A/C. 1/SR. 82, pp. 198-200; A/C. 1/SR. 83, 217-218.

35. See Department of State, *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents*, II, 2180-2187. As Mr. Acheson (*op. cit.*, 562-565) has commented: "If ever there was a political stillbirth, this was it.... It brought no response from the Middle East but a sharp one from the Soviet Union."

36. *American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1950-1955, I*, 856-858.

kan States located to her north. Turkey, astride the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, guards the approach by water from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and to the Suez Canal and Egypt farther south. Turkey, too, flanks the land routes from the North to the strategically important oil fields of the Middle East.

General Bradley found evidence of the strategic significance of both countries "in the intensive efforts of international communism to bring Greece under Soviet domination, and in efforts of Russia, extending over almost 200 years, to gain control of the Turkish Straits." Mr. Acheson sounded much the same note.³⁷

A year later, on February 28, 1953, Greece and Turkey joined with Yugoslavia in a new Balkan Entente but, while a Treaty of Alliance, Political Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed at Bled on August 9, 1954, the new grouping did not, in fact, prove of much significance as a regional security instrument. The so-called Baghdad Pact (CENTO after 1958), the beginnings of which went back to 1954-1955, appeared, for a time, on sounder ground, and it became the object of bitter Soviet attack.³⁸

Shortly after the visit of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to the Eastern Mediterranean during May 1953, the Soviet Union appeared in a renunciatory mood. In a new overture to Turkey on May 30, 1953,³⁹ Foreign Minister Molotov, advised the Turkish Government that the Soviet Union had been considering its relations with neighboring states, more particularly those with Turkey. The Governments of Armenia and Georgia, Turkey now learned, had found it possible to renounce their territorial claims on Turkey. Moreover the USSR had reviewed its policy as to the Straits, and considered it possible to protect Soviet security in connection with the Straits on terms equally acceptable both to the Soviet Union and to Turkey. Consequently, the Soviet Union had "no territorial claims on Turkey." The United States, the United Kingdom and France were duly informed of the new Soviet overture, but it was not until July 18 that the Turkish Government replied, expressing satisfaction at the renunciation of territorial claims, noting the desire for good relations, and stressing that "the question of the Black Sea Straits,

37. *Ibid.*, 848-864; Acheson, 563-564, 569-570, 593, 609, 710. See also Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of Greece and Turkey, in *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents*, I, 871-873.

38. J. C. Hurewitz, ed., *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East* (Princeton, N.J., D. Van Nostrand, 1956), II, 415-421.

39. For the Turco-Soviet exchange see especially Council on Foreign Relations, *Documents on American Foreign Relations 1953*, pp. 165-169.

as the Soviet Government well knew," was regulated by provisions of the Montreux Convention.

Evidently to keep the discussions going, on July 20, the USSR sent another note to Ankara, which had a special bearing on Turco-American relations, for it complained concerning the prospective visit, during July, of 10 American warships to Istanbul, to be followed by a visit of 22 British warships, which the USSR considered "a kind of military demonstration." But on July 24 the Turkish Government observed 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 USSR reiterated its position on July 31, when it pointed out that 33 warships had visited Turkey in 1950, 49 in 1951, and 69 in 1952, to say nothing of the 60 which had passed the Straits during the first seven months of 1953. There was no special response to the Soviet note, but on August 8, 1953, Premier Malenkov reiterated the Soviet renunciation of territorial claims and noted the desire for good neighborly relations.⁴⁰ The Soviet Union took no steps to denounce the Montreux Convention, as it could 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. It may be assumed that it refrained from such action because it had substantially achieved what it required under the Montreux Convention. Moreover, it was doubtful that the USSR could achieve its additional desiderata through the convening of an international conference either to revise the Montreux Convention or to elaborate a new regime, particularly as to converting the Black Sea into a *mare clausum*. It is also probable that, in any event, the region of the Straits could be controlled effectively with the new weaponry and missiles.

As noted above, few questions have arisen since 1946 relative to the Straits and there have been few pronouncements. While Turkey supported the American position as to a form of international control over the Suez Canal, during the crisis of 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.⁴¹ In 1957, Turkey fully supported the Eisenhower Doctrine. During the Syrian crisis of August-October 1957, Turkey was once more

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

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

under severe Soviet pressure, not dissimilar to that which had been applied in reference to the Straits during 1945-1946, as Secretary of State Dulles well pointed out.⁴² The Turkish Government became somewhat concerned with the elaboration of principles pertaining generally to the regime 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, 1958-1960, failed to reach basic agreement, especially as to territorial waters.⁴³

There were no basic changes in policy or interest relative to the Straits in Turco-American relations in the later years, whether before or after the May 1960 *coup d'état*. Turkish foreign policy in the later years continued to develop in the direction of independence, based on highly realistic considerations in a very strategic area of the world at the intercontinental crossroads. Although the trends had earlier roots, anti-American and pro-neutrality sentiments had begun to develop in Turkey by 1964. While the American position on the very sensitive problem of Cyprus stood out as one of the most significant factors, other elements included the presence of a large number of American troops on Turkish soil, Turkish dissatisfaction with the USAID program, alleged CIA attempts to intervene in Turkey's domestic affairs, and Soviet receptiveness to Turkish moves toward a more "friendly" relationship. But there was an ingrained caution in Turkish policy toward the Soviet Union, based on a well-grounded sense of realism. The development of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, with its bases largely in the Black Sea, did not go unnoticed in Ankara. The fact that there was such a fleet, and an announced intention to remain in the Mediterranean as a counterweight to the U.S. Sixth Fleet, made its inevitable impact. Following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, Turkey reaffirmed its basic position in both NATO and CENTO. President Sunay observed on August 30, 1968 that, in the interest of maintaining its own independence and sovereignty, Turkey would have to fulfill its "mutual pledges and commitments," recent developments once more having proved "the necessity for and use of our alliances."⁴⁴ In turn, it was noteworthy that the NATO Council, during

42. *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents* 1957, pp. 1046-1048.

43. 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, pp. 249-291.

44. For the positions of the Turkish political parties on matters of foreign policy see especially C. H. Dodd, *Politics and Government in Turkey* (Berkeley, University of California, 1969), Ch. IX, and *passim*.

November 15-16, 1968, observed that "the new uncertainties resulting from Soviet actions" extended to the Mediterranean basin, and warned that "clearly any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences."

V

THE TURKISH STRAITS TODAY

If, as has been suggested, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 did not alter the significance of the region of the Black Sea and the Turkish Straits, it may now be added that the period since World War II has shown a continued development of that region and the use of the waterway both for commercial and naval purposes. By 1969, no less than 17,159 ships of 61,545,535 tons passed the Straits, as compared with 13,150 ships (101,391,132 long tons) transiting the Panama Canal (1969) and 21,250 ships (274,250,000 tons) transiting the Suez Canal.⁴⁵ The steady development of Soviet commercial shipping in the Turkish Straits is evident throughout the post World War II period, and particularly since 1955, when the tonnage grew from some 1,200,000 to more than 26,631,000 in 1967 and totaled 26,365,346 in 1969. By 1969 Soviet commercial vessels constituted some 36 per cent of those using the Straits, while the tonnage amounted to some 43 per cent. With ships of Bulgarian (2,188,905 tons) and Rumanian (1,991,133) registry, Black Sea ships constituted some 45 per cent of the total and tonnage somewhat more than 50 per cent. While this heavy percentage underlines the regional significance of the Straits, it may be observed that Mediterranean commercial shipping, primarily Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia and France, made up 30 per cent of the ships and 20 per cent of the tonnage. Greece and Italy have generally ranked second or third in the listings. In 1969, for example, 3,037 ships of Greek registry (6,026,180 tons) passed the Straits, as compared with 1,301 Italian ships (7,710,850 tons). The primary Western European users of the Straits are Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden and West Germany, with 6 per cent of the ships and the tonnage. In Eastern Europe, the primary users are Finland, Poland and East Germany, with 4.6 per cent of the ships and 5.6 per cent of the tonnage. Among the Arab States, ships of Lebanese registry are of primary interest, with 1,312,916 tons in 1962, and an annual

45. These data have been compiled from Republique Turque, Ministère Des Affaires Etrangères. *Rapports Annuels sur le Mouvement des Navires à Travers les Détroits Turcs* (1946-1969).

average of some 600,000 tons over the past several years. In South Asia, Indian ships have averaged an annual 300,000 tons, as have those of Japanese registry. Another element of high interest, however, is the fact that American shipping has generally ranked well in tonnage passing the Straits. Thus, between 1945 and 1947, American commercial shipping surpassed all other shipping, as it did in 1949, while it was exceeded by that of the United Kingdom and the USSR in 1948, Italy in 1950 and 1951, and the USSR and Greece in 1952. While American tonnage reached an all-time high level of 1,449,389 in 1964, in later years it was regularly surpassed, not merely by the USSR, but by Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Norway and France. American tonnage, of course, would be much higher if ships of Panamanian (845,299 tons in 1969) and Liberian (1,862,644 tons in 1969) registry, often of American ownership, flew the American flag. British shipping, which played a leading role in the interwar period of 1919-1939, declined after World War II (493,000 tons in 1969). The total amount of commercial shipping using the Straits, with the exception of the war and immediate post-World War II years, showed a rather steady increase from 6,500,178 tons in 1923 to 12,322,012 in 1935, and 61,545,535 in 1969.

Insofar as the Soviet Union is concerned, the significance of the Black Sea and the Straits may be measured in other ways. For example, it appears that Soviet *Far Eastern* lines comprise some 35 per cent of Soviet shipping and 23 per cent of the deadweight tonnage, the *Baltic* lines about 23 per cent of the shipping and 19 per cent of the tonnage, and the *Arctic* merchant fleet only 2 per cent of the shipping and 8 per cent of the tonnage. By contrast, the *Black Sea* merchant fleet comprises 31 per cent of the shipping and 50 per cent of the tonnage. On an average day, it is estimated, some 250 Soviet merchantment ply Mediterranean ports. As a whole, the Soviet merchant fleet, which is expected to carry some 75 per cent of the total Soviet maritime foreign commerce by 1970, has advanced from 21st in 1950 to fifth place by 1968. It was expected to carry 186,700,000 tons of cargo in 1970, as compared with 144,000,000 tons in 1967. The value of annual foreign trade increased from some \$5,000,000,000 in 1962 to no less than \$18,000,000,000 in 1968. By 1980 Soviet officials hope that cargoes from developing countries will be worth some \$11,000,000,000 much of which will, of course, go through the Straits from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea.⁴⁶

46. The Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Soviet Sea Power* (Washington D.C., 1969), 73-91. On development of the Soviet merchant fleet see "Under the Soviet Flag: Our Correspondent Interviews Victor Bakayev, Minister of the Soviet Merchant Marine," *Culture and Life*, No. 10 (1968), 11-15.

Naval passage of the Straits increased significantly after World War II; this was especially true of the Soviet fleet after 1964. But problems as to naval passage after 1946 were not of overriding significance under the terms of the Montreux Convention. When the Italian Government, in accordance with the treaty of peace with Italy, transferred the battleship *Giulio Cesare* and two submarines to the USSR, Soviet crews were put aboard, the Red Ensign was hoisted, and the ships passed the Straits without incident during February 23-25, 1949.⁴⁷ The elimination of Japan as a signatory, under the Treaty of Peace of 1951 occasioned no special problems.⁴⁸

In the period prior to 1962, the Turkish Straits witnessed the transit and passage of large numbers of American warships, and of a significant number of British men-of-war. In 1957, for example, no less than 54 units of the U.S. Fleet, of 865,638 tons, went through the Dardanelles, and as late as 1959, the warship tonnage stood at 669,787 (62 ships). While fewer American warships transited the Straits after 1962, there were many courtesy visits as, for example in 1963, when 7 American warships (165,000 tons) visited Istanbul, and in 1964, when 15 American warships (163,500 tons) paid calls. There were also scattered calls of other warships but, for various reasons, American warships reduced the numbers of their visits, whether at Istanbul or other Turkish ports.⁴⁹

On the other hand, the postwar years witnessed an increasingly heavy use of the Straits by the Soviet navy, beginning essentially in 1964, with the development of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, although there were earlier antecedents. The statistical data tell something of their own story. Thus, in 1964 some 90 Soviet warships are listed as passing the Straits, while 128 did so in 1965, 140 in 1966, 222 in 1967, 230 in 1968, and 284 in 1969. At the same time and throughout the postwar period, the USSR continued its attempt to establish the principle of the *mare clausum* in the Black Sea. Not until January 1962 did it bother to report to the Turkish Government, under the Montreux Convention, its naval tonnage in the Black Sea. In the *Rapport*

47. See *Treaty of Peace with Italy* (1947), 22-94. The *Giulio Cesare* was named the *No-vorossisk*.

48. See *Conference for the Conclusion and Signature of the Treaty of Peace with Japan. San Francisco, California, September 4-8, 1951. Record of Proceedings* (Washington, D.C., USGPO, 1951), 216-217.

49. Under Article 17 of the Montreux Convention, it will be recalled, courtesy visits are without limitation of tonnage or composition, although the ships must leave the Straits by the same route as that by which they entered. During February 1969, 5 American warships paid courtesy visits in the Straits.

Annuel of that year it reported 95,000 tons of warships in the Black Sea, and it has maintained these figures in the ensuing years. Bulgaria and Rumania began reporting in 1964, with figures which have also remained constant: Bulgaria 6,300 tons, and Rumania 3,881 tons.

The Soviet Government continued to frown upon the entry of American warships into the Black Sea. The United States, in turn, asserted its right to do so within the limits established in the Montreux Convention (Article 18), and maintained this right usually by sending two destroyers or frigates in the spring and fall of each year. Other considerations aside, the obvious purpose of these semiannual visits appeared to be the maintenance of the principle of freedom of transit and navigation through the Straits and into the Black Sea, in accordance with the American Ottoman treaties of 1830 and 1862 and with the principles enunciated in May 1871.⁵⁰ The Soviet position was well stated, albeit unofficially, in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, on September 3, 1966,⁵¹ when it commented on the announced visit of the USS *Pratt* in the Black Sea and charged that, since it was armed with rockets, its entry into the Black Sea would constitute a violation of the Montreux Convention. Particularly noteworthy, however, were the concluding paragraphs, which questioned the "legality" of passage into the Black Sea. It was "impermissible" that any

'demonstrations of strength' of a provocative nature be organized in the Black Sea and that warships of states having no relation to this sea should rattle their rocket or nuclear weapons there. The Black Sea Straits may be utilized in the interests of strengthening friendship, but not to the detriment of the security of states situated in this area. The Black Sea must always remain a sea of peace and friendship among nations. This is in the interests of all the Black Sea countries.

Granted the use of the region of the Turkish Straits and the Black Sea by

50. The destroyers *Johnston* and *Perry* entered and left the Black Sea on October 4, 1963 (3,500 tons each); the *Luce* and *Corry* entered and left on September 22, 1965; the guided missile frigate *Yarnell* and the destroyer *Forrest Royal* entered and left on January 13, 1966; the *Goodrich* and *Wood* visited the Black Sea on November 18, 1967; the *Cecil* and *Norris* visited on June 10, 1968, the *Turner* and *Dyess* on December 12, 1968; and the *Perry* and *Norris* visited in June and September 1969, and the *Roberts* and *Strong* in December 1969. Two American frigates paid a 4-day visit to the Black Sea during March 27-31, 1970.

51. Cited in Walter Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East*, 348-350.

the Soviet Navy, which now maintains a substantial squadron in the Mediterranean Sea, it would appear that the region remains vital to the security of the Soviet Union, as it was to Imperial Russia, and for the same reasons, whatever the changes in military technology. The Imperial Russian Government maintained this position, as it sought to maintain the principle of the *mare clausum* in the Black Sea, while attempting to achieve freedom for its warships to pass through the Straits into the Mediterranean and return. It was also the position of the Soviet Government in the demands made upon Nazi Germany in November 1940 and in those made upon Turkey during 1945-1946. From the evidence available, and despite the developments in the new weaponry and missiles, it appears to be the position of the USSR today, even though in wartime it is doubtful that any foreign fleet would attempt or need to utilize the Straits for war purposes against the Soviet Union.

If one looks at the grand Soviet strategy, it would appear that the USSR is attempting to control the Baltic and the Black Seas, as in the past and, ultimately, to exercise a dominant influence in the Mediterranean Sea, together with their approaches, and it is still seeking, perhaps, to become the dominant power in the Turkish Straits, through which its warships must pass from the Black Sea into the Aegean and the Mediterranean. In conjunction with land-based air power, the Soviet Fleet poses a serious threat in the Mediterranean, and an increasing naval challenge to the American Sixth Fleet in the inland sea. In the Indian Ocean, even with the Suez Canal barred to traffic, the Soviet Navy is establishing its presence.⁵²

The USSR has used its Mediterranean Squadron, with units moving into the Egyptian ports of Port Said and Alexandria and calling regularly at Latakia and Mers-el-Kebir, as a political instrument. As the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, remarked on May 12, 1968:

Being a Black Sea Power, and consequently a Mediterranean Power, the Soviet Union is interested in peace and security in that area, which is in direct proximity to the USSR's southern borders. We have always stood for turning the Mediterranean Sea into a sea of peace and a zone free of nuclear weapons. The presence of

52. See The Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Soviet Sea Power*, 29 and *passim*. Established in 1964, under the command of Amiral S. Y. Chursin, by 1969 the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron consisted of some 60 to 70 warships. For the Soviet Navy, in general see *Jane's Fighting Ships* 1969-70, p. 78.

the Soviet ships in the Mediterranean is a factor facilitating the safeguarding of the security of the entire Mediterranean zone.⁵³

Moscow announced on October 12, 1968 that a new power had now appeared in the Mediterranean, the Soviet Union, whose presence had "political and military importance." Its influence was to be felt in the Middle East, along the shores of North Africa and those of southern Europe. Ultimately, it appeared that the Soviet aim was to overshadow and, perhaps, to deny the American naval presence in the Mediterranean and then to open up a secure passage through the Suez Canal to South Asia. It was also possible, if improbable in the near future, that the development of Soviet naval strength in the Mediterranean may encourage the USSR to seek formal changes in the Montreux Convention and to seek to loosen the Turkish ties to the West under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to neutralize Turkey.

In broad and summary terms, the basic interests which have led the USSR to take its actions relative to the Mediterranean Fleet center around (1) its ambitions for a secure outlet to the open sea for Soviet military and commercial operations; (2) its desire for participation in the Middle Eastern oil industry; (3) its struggle for "legitimacy" and its hope to achieve it through the establishment of the USSR as a world power, with world-wide interests; (4) its desire to keep its ideological competitors, the Chinese Communists, out of the Middle East; and (5) its ambition to control the Turkish Straits, the Suez Canal and the southern entrance of the Red Sea.

Granted, for a moment, the contention of Laurence Martin, that the Middle East is a "declining asset" to the West in its "traditional role of line of communication," it does not appear so for the Soviet Union, for which indeed, the area has taken on an increasing interest, with Turkey and the Turkish Straits, to say nothing of the Balkan area, as key points in the process, "as a way to break out finally from its long encirclement." If the USSR is really seeking and developing strength to enhance its status and position as a global power, with Turkey, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East as avenues by which to achieve that end, it is doubtful that the United States can remain indifferent or ignore the totality of its own interests in the area. This may well have been the significance of President Nixon's Report to the Congress in February 1970, when he called special attention to the

53. TASS International Service, May 12, 1968.

activity of the Soviet Union in the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea and declared that the United States "would view any effort by the Soviet Union to seek predominance in the Middle East with grave concern."⁵⁴

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54. *U. S. Foreign Policy for the 1960's. A New Strategy for Peace. A Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon, President of the United States. February 18, 1970* (Washington, USGPO, 1970), 77-83. See also George W. Ball, former Under Secretary of State, "Suez is the Front to Watch," *The New York Times, Magazine* (June 28, 1970), 10-11, 58, 62-65, for an overall assessment.