

U.S. - TURKISH RELATIONS IN THE 19th AND 20th CENTURIES

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I. THE BEGINNINGS

In April, 1820, President James Monroe entrusted Mr. Luther Bradish of New York, with the task of collecting information that would be useful for building trade with Turkey. The President asked Mr. Bradish to relay this information to the U.S. Department of State. The Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, gave Mr. Bradish a special passport on April 18, since he had already been issued a general passport on April 4. Bradish was given the following points to investigate :

1. Will U.S. interests benefit by signing a friendship and trade agreement with Turkey? If so.
2. Is it possible to sign such an agreement? And if so, then,
3. Which is the best method to attain this objective?

Bradish, in a letter to Secretary of State Adams from Istanbul on December 20, 1820, answered the first question positively. He was surprised to have received an audience with the Foreign Minister a few days after his arrival in the Turkish capital. In fact, the Minister invited Bradish to a private interview.

In his first report, Bradish mentioned a rumor he had heard in Istanbul. According to this rumor, the United States allegedly wanted to launch negotiations with Turkey through the mediation of Russia. Bradish wrote that such an act would not be acceptable to Turkey and no results would be derived from negotia-

tions begun in this fashion. Instead, the recommended direct negotiations with Turkey. He maintained that such negotiations would better suit the character of the Turks and would indicate a trust in Turks and flatter them into thinking that, by their actions, they deserved this consideration. Bradish said, "Turks have fine, sensitive feelings. To address one's self to their magnanimity and their grandeur generally elicits good results; and they seldom abuse the confidence placed in them."

Bradish added that the fact that the United States was not a member of the Holy Alliance and was independent of any other such alliance would have a positive role in establishing relations with Turkey.

II. THE TREATY OF MAY 30, 1830

Turkey was prompted to grasp the hand extended to her from the New World after the great powers of Europe, England, Russia and France had been allied against her during the battle of Navarino in 1827. Following negotiations that lasted for three years, a trade and navigation treaty was signed between Turkey and the U.S. on May 7, 1830. This treaty was put into effect by President Jackson on Feb. 4, 1832, only two years after it was signed. Admiral Mehmed Husrev Pasha, who headed the group desiring establishment of relations between the U.S. and Turkey, was greatly instrumental in the signing of the treaty.

The treaty had a clause which said "Americans should be recognized as a most favored nation." The 4th article of the treaty later was the topic of long-lasting debate between the two states. It was discovered that some of the clauses in the copy of the treaty in the possession of the Americans, pertaining to capitulation privileges, did not exist in the Turkish text. The treaty was drafted in Turkish in Istanbul and was translated into English. According to the 4th article of the Turkish text, the trial and sentencing of Americans committing crimes within Ottoman boundaries was left to the Ottoman authorities, whereas in the English text authority for judgment and sentencing was left with the American Ambassa-

dors and Consuls. The United States insisted on the validity of the privileges granted in the copy of the treaty in her possession. The debate which began in 1869 was not settled until 1974.

The American Embassy opened in the year 1831, and Rear-Admiral David Porter was appointed Charge d'Affaires. He was promoted to the rank of Minister Resident eight years later. In 1882 the head of the American diplomatic mission in Turkey became known as an "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary", and in 1906, as the Ambassador.

In 1824, prior to the signing of the treaty, a consulate had been opened in Izmir. Following the signing of the treaty in 1830, the American Charge d'Affaires appointed certain British subjects and Levantines as honorary consuls in some places in Anatolia and the Arab countries. The Americanization of the Consuls materialized only on August 11, 1856, after the Congress approved certain regulations pertinent to the Department of State.

III. THE AMERICAN - TURKISH TRADE

American - Turkish trade was initiated 50 years before the signing of the treaty. After 1830 American ships began calling on principal Turkish ports.

Trade in 1831 amounted to 560,000 dollars; in 1897 it was 7 million dollars, and in 1913 it was 25 million dollars. This amount of trade could not be considered of great importance either for Turkey or for the US the balance of payments was in favor of Turkey, except in eight provinces. On the eve of World War I, U.S. importation from Turkey comprised tobacco, wool rugs, and some agricultural products. Turkish tobacco, which constituted one third of imports in 1913, was "discovered" by Americans at the end of the 19th century.

Another matter of debate between Turkey and the U.S. after 1884 was the notification given by Turkey on January 15, 1874, to the effect that Turkey would revoke the Trade and Navigation Agreement signed in 1862. According to the 22nd article of this

agreement, the agreement was to be terminated on June 2, 1876. As the U.S. Department of State did not recognize unilateral cancellation of the agreement by Turkey, a new agreement was not signed and the U.S. continued to benefit from the "most favored nation" clause of the 1880 agreement.

IV. FIRST TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO THE USA.

Although the U.S. opened an American Embassy in Istanbul in 1831, opening of a Turkish Embassy was delayed until 1867. In 1850, for the first time, a teacher, Navy Lt. Commander Emin Bey, from the Marine School at Heybeli, was sent to the U.S. to investigate shipbuilding facilities. The Commander was treated as an ambassador and his expenses were paid out of a U.S. allotment of 10.000 dollars.

In the context of the Turkish - American agreement of 1830, there was a secret article in connection with shipbuilding. In accordance with this secret article, Turkey, having lost its fleet in Navarino in 1827, would purchase warships and lumber from America. The U.S. Senate did not approve this secret article.

When the revolt in Crete broke out, it was thought that a Turkish Ambassador should be sent to the United States. But when an excessive number of Greeks in the United States began sending weapons and money to Crete, it was considered that a Christian Ambassador should be sent instead of Turkish diplomats, who did not view Washington with favor.

Mr. Rustem, of Italian origin, and Mr. Eduard Blacque, of French origin, were considered. First, it was decided that Mr. Rustem should be sent. But then the decision was changed and Eduard Blacque, whose grandfather was a lawyer for Louis XVI, and whose father had settled in Turkey, went instead. Mr. Blacque successfully represented Turkey and also managed to purchase weapons for the Turkish Army. He represented Turkey for 6 years, until 1873.

During this period, President Grant permitted the sale of 125.000 old, reconditioned rifles for 7 dollar apiece, and after-

wards 500.0000 Henry Martini rifles were purchased. During the 1877 - 78 Turkish - Russian war, Turkish soldiers used American weapons.

Just before World War I, America's feeling was anti - Turkish. This was a prejudice which came into the U.S. from the Western Europe. We can also hold the American missionaries responsible for this. The missionaries, rather than converting Moslems to Christianity, were trying to convert native Christians to protestantism. An Ottoman Protestant Church was formed which attracted the enmity of the native Christians. The Armenians adopted the Protestant religion more than other Christians. The missionaries began to train native Christian leaders and develop the national languages of the minorities. Armenian and Bulgarian, which were only local dialects, became modern literary languages after the translation and publication activities of the missionaries. Thus, the missionaries, either consciously or not shared the same goals as the native minority agitators: consciously or not they were pulling in harness with the local agitators for the cultivation of "national" languages, a fact, which was an essential element in the deliberate evocation of conscious nationalism among the Ottoman peoples of the 19th century.

Soon after 1830, through the Congregational Dutch Reformed and Presbyterian Churches (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions) they began to work in Anatolia, the Arab nations and Iran. After 1870, the Congregational Church continued to work in Anatolia alone.

V. THE NATIONALITY CONTROVERSY

In the 25 years after 1890, more than 300.000 Ottoman citizens, particularly Armenians and Lebanese, went to the United States. We know that 14 per cent of these citizens returned and claimed that they had become Americans. This event opened the way to misunderstanding between Turkey and the United States which remained unsolved until the Republican period.

The first Turkish Citizenship Law, which was adopted in January, 1869, had banned from abandoning their citizenship without

receiving permission. This provision is still in effect in the new law of 1964.

However, Turkish citizens who went to America and became naturalized citizens before First World War would then return to Turkey as American citizens, and benefit from the capitulations; this was an abuse of Turkish law. Since other countries such as England, France, Russia and Austria, did not claim the peculiar right to protect Turkish citizens within Turkey, it is difficult to understand the insistence of the United States on this point. For example, France did not confer citizenship on these Turks who did not have permission to abandon Turkish citizenship. England and Russia noted in the passports of these naturalized citizens who denounced Turkish citizenship without permission that they would not enjoy political protection in Turkey. In 1907, the United States declared that if the naturalized citizens returned to Turkey and stayed there for two years, they would lose their American citizenship.

During World War I, according to Lewis V. Thomas and Richard N. Frye, President Wilson did not declare war on Turkey because of personal friendship for an important American philanthropic family in the Otoman Empire¹ and the United States did not seek mandates in the Middle East after the war.

VI. THE RELATIONS DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

During the occupation of Istanbul, the friendly attitude of the American High Commissioner, Admiral Mark L. Bristol, won the hearts of many Turks. It is known that the Admiral's reports to Washington were in favor of the Turks. Also, many Americans residing in Istanbul at the time helped to achieve understanding for the War of Independence by their writings in American newspapers. The head of the Investigation Committee sent by the United States Government to study the *status quo* in Eastern Anatolia and the

1) Lewis V. Thomas and Richard N. Frye, **The United States, Turkey and Iran**, 1951, p. 139.

Caucasus, General James H. Harbord, visited Mustafa Kemal on September 22 after the Sivas Congress. In a speech afterward Mustafa Kemal spoke of this visit as follows: "The American Government sent an Investigation Committee headed by General Harbord to study the situation in our contry and the Caucasus. This Committee also came to Sivas, and we had a long dicussion with General Harbord on September 22, 1919. I explained to the General the purposes, aims and organization of the national movement and the reasons for national pantheism, I told him in detail about the national feelings against the non - Moslem minority and the negative propaganda and administration of foreigners in our country. I was subjected to some peculiar questions by the General. For example: What will pou do if success is not achieved even after the nation has made all attempts and sacrifices imaginable? If I recall correctly, I gave the following answer: A nation can achieve success after making all effort and sacrifices necessary to preserve her national existence and independence' If it cannot be successful this means that that nation is dead. Thus, as long as the nation exists and continues its sacrifices, no failure can occur.

"I did not wish to ask what the General meant by his question. However, I would like to express on this occasion the fact that my response was met by him with appreciation."

VII. THE RELATIONS AFTERWARDS

The United States of America had not participated in the Sevres agreement because she had not declared war on Turkey, Admiral Bristol, the United States Ambassador to Italy, Richard Child, and the Ambassador to Switzerland, Joseph C. Grew, were assigned as observers for the Lausanne agreement, but Admiral Bristol did not come to Lausanne. Grew especially had long discussions with Ismet Pasha, and an agreement was signed on August 23 1923. However, despite the fact that the Turkish - American Association was established in New York in 1924 and that favorable articles were written in the newspapers by these Americans who were friends of Turkey, the agrrement was rejected by the U.S.

Senate on January 18, 1927. Prior to this, our Foreign Minister and Admiral Bristol prepared a *Modus Vivendi* agreement, which was later extended twice by the Turkish Government. Then a final agreement was made it ratified by the U.S. Senate on February 18, 1930 and by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on April 12, 1930. Prior to these agreements, the two states had already exchanged Ambassadors. The United States assigned Joseph Grew as Ambassador to Turkey and Turkey sent Ahmet Muhtar Bey as Ambassador to the United States. Grew presented his credentials to Gazi Mustafa Kemal on October 12, 1927, and Ahmet Muhtar gave his to Calvin Coolidge on December 5, 1927.

The trade relations were widening greatly at this time. While Turkey's imports from the United States were only 3.5 million dollars in 1913, in 1920 this reached 42,200,000 dollars. While our exports to America were 22,100,000 dollars in 1913, in 1920 this figure reached 39,600,000 dollars.

The interest and the affection that Mustafa Kemal showed towards America has been expressed in the memoirs of U.S. Ambassadors Joseph Grew and General Charles H. Sherrill².

In July 1931 two American pilots, Russell Boardman and John L. Poland, took off in their plane named Cape Cod from New York and landed in Istanbul on July 30 after a non-stop flight of 9,240 kilometers. They were received like heroes. Atatürk received them at Yalova, congratulated them and addressed them in a speech in which he spoke of the sincerity of Turco - American relations. He also sent a cable to U.S. President Hoover congratulating him for their success. Hoover, in his reply thanked Atatürk for his sincere feelings. The American pilots, who stayed in the city until August 7, were presented with valuable gifts by the city of Istanbul.

The death of Atatürk caused great grief in the U.S., and General Douglas MacArthur said that he bowed with great respect

2) For more new information on the memoirs of Grew, see paper presented by Prof. Dr. Carl Max Kortepeter to the Second International Symposium on Atatürk's Reforms, May 11-15 1981, İstanbul.

along with the Turkish nation in the presence of Atatürk. With his death Turkey lost one of her greatest sons, and the world lost one of its greatest leaders.

At the start of the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt said that the defense of Turkey was of vital importance to the U.S. Thus, during the war, Turkey became one of the first nations to receive foreign aid from the U.S., getting 43million dollars worth of military assistance.

In 1946, Turkey became the first country to accept a proposal that financial liabilities born through assistance extended in the form of loan grants be paid immediately and in cash.

As the Prime Minister told the Parliament, "by repaying our loans, we are repaying some portion of our debt to the United States. But this problem has a moral side as well; and by paying our debts we are taking a stand beside America and justice, freedom and humanity." This speech received great support in Parliament.

VIII. SOVIET NOTES AND USA

As Secretary of the Navy Forrestal pointed out in his memoirs, the Soviet note, dated August 7, 1946, forced the American Government to choose between two alternatives:

1 — To leave Turkey at the mercy of Soviet Russia, after making stern reply to the Russian note.

2 — To adopt a determined attitude and to support Turkey, come what may.

The state Department and the Department of the Navy, considering their responsibility in light of world conditions, chose the second alternative.

This new attitude of the United States was a turning point in American policy toward Turkey. American administrators who had thought that Turco - Soviet disagreements were only in connection with the rights of passage through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, understood the situation better after receiving this

Soviet note in August, 1946. Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, during discussion on the subject, stated that Russia was prepared to take Turkey under Soviet domination rather than merely to review the protocol on rights of passage through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.

President Truman agreed with Acheson. According to President Truman, if the Russian note of August 7, 1946, were accepted, America and Britain would have lost their rights to say on matters concerning the Straits, and more important, Turkey would have lost her independence. All experience has shown that whenever Russia has entered a country that, soon that country has fallen under the Soviet's control. The Soviets, who had come into Turkey under the pretext of desiring a joint defense of Bosphorus and the Dardanellos would want to take the entire country under her control. Would the United States of America then close her eyes to the Soviet domination of Turkey? Under Secretary of State Acheson said "no" to this question in a meeting at the White House with President Truman, Forrestal, Under Secretary of War Kenneth C. Royall, General Eisenhower and the Chiefs of Staff of the three armed forces. Acheson believed that if Turkey entered the Soviet bloc, this would mean that Greece would follow suit. And if Turkey and Greece were in the Soviet orbit, this would mean a change in the balance of power in the entire Mediterranean and the Middle East, and all communication and transportation leading to this area would be in danger. Therefore, America decided to prevent a Russian-imposed settlement in Turkey, taking into consideration that such an attempt might lead to an armed clash with the Soviets.

After hearing Acheson's views on this subject, President Truman said that he shared the same opinion, and that a determined attitude by America would force Soviet intentions into the open. Then the President asked Acheson to contact with Turkish Government through the American Ambassador in Ankara to inform them that this issue was being debated at the highest level in Washington.

As for the Turkish reply to the Soviet Union, President Truman asked the American Ambassador to tell the Turkish Government that this reply should be "reasonable but strict."

The events that followed indicate that the American Government took two important decisions during the meeting of August 15. The first was that in the reply to the Soviet note, it would be made clear that if the Straits were subject to aggression or threat, the American Government would consider this a threat to international security and would take the case to the United Nations Security Council. The second decision was to send a great naval force to the Mediterranean to prove that the American reply to the Soviet note would be backed up by force.

In fact, in the American reply, delivered to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Washington on August 19, 1946, it was stated that the American Government was in agreement with the Soviet Government on the first three points proposed in the Soviet note. The reply then added :

"The fourth suggestion made in the Soviet note... seems to indicate the intention of establishing a new regime which would apply only to Turkey and the Black Sea countries, rather than modifying the Montreaux Agreement. It is the view of our government that the regime of the Straits pertains to all countries and not just the Black Sea nations. Consequently, the American Government cannot agree with the Soviet point of view that the establishment of a regime over the Straits should be the sole responsibility of the Black Sea countries and exclude all other states."

As far as the American naval force sent to the Mediterranean is concerned, it was disclosed in Washington on August 16, 1946 that a great naval force would be sent to the Mediterranean.

A Moscow Radio broadcast on August 28 stated that the dispatch of this American naval force would be considered a provocation against the Soviet Union.

As far as the Turkish attitude was concerned in the face of the Soviet note, in the Government's program read in the Grand National Assembly on August 14, 1946, it was stated that the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Turkey would be paramount, that the Armed Forces of the Republic of Turkey were on guard to defend the integrity and security of Turkish soil, and the honor and rights of the State, and that our relations with the United States

of America were developing on a reciprocal basis of respect and cooperation.

The Government headed by Recep Peker stated in its reply to Moscow on August, 1946, that some changes perhaps, could be made in certain rules in connection with Montreux, however, the abolition of the Montreux regime and the Soviet demands regarding the joint defense of the Straits were rejected.

In the face of persistent demands by the Soviet Union to solve the question of the Straits on a bilateral basis with Turkey and to obtain bases in the Straits, the American government was obliged to make a move. She took a stand alongside Turkey as she had done in face of the first Soviet note, and she began to believe that what the Soviet Union wanted was not merely to open the Straits to Soviet warships and Merchant ships but to close them to American and British naval and air forces. In a note to the Soviet Union on Oct. 9, 1946, the U.S. government repeated its stand that the Montreux Convention could not be amended by the Black Sea powers alone, and that Turkey should remain the only power responsible for the defense of the Straits. She reasserted her views that in the event the Straits became a target of attack or were subject to threats of an attack, this would necessitate action by the U.N. Security Council.

IX. TRUMAN DOCTRINE

In 1947, England terminated her aid to Turkey. The United States then decided to replace England and as Truman declared in his now famous Truman Doctrine:

"I believe in supporting the resistance of free countries when their freedom is endangered either by external pressure or by armed infiltration.

"I believe in giving aid to free nations so that they may determine their own destiny.

"I believe in economic aid, which is one of the preconditions for economic stability and rational political development."

President Truman requested the allotment of 400 million dollars and the assignment of civilian and military personnel to Turkey and Greece on July 30, 1948.

In February 1952 Turkey became a member of NATO. Through 1955, American aid to Turkey amounted to 1 billion 600 million dollars.

In 1955 Turkey entered the Baghdad Pact, which later became known as CENTO.

After this pact was signed, the U.S. Department of State in a statement on Nov. 29, 1956, declared that the United States, from the start, supported the pact and the objective of collective security for which it stood, and that the U.S. Government was willing to help in any way necessary to strengthen the security of these nations. It was also added that any threat against the territorial integrity or the political independence of these states would be taken very seriously by the U.S.

X. CYPRUS EVENTS AND USA

The events following the bloody Christmas of 1963 in Cyprus caused a cooling of Turkish - American relations. The U.S. was not able to evaluate the importance of Cyprus to Turkey. In order to prevent a collapse in NATO's southern wing, the Sixth Fleet had to interfere.

In 1835, Commodore David Porter said: "At present, I don't think that the Turks are showing the respect that they bestow upon the U.S. to any other nation. And I do not want anything to erase this favorable impression." On that bloody Christmas day of 1963, these very words rang with pain in the ears of those Americans who love the Turks.

During the recent Cyprus crisis, Turkey's claims have been considered by the United States as the justified claims of an ally, whose loss would be most undesirable. Thus, the United States took action by sending a mediator, who solved the crisis according to the terms Turkey demanded,

But later upon Turkish action of July 20, 1974 based on the Treaty of guarantee to Cyprus the U.S. congress imposed an arms embargo on Turkey which lasted many years This was not fair to an ally. U.S. Congress lifted the ban later and now relations seem to be improving.

If the United States follows this foresighted road and continues to observe the problems of Turkey from the Turkish point of view, the weakened relations between Turkey and the United States will be strengthened despite the efforts of America's enemies.