

# TURKEY'S SEARCH FOR SECURITY AND THE SOVIET FACTOR DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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## Abstract

In this essay, an attempt has been made to analyse Turkey's search for security during the Second World War within the context of the Soviet factor and Turkish diplomatic relations with the great powers. It has taken the establishment of the Tripartite Agreement of 1939 as a starting point and tried to provide an analysis of events leading to Ankara's decision of declaring war on the Axis in 1945. By doing this, the reasons why Turkey did not enter the War until the eleventh hour have been examined thoroughly and the author came to conclusion that there is a strong correlation between Ankara's search of security, the Soviet factor and the policies of the Allied powers against Turkey. Therefore, the author suggests that in addition to many other factors, this correlation needs to be established in order to understand Turkish foreign policy properly during the Second World War.

## Introduction

Many important points can be made about Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War, but one of the most interesting features of this period is Turkey's successful use of diplomacy. From a realistic perspective, there was in fact little room for a country like Turkey to act otherwise to be able to ensure its own security. As a *pro-status quo* power, Turkey had to deal with security issues in the 1930s and during the War certainly not less than it did before. Because its "eternal leader", Mustafa Kemal, rightly anticipated the break-up of the Second World War years ago, Turkey had been trying to contain any conflict in its security zone by regional pacts. The Balkan and the Saadabat Pacts were a result of such an understanding. During the same period, Turkey did not ignore the developments in the front of the Axis powers as well. While Ankara was always keeping an eye with the actions of the Fascist Italy in the Mediterranean and Balkan regions, it tried not to give a hostile impression on Germany. Instead, one of the most important countries with which Turkey made trade was Germany.

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On the other hand, having solved their historical problems, the Turkish decision-makers established contacts with other great powers, too. It is a fact that this process threw the country towards the western side. Although this process of rapprochement was carefully designated, Turkey's multi-faceted foreign policy understanding irritated Soviet politicians in particular. However, the two countries had been able to establish good neighbourly relations since the very beginning of the Turkish war of national liberation, despite of ideological differences. But the Soviets always followed Turkey's international relations closely, and therefore Ankara's integration attempts with the then existing world political system caused some concerns in Moscow. It was clear that the Soviets were not happy with Turkey's participation in the League of Nations and with the revision of the Straits regime at Montreux in 1936. Nor did Moscow approve Turkey's attempts to establish a pact with Britain and France towards the end of the 1930s. Beyond this point, there came the escalation of the Russian-Turkish dispute, if not only Russian anger over Turkey, up to the final stage of the Kremlin's famous decision of 1945. However, whilst trying to secure the western world's friendship and alliance through bilateral or multilateral treaties between 1936 and 1945, Turkey spent some efforts to satisfy Russian demands either.

For Turkey, its neighbour has since the fifteenth century been a vital factor in its security calculation. Perhaps Turco-Russian relations experienced a period of rapprochement after the Soviet Revolution and the start of Turkish National War of Liberation in 1919, thanks largely to Mustafa Kemal and Lenin, this process was not enough to bury historical enmities between the two nations. After Lenin in particular, the Soviet Union gradually estranged from Turkey and took the place of old Russian factor in Turkey's security understanding. If Turkey had been able to stay out of the Second World War by diplomatic means, it was mainly due to its concerns of security, a security that cannot be constructed without taking into account the Soviet factor. In the following pages we will try to analyse Turkey's efforts aiming to create an umbrella of security by diplomacy and its manoeuvres in order not to join the war in general and not to have a direct confrontation with the Soviets in particular.

At the outset of the study, one more important, but neglected, point needs to be made as well. Many students of Turkish foreign policy who analysed the very same period paid very little attention to the vague

policies and dubious acts of the Allied powers towards Turkey especially when they invited the Turks for coming into the War on their side. This is nonetheless not to say that they were totally wrong as they argued for, for example, the reasons why Turkey did not enter the War until 1945. Instead, by the above outlined way of analysis, we simply argue that perhaps some factors such as Turkey's needs of military equipment and financial support, the existence of some Germanophil in Turkish official circles, the previous experiences of Turkish warrior diplomats, and so on, played important roles, which cannot be ignored certainly, but the place of the Soviet (Russian) factor in Turkey's national security concept and the behaviours of the Allied powers especially those of Britain need to be analysed more carefully. That is, in addition to other points, an attempt in this analysis will also be made in order to establish if there is a meaningful correlation between Ankara's search for security, the Soviet factor and Turkey's international politics during the Second World War.

### **Waiting for the War: The Moscow Talks and the Tripartite Alliance**

As we have indicated already, Turkey was sure that the world was going to another war, which would commence not later than the end of the 1930s. Therefore, Turkey's rapprochement with Britain started at the beginning of the 1930s and developed to the degree that they together with France began negotiations to establish a defence pact against revisionist powers.<sup>1</sup> But for Turkish decision-makers who very well knew what the meaning of having a giant power as neighbour, they also wanted not to create any suspicion in the minds of the Soviet leaders against Turkey.<sup>2</sup> That

<sup>1</sup> For this period many publications cited below can be consulted: For a brief survey see: Kamuran Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri (1920-1953)*, Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1991, pp.133-169. Türkaya Ataöv, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1939-1945*, Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1965, pp.1-50. Fahir H. Armaoğlu, "İkinci Dünya Harbinde Türkiye", *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi (SBFD)*, Vol.XIII, No.2, 1958, pp.139-148.

<sup>2</sup> Turkey always informed the Soviet government as to the negotiations taking place between France, Britain in accordance with the Turkish-Russian Protocol of 1929, which extended the Treaty of 1925. İsmail Soysal, "1939 Türk-İngiliz-Fransız İttifakı" (Turco-Anglo-Franco Pact of 1939), *Belleten*, Vol.XLVI, No.182, 1982, pp.385-386. For Turkey's relations with the Soviets during this period particularly see: Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.156-197.

is mainly why, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, during the so-called Moscow talks, which was held between September 26-October 16 1939 upon an invitation from Moscow, proposed to the Soviets a treaty in parallel with Turkish government's negotiations with France and Britain.<sup>3</sup> But the Russians brought the question of the Turkish Straits to the table of negotiations as usual. They simply said that before reaching any agreement, Turkey ought to accept modifying the Montreux Convention in favour of a joint defence mechanism in the Straits. To this end, the Soviets also asked a base-like place in the region that would be used jointly by Russian and Turkish troops alike.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it was not a surprise that Saraçoğlu's negotiations with Russians would provide nothing new to satisfy Soviets in particular, and would end with an ordinary communiqué.<sup>5</sup>

For many such a result meant a beginning of great confrontation with Russia in the nearest future, because it was obvious that this result pleased neither of these countries indeed. As also pointed out by Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, "it disappointed Ankara and irritated Moscow".<sup>6</sup> But most of the people preferred to stay silent in order not to ignite an open confrontation with the neighbour country. Some of them just touched upon the visit of the Saraçoğlu delegation as if it was an unimportant issue without providing any information.<sup>7</sup> According to the then Turkish

<sup>3</sup> Some official documents concerning Turco-Soviet relations in 1939 until the end of the so-called Moscow talks can be found in Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı (TCDB), **Türkiye Dış Politikasında 50 Yıl: Montreux ve Savaş Öncesi Yılları**, TCDB Yayınları: Ankara, 1973, particularly pp.195-247. For the Moscow talks also see: F. Cemal Erkin, **Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri, ve Boğazlar Meselesi**, Ankara: Başnur Matbaası, 1968, particularly Chapter V, pp.134-155. Cevat Açıkalın, "Turkey's International Relations", **International Affairs**, Vol.23, No.4, 1947, pp.480-482. Necmettin Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets", **Foreign Affairs**, Vol.27, No.3, 1949, pp.452-453. See also: Ataöv, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.56-59. Gürün, **Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri**, pp.197-214.

<sup>4</sup> Erkin, **Türk-Soviet İlişkileri**, pp.147-148. Ş. Süreyya Aydemir, **İkinci Adam**, Vol.II, Remzi: İstanbul, 1979, p.122-126. Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, **The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece**, Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, p.22. Açıkalın, "Turkey's International Relations", p.481. Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets", p.453. Soysal, "1939 Türk-İngiliz-Fransız İttifakı", pp.402-404. Rifat Uçarol, "Değişmekte Olan Dünya'da Türk Boğazlarının Önemi ve Geleceği", in S. Şen, **Yeni Dünya Düzeni ve Türkiye**, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1992, p.188.

<sup>5</sup> Erkin, **Türk-Soviet İlişkileri**, p.155.

<sup>6</sup> Aydemir, **İkinci Adam**, Vol.II, p.123.

<sup>7</sup> See: **Aydın Tarihi**, October 1939.

Prime Minister Refik Saydam, who in fact concealed what had happened in Moscow, there was something wrong in Russia. In a speech, he only said that "Turkish-Russian friendship is going on well. But we have reached no agreement because Russian demands have far exceeded our frontiers of promises."<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, a treaty of friendship and non-aggression between the USSR and Germany had unexpectedly been concluded on 23 August 1939.<sup>9</sup> This literally panicked Turks and led them to think about the future of the war, especially in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.<sup>10</sup> Ankara now had to watch out Berlin as much as Moscow. Perhaps there was nothing changed in essence regarding to Turkey's security, but in appearance Moscow's priorities seemed to be changing. In the meantime Stalin had begun signalling out some changes in domestic politics as well and appointed Molotov as the commissar of foreign affairs to the post of Litvinoff. Soon after sitting his chair, he felt necessary to make a statement on Turkey. He declared that the rumours in the air as to the Russian demands on the Straits and the territorial claims alongside the northern Turkish borders during the so-called Moscow negotiations were "pure inventions". These negotiations did fail, he argued, because not Russia, but Turkey had wished to do so, and "had linked her fate to that of western powers."<sup>11</sup> As for the matter of Turkey's pact with France and Britain, it was, to him, a pure design of the two western powers for only their benefits: "whether or not Turkey would be afraid of it, we will see one day in future."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Aydemir, *İkinci Adam*, Vol.II, p.123. Rıfıkı Salim Burçak, *Türk-Rus-İngiliz Münasebetleri, 1791-1941*, İstanbul: Aydınlık Matbaası, 1946, p.99. Açıklan, "Turkey's International Relations", pp.481. For the reaction of the Turkish decision makers and the press see: Ataöv, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.59-60.

<sup>9</sup> Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.27. For the Nazi-Soviet pact and its impact on Anglo-Turkish Relations and the reaction of Turkish public opinion see: Selim Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War: An "Active Neutrality"*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1989, pp.77-89. See also: Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.214-238.

<sup>10</sup> Aydemir, *İkinci Adam*, Vol.II, p.121-122.

<sup>11</sup> Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets", p.454. Açıklan, "Turkey's International Relations", p.481.

<sup>12</sup> Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.158.

According to Açıkalın's accounts, 'the principal source of dissatisfaction in the Kremlin's attitude towards the Saraçoğlu delegation was in fact Turkey's rapprochement with France and Britain.<sup>13</sup> However, Kremlin's policy was groundless in essence. Perhaps it was true that Turkey had been becoming more and more an ally of these western countries since the beginning of the 1930s, mainly due to the Italian factor in the Mediterranean region, but Ankara had never undermined its mighty neighbour's vital importance in its security conception. As we have already mentioned, Turkey had tried to do all its best not to inflate any Russian discomfort with the rapprochement, through informing Moscow as to the developments of negotiations taking place between the three parties as much as possible.<sup>14</sup>

Even though the Moscow talks ended with misery, the Tripartite Alliance Treaty was eventually concluded and signed on 17 October 1939. One of the interesting features of the Treaty was the inclusion of an escape clause, mostly upon Turkish request. This clause was specially designed for the benefit of Turco-Russian relations: <sup>15</sup> any obligation undertaken by Turkey could not compel it "to take action having as its effect, or involving as its consequence, entry into armed conflict with the USSR."<sup>16</sup> Under this clause, soon after the start of the Second World War, Turkey declared its neutrality on the grounds that its participation in the war might evoke a confrontation with the Soviet Unions.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Açıkalın, "Turkey's International Relations", p.482.

<sup>14</sup> Erkin, **Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri**, p.135-139. Also see Soysal, "1939 Türk-İngiliz-Fransız İttifakı", pp.386-388

<sup>15</sup> İsmail Soysal, **Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları, 1920-1945**, Vol.I, Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1989, pp.596-597. For the Turkish text of the Agreement see: *Ibid.*, pp.600-609. For English version: Deringil, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.189-192. J.C. Hurewitz, **Diplomacy in the Near and the Middle East, A Documentary Record: 1914-1956**, Vol.II, Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1956, p.226-228. For national and international reactions see also: Ataöv, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.60-65. Rıfki Salim Burçak, "İngiliz-Fransız-Türk İttifakı", **SBOD**, Vol.IV, No.1-4, 1949, pp.346-374.

<sup>16</sup> Added Protocol No.2. Soysal, **Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları**, Vol.I, p.603. Deringil, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, p.191.

<sup>17</sup> Deringil, **Turkish Foreign Policy** pp.103-105. Necla Yongacoglu Tschirgi, **Laying Foundations of Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy 1945-1952**, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The University of Toronto: Toronto, 1979, pp.120-121. G.E. Kirk, "Turkey", in Arnold Toynbee and Veronica Toynbee, **Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946: the War and the Neutrals**, OUP: London, 1956, p.348.

### Turkey's Neutrality and the Soviets' Mobility in the War

Nevertheless, at the very beginning of the War, Turkey and the Soviets had fallen apart, since they had chosen their camps in opposite sides, through signing treaties with Germany on the one hand, and France and Britain on the other. The unsuccessful attempts made by Saraçoğlu in Moscow had done nothing, but exacerbated Turkey's concerns as to the impacts and consequences of the coming war on their country, because Russia's waltz with the mighty Germans cast additional shadows over the Straits. Indeed, the visit of German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, to Moscow, at a time when Saraçoğlu was there, was used, if not designed,<sup>18</sup> by Joseph Stalin as another opportunity in order to humiliate the Turkish delegation. Indeed it was a humiliation because Saraçoğlu delegation had applied for an appointment to see Stalin, but he chose to forget and ignore Saraçoğlu and his team in Moscow.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the soldiers of Red Army invaded a small neighbour country, Finland, as if sending a message to Turkey at a time when all people in Ankara getting more and more anxious about the German-Russian front's aggressive actions. Inevitably, Turks would interpret the invasion of Finland by the Soviets as the sign of a revival of the Old Russian expansionist policy.<sup>20</sup>

In this chaotic situation, Britain tried to bind severing ties and to improve relations between the Soviets and Turkey. In July 1940, thanks in part to the efforts of the British Ambassadors in Moscow and Ankara, respectively Sir Stafford Cripps and Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, Stalin personally appeared to have given up the previous Russian

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<sup>18</sup> Erkin, who was one of the Turkish diplomats participated in the Saraçoğlu delegation, maintains that Moscow deliberately invited both of the German and Turkish foreign ministers at the same time in order to play one off against the other as a "scarecrow". Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.154-155.

<sup>19</sup> Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy* pp.87. According to Deringil, "this humiliation left its mark on Saraçoğlu who became renowned for his anti-Soviet attitude". On the other hand; Erkin recalls their days in Moscow as "unforgettable" in terms of Russian's hospitality. For a comparison see Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri* p.156.

<sup>20</sup> Kirk, "Turkey", p.352.

demands on the Straits, except for the concern of their defence.<sup>21</sup> However, it was not the case in reality. In June 1941, Hitler's announcement referring to conversations and secret agreements happened between Germany and the Soviets proved time and again that as far as Turkey was concerned, Russian demands would remain unchanged.<sup>22</sup>

According to the documents of German foreign policy between 1939-1941, as the Soviets was ostensibly making good gestures towards Turkey, they at the same time negotiated with the Germans as to the future of the world and the spheres of influence of the Axis Powers.<sup>23</sup> As a natural extension of the old Russian imperial "warm water policy", the Soviets were also very much interested in "the replacement of the Montreux Straits Convention... by another convention" that would grant the USSR "the right of unrestricted passage of her Navy... at any times".<sup>24</sup> In addition, Stalin made it clear that "the centre of the aspirations of the Soviet Union" directed towards the "south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf". Moscow did not stop there: they also wanted "a base for the [land] and naval forces of the USSR on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by means of a long-term lease."<sup>25</sup>

However, the end of German-Russian friendship did not allow them to realise such a plan. Nonetheless the question of the Straits and Molotov's ideas on Turkey urged Germany to decide which side, Turkey

<sup>21</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, HMSO: London, 1962, p.67. David J. Alvarez, *Bureaucracy and Cold War Diplomacy: The United States and Turkey 1943-1946*, pp.34-35. Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets", p.455. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.95-96.

<sup>22</sup> Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets", pp.455-457. Kirk, "Turkey", p.353.

<sup>23</sup> Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets", p.455. Tschirgi, *Laying Foundations*, p.121.

<sup>24</sup> HMSO, *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D 1937-1945, the War Years-September 1, 1940/January 31, 1941, Vol.XI, HMSO: London, 1961, pp.509-510. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, Vol.II, pp.228-229. Frenc A. Vali, *The Turkish Straits and NATO*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972, p.60-61. Ahmet Şükrü Esmer and Oral Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası" (Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War), in M. Gönlübol et.al, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası*, Ankara: SBF Yayınları, 1982, pp.156-157.

<sup>25</sup> HMSO, *Documents on German Foreign Policy S.D*, Vol.XI, pp.714-715. During the famous conversation between Hitler and Molotov, recalling the Crimean War and the events of the years 1918-19 the latter had explicitly stated that for reasons of security the Straits and the Black Sea were of great importance for the Soviets, and they needed particularly the Straits. *Ibid.*, pp.560-561. For a detailed analysis of the Conversations from a Turkish standpoint see A. Ş. Esmer, "Hitler-Molotov Mülakatı ve Türkiye", *Siyasi İlimler Mecmuası*, Vol.XXIV, No.277, Nisan 1954, pp.88-90.



or Russia, be sacrificed for the other. In several times Berlin had tried to understand the real intentions of the Russians about Turkey. In one of them, Hitler explicitly brought these issues and stated to Molotov that Germany was not interested in the Straits and Eastern Europe. Perhaps Berlin might be leaving some parts of Europe to Moscow, but after the above mentioned conversation the Führer realised that the Russians would be a hurdle in the way of German plans for the south east of Europe. Therefore, before German attacks on Russia, Hitler came to the conclusion that they could not get at the Straits unless Russia would had been beaten decisively.<sup>26</sup>

As for the Turkish government, they did not know exactly what had in the meantime happened in Berlin. At the beginning of 1941, Turkey enjoyed a sort of rapprochement with both Russia and Germany. In March, the Soviets declared that should Turkey be subject to any sort of aggression, they would remain neutral.<sup>27</sup> Two months later, Germany signed a treaty of friendship with Turkey on 18 June 1941, only four days before Germany attacked the Soviets.<sup>28</sup>

The first reaction of Turkish Foreign Minister, Saraçoğlu was to call it "a war of new crusaders" fighting each other.<sup>29</sup> Whilst immediately declaring its neutrality in this war as well,<sup>30</sup> Turkey was in fact pleased by such a German campaign. Above all, Turkey had an opportunity to take a deep breath.<sup>31</sup> According to German sources, though they cautiously refrained from enthusiastic official statements and actions that could irritate the Soviets, the Turks showed their sympathy

<sup>26</sup> Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.116. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.158.

<sup>27</sup> TCDB, *Türk Dış Politikasında 50 Yıl: İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları (1939-1946)*, Ankara: TCDB Yayınları, 1982, p.72-73. Elizabeth Barker, *British Policy in South East Europe in the Second World War*, London: Macmillan, 1974, p.23. George E. Kirk, "The USSR and the Middle East in 1939-1945: Turkey", in G.E. Kirk, *Survey of International Relations: the Middle East in the War 1939-1946*, London: Oxford University Press, 1952, p.450. For the text of the Soviet declaration see also: *Ayn Tarihi*, No.88, March 1941, p.49. Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, p.636.

<sup>28</sup> TCDB, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları (1939-1946)*, pp.96-121. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.120-122. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.163-165.

<sup>29</sup> Aydemir, *İkinci Adam*, Vol.II, p.165.

<sup>30</sup> Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.239-240.

<sup>31</sup> Aydemir, *İkinci Adam*, Vol.II, p.165. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.123

for Germany in this war, from its very beginning.<sup>32</sup> They indeed hoped a prompt defeat of Russia in east, because such would make possible a peace between Germany and Britain in west.<sup>33</sup> In this respect, even the Turco-German Treaty of 1941 was not seen by the Turkish government as a replacement of their treaty of 1939 and friendship with Britain, but a complementary to it in order to strength their relations with the west as a whole.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, this matter would totally change when Turkey's relations with Germany were compared with that of Russia. If we look at the general public opinion regarding to the warring nations, many people in Turkey gave support to Germany openly.<sup>35</sup> Some influential dailies like *Cumhuriyet*, *Tanin*, *Vakit* and *Tasvir-i Efkar* went beyond to be simple German sympathiser only but tried pushing Turkish government to enter the War on the side of Nazis. For example, Nadir Nadi of *Cumhuriyet*, saw Germans right when they were attacked on Poland and elsewhere because he thought that this war was a war of German unification. According to him Turkey "needs to understand the reality of 90 million German in Central Europe".<sup>36</sup> He defended German policies as "an historical reality emerged from necessity."<sup>37</sup> Because this subject is more related with Turkey's relations with Germany during the war and our space here is limited, we cannot go further and leave this matter to another article. But it should be noted here that what the Turks

<sup>32</sup> HMSO, **Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945**, Series D, the War Years-June 23, 1941/December 11, 1941, Vol.XIII, HMSO: London, 1964, pp.174-175.

<sup>33</sup> **Ibid.**, pp.174-175 and 632-633.

<sup>34</sup> Throughout the negotiations leading to the Turco-German Treaty, Turkey informed the British Ambassador in Ankara. According to the Ambassador, "the Anglo-Turkish alliance retained precedence.... The Turks were driven by hard practical considerations into making their Treaty with Germany. It was in no sense due to inclination or sentiment they did so." Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, **Diplomat in Peace and War**, London: John Murray, 1949, p.170.

<sup>35</sup> This public support is related much with nationalist movements and the rise of pan-Turanist and anti-Semitic influential circles in Turkey. For this subject see: Şaban Çalış, "Pan-Türkizm and Europeanism: A note on Turkey's pro-German neutrality during the Second World War", **Central Asian Survey**, Vol.16, No.1, pp.103-114. Also: Günay G. Özdoğan, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarındaki Türk-Alman İlişkilerinde İç ve Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Pan-Türkizm", in Faruk Sönmezoglu, **Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi**, İstanbul: Der, 1994, pp.357-372.

<sup>36</sup> **Cumhuriyet**, 30 July 1940.

<sup>37</sup> **Ibid.**, 31 July 1940.

sincerely wished to see was a compromise peace that would be accepted by Germany and Britain alongside the western powers excluding the Soviets.<sup>38</sup> To this end some attempts would be made by Turkey in order to bring together Britain and Germany until the Casablanca Conference. Turkish hopes took there a final blow when it was declared that the Allied powers would wage the war unless Germany surrendered unconditionally.<sup>39</sup>

### Russia's Honeymoon<sup>40</sup> with the West and Turkey's Position

Meanwhile Germany had attacked Russia on 22 June 1941. Immediately, the British Prime Minister, Churchill, declared that they would render whatever Britain could do for assistance to the attacked country.<sup>41</sup> Once again, this declaration was not too late to stir up Turkey's suspicions of this new bloc, particularly when the Prime Minister referred the Russians' efforts in the World War I. To the Turks this promptly reminded the secret Constantinople Agreement of March 1918 that was signed by Britain, Russia, and France.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Churchill's speech was a diplomatic *faux pas*, because the entire world knew the fact that the Russians' efforts in that war had chiefly been directed to gain the Straits.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, one of the main concerns in Ankara was the probability of bargaining between Russia and Britain on Turkey, as they did in the First World War. Thanks in part to the German propaganda machine, and von Papen's efforts to keep lively the *phobia*

<sup>38</sup> HMSO, *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, S.D, Vol.XIII, p.603. Harry N. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, p.166. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.134.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134.

<sup>40</sup> LaFaber maintains that despite their co-operation in military and economic fields, "a honeymoon never occurred" between Russia and the West. Walter LaFaber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1992*, (7<sup>th</sup> Edition), McGraw-Hill Inc.: London, 1993, p.8.

<sup>41</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, HMSO: London, 1962, p.151.

<sup>42</sup> Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.123. Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.239-240.

<sup>43</sup> By the secret Constantinople Agreement, Britain and France agreed that, in the event of an Allied victory, to grant to Russians control of the Straits and its hinterland. Vâli, *The Turkish Straits*, p.28. T.E.M.M., "Russia, Turkey and the Straits", *The World Today*, Vol.2, No.9 (New Series), September 1946, p.396. J. R., "The Background of Russo-Turkish Relations", *The World Today*, Vol.2., No.2, 1946, p.62.

of Russia, the Turkish government closely followed the developments in London and Moscow, with a great anxiety.<sup>44</sup> However, Turkey's neutrality and friendship in this period were appreciated by both the British and the Russians, since this neutrality provided a reliable security for the Straits and the southern borders of Russia<sup>45</sup>, and "a bulwark or 'protective pad' against German penetration into the Middle East".<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the British and the Soviets published a joint declaration in August 1941 in order to appease Turkish suspicions.<sup>47</sup> By this declaration, they assured Ankara of their fidelity to the Montreux Convention and to the respect of Turkey's territorial integrity. It was also added that in the case of Turkey being attacked by a European power, London and Moscow would be ready to provide every help and assistance to this country.

However, these assurances would not work to relief Turkey's scepticism of the British-Russian front, mainly because 15 days later from this declaration Iran was invaded by the Allied troops. The date was 25 August 1941.<sup>48</sup> This occupation promptly led Turkish public opinion and the government of Ankara to protest it and to underline similarities between the case of Iran and their position. As an independent country, whatever the reasons behind it Iran's occupation was mostly interpreted by Turkish press as an illegal action, aggression, and occupation.<sup>49</sup> As for the Turkish government, by which the reactions of the public opinion seemed to be manipulated, it did not certainly "like" what had been done in Iran.<sup>50</sup> This situation was further aggravated by Soviet behaviours in

<sup>44</sup> Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.165-166. Sarımay, **Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi**, pp.29-30.

<sup>45</sup> Tschirgi, **Laying Foundations**, p.122. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.166

<sup>46</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, **Diplomat in Peace and War**, pp.180, 203-204. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.166.

<sup>47</sup> TCDB, **İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları**, p.126. **Aydın Tarihi**, August 1941. Knatchbull-Hugessen, **Diplomat in Peace and War**, p.171. Anthony Eden, **The Memoirs of Anthony Eden: The Reckoning**, Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1965, p.317.

<sup>48</sup> Deringil, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, p.126-127. Kuniholm, **The Origins of the Cold War**, p.28. For the reasons of the invasion of Iran and the events leading to the invasion see also: Woodward, **British Foreign Policy**, pp.161-163.

<sup>49</sup> For examples see: **Ulus**, 26-27 August 1941. **Akşam**, 26-28 August 1941. **Cumhuriyet**, 27 August 1941. Some of these comments were partially quoted in Deringil, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, p.128.

<sup>50</sup> **Ibid.**, p.127.

their occupation zone that was largely populated by Azerbaijani Turks.<sup>51</sup> In Deringil's words, "to the Turks all these developments must have appeared as the height of predictability, and as once more vindicating their conviction that a strong stance towards all parties was indispensable."<sup>52</sup>

But the most important issue at the end of 1941 for the Turkish government was the Moscow visit of British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, in December following the USA's entry into the war as an ally of Britain. Eden's was a visit that seemed to be planned for a conference in order to settle the arrangements for the supplies of war materials to Russia, and to enhance the co-ordination of the Allied powers' wartime policies.<sup>53</sup> But, at his first meeting with Stalin in Moscow, Eden was handed over by the former the drafts of two 'short' treaties, one of which was concerned particularly territorial frontiers that would reshape Europe after the war, whilst the other was addressed to military matters. This demonstrated the fact that Russia was not only interested in a military alliance during the war, but also to set out beforehand the principles of a common action to solve post-war questions in Europe.<sup>54</sup> In general it can be said that as a leader of fighting nation, a nation that experienced the worse side of war, Stalin too had a right to say something on the future of the old continent. Such seemed to be normal in fact. However the issue in Stalin's mind was not to find a solution to the problems of Europe but to create more ones by playing with the borders of states, be in or out of the war.

One of the playgrounds was Turkey as usual. Indeed, when Stalin came together with Eden in Moscow, he could not refrain himself from making explicit what he had in his mind. He said that "both these treaties were to be published, but the second one [concerning territorial order] was to have a secret protocol dealing in some detail with European frontiers."<sup>55</sup> Of course, a part of the question of frontiers related to Turkey. Stalin suggested that Turkey be offered the Dodecanes Islands

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128.

<sup>53</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, pp.155-160.

<sup>54</sup> Graham Ross (Ed.), *The Foreign Office and The Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo Soviet Relations 1941-1945*, CUP: London, 1984, pp.82-83. Eden, *The Reckoning*, p.335.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p.335.

and certain districts in Bulgaria, and possibly also in northern Syria, as a price in case of Turkey's entry into the war in their side against the Axis powers.<sup>56</sup> Surprisingly this time Stalin was talking about giving something to Turkey. However, such was only an introduction to the issue of Turkey in fact. After splitting their ways from Germany, the Soviets would always insist on Turkey's entry into the war on their side, but, as we shall see in the ongoing pages, this invitation seemed to be a part of long term designs for materialising their historical ambitions regarding Turkey.

Therefore, knowing very well the meaning of Russian diplomacy, the Turkish foreign ministry officials paid very much interest to the Moscow Conference, which started with the visit of Eden. As it is expected, during the Conference, Ankara was in red alert indeed. According to the accounts of von Papen, Turks then feared that with the help of Anglo-American forces the Soviets would gain power again and later impose whatever they wished when the time came to establish a new order in Europe, mostly at Turkey's expenses.<sup>57</sup> It was important because, the entry of USA into the war had created an unfavourable factor for Germany, and to a great extent changed Turkey's anticipation as to the fate of the war in favour of an Allied victory.<sup>58</sup> For Turks without any doubt, it meant the re-emergence of the Russian threat. Therefore, when the rumours of Stalin's offer concerning the Dodecannes Islands reached to Ankara, the Turkish government conceived it as a pure Russian conspiracy in order to justify or at least to conceal their demands on the Straits, in return.<sup>59</sup> It was the situation in Ankara when the British Ambassador in Turkey who joined Eden in Moscow returned from Russia. With some distortions, he tried to assure

<sup>56</sup> Ross, **The Foreign Office and The Kremlin**, p.83. In his memoirs Eden seemed to be caught unprepared when Stalin mentioned doing secret protocols concerning the frontiers of post-war Europe. However, before his departure for Moscow Eden was told that he should not be surprised if he would face some territorial claims from Stalin, including the Straits. See: "Minute by A.R. Dew on Policy Towards the Soviet Union, 21 November 1941", *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>57</sup> Howard, **Turkey, the Straits and US Policy**, pp.166-167. Deringil, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.133-134.

<sup>58</sup> Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.166. Howard, **Turkey, the Straits and US Policy**, p.166. Yusuf Sarnay, **Türkiye'nin Batı İttifakına Yönelişi ve NATO'ya Girişi**, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1988, p.31.

<sup>59</sup> Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.166.

Turks that nothing as to the future had been discussed at all and most certainly nothing contrary to Turkish interests and that both countries desired a strong, intact and prosperous Turkey.”<sup>60</sup> He later informed ‘his friend’ Şükrü Saraçoğlu about the news and mentioned the Stalin offer to invoke primarily Turkey’s fear of Russia, as well as to satisfy the so-called Turkish territorial aspirations with which Germany had already tried to play, as a counter-measure. To this the reaction of Turkish Foreign Minister was ironic in appearance, but enough clear and short in substance to show Turkey’s attitude towards any offer based on territorial calculations. “That would not be nearly enough, he said; I must have Scotland as well.”<sup>61</sup>

Meanwhile, in order to officially confirm his Ambassador’s assurances in Ankara, Eden declared in a speech before the House of Commons that Turkey was treated in Moscow in a way that even the Turks themselves would have been glad to see. There was nothing occurred that could be regarded as harmful to Turkey’s national interests and territorial integrity. He concluded “the Anglo-Soviet pledges that we gave to Turkey last autumn would be fully honoured.”<sup>62</sup>

### Double Edged British Policy

Against this background, Britain’s policy was indeed a policy of continuing to support Turkey’s position and “active neutrality” until the Allied victory at El-Alamein in North Africa and the Russian successful campaign against Germany in Stalingrad.<sup>63</sup> However, towards the end of 1942, British Prime Minister, Churchill favoured Turkey’s entry into the war as a belligerent power with its forty-five divisions, well supported militarily by the Allies for an invasion of the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>64</sup> To him, Turkey’s entry depended on proper means that would be taken by the

<sup>60</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp.177-178.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178. For the Turks’ official policy towards territorial offers, see: Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.140-141. Ataöv, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.100-101. Armaoğlu, “İkinci Dünya Harbinde Türkiye”, pp.163-164.

<sup>62</sup> *Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, p.377. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.165. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.140-141.

<sup>63</sup> Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, pp.169-170. Tschirgi, *Laying Foundations*, p.123. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.28-29.

<sup>64</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Hinge of Fate*, Vol.IV, Cassel and Co.: London, 1953, pp.624-626. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.170.

Allies, because it was an ally and would want to sit at peace conference following the end of the war.<sup>65</sup> Even more, Churchill thought that in any case he could also play the card of Turkish phobia of Russia to pull it towards their side.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, the British Prime Minister himself later told Stalin that Roosevelt was in substantial agreement with him as to a new effort to bring Turkey into the war.<sup>67</sup> Stalin also agreed with the Prime Minister, since, he calculated, Turkey's active participation in the war by the spring of 1943, if it would happen as proposed, would be "of great importance in order to accelerate the defeat of Hitler and his accomplices"<sup>68</sup>

In order to discuss the decision of Churchill in depth, the then British Ambassador in Ankara was accordingly summoned to London in December 1942.<sup>69</sup> He briefed to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, and the Chiefs of Staff the situation of Turkey, the advantages and disadvantages of the Turkish entry into the war, as a belligerent.<sup>70</sup> The outcome of the discussions was primarily reaffirmed the early decision of Churchill: "in principle, the desirability of persuading Turkey to come into the war was accepted, but there were many attendant problems and qualifications" with which should be dealt before asking Turkey for declaring war against the Axis power. Consequently, Eden's message which was carried by Sir Hughe, the British Ambassador, to Saraçoğlu was mildly designed without any reference to Turkey's active participation in the war. Eden indicated there the importance of the determination and continuity of Turkish policy and goodwill, and declared that close co-operation and friendship between their countries formed "one of the cardinal points of British policy." His message was concluded with an assurance: "Turkey could count on the friendly

<sup>65</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.IV, pp.698-699. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, pp.170-171.

<sup>66</sup> Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.142.

<sup>67</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.IV, p.696. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.172. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.171.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.696. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.172. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.171.

<sup>69</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp.184. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.172.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.185. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.171.



sympathy and understanding of her Allies as an important factor serving the common interests of the two countries."<sup>71</sup>

Some weeks later, the British Prime Minister took his case to the President of the USA, Roosevelt, at the Casablanca Conference held in January 1943.<sup>72</sup> To the Prime Minister's case Roosevelt raised no objection in principle and let Churchill to play his 'cards' on Turkey, both for Britain and the United States,<sup>73</sup> while keeping a secondary role for his country in dealing with Turkey.<sup>74</sup> Such a behaviour of Roosevelt in this Conference was remarkable, as it showed the place of Ankara in the relations of United States with Britain that would basically remain unchanged until the Marshall aid program that would start in 1947. America accepted, or to put it in a better way, Roosevelt confirmed a conventional aspect of the US foreign policy that as far as Turkey was concerned, the prime responsible was Britain since it was considered a country under the British sphere of influence.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, it was acknowledged at the Conference that Churchill should play the cards to solve the problem of Turkish entry into the war.

Through the British Ambassador in Ankara, then Churchill urgently requested 'a most secret rendezvous' from the Turkish government, at any place convenient to them,<sup>76</sup> to be able to speak, on behalf of both the United Kingdom and the United States, on Turkey's

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<sup>71</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp.185-186. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.171.

<sup>72</sup> For the Casablanca Conference see especially: U.S. Department of States, *FRUS. The Conferences at Washington, 1941-1942, and Casablanca, 1943*, Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1968, pp.487-849. Edward Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1943-1945: Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, pp.133-139. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.29-30. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.172. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.IV, pp.696-716.

<sup>73</sup> *FRUS, The Conferences at Washington, 1941-1942, and Casablanca, 1943*, pp.634, 650, and 659-660. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.172. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.119-132. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.30.

<sup>74</sup> Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.29-30. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.172.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.172. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.29-30.

<sup>76</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.187.

needs in military equipment and general defence policy.<sup>77</sup> However, it was a visit aiming to persuade Turkish decision-makers to enter into the war.<sup>78</sup> Upon this request, between the dates of January 30 and February 1, a conference was held at Adana, one of the big Turkish cities located in the Mediterranean region.

### Adana Conferences: İnönü's Well-Tuned Diplomacy

At the Adana Conference, Churchill explained to the President of Turkish Republic, İsmet İnönü, how the Allied Powers, particularly Britain and America warmly interested in Turkey's active participation in the war.<sup>79</sup> Although they entirely understood the position of Turkey, they would prepare themselves to give all assistance in their power to Turkey in the event of its entry into the war.<sup>80</sup> But, beside the subject of exploring the possibilities of Turkey's active role in this war, at the Conference it was mostly dwelt on the two points: the structure on the post world war and the arrangements for an international organisation, and the future of Turkey's relations with Russia.<sup>81</sup> In order to affect Turkish delegation, Churchill who "believed himself an expert on Turkish psychology and policy"<sup>82</sup> played all his cards during the Conference. He focused especially on the point of Turkey's place in a new world order that would be established after the war came to the end.<sup>83</sup> He insisted that his country and the US were in full agreement that

<sup>77</sup> Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.173.

<sup>78</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.188.

<sup>79</sup> For the Adana Conference see Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.4, pp.706-709. Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.192-211. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp.187-192. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.30-33. Kamuran Gürün, *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası (1939'dan Günümüze Kadar)*, SBFY: Ankara, 1983, pp.90-91. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.172-179. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.145-149. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.152-161. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.173. Aydemir, *İkinci Adam II*, pp.258-262. Ataöv, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.106-110. Armaoğlu, "İkinci Dünya Harbinde Türkiye", pp.167-168. Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.246-249.

<sup>80</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.4, pp.706-709. Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.193. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp.188-190. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.173.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.174. Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.193-194. Sarıncay, *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, p.32.

<sup>82</sup> Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.30.

<sup>83</sup> Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.173. Sarıncay, *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, p.31.

Turkey should be associated with the two Western democracies not merely closing stages of the war, but in the general work of rehabilitation to follow.<sup>84</sup> When its time came out, he said, the sincere desire of the two democratic countries was to see Turkey as a full partner in the peace conference where all matters concerning changes in the status quo of Europe would have to be settled.<sup>85</sup> As for the Soviets, Churchill nominally tried to assure Turkish leaders, who expressed their anxiety on the matter, that the USSR was no longer the same with the old Russia, and that their Communist system had "already been modified".<sup>86</sup> According to Churchill, there was no reason to fear from the existence of the "to-day's Soviets", because they would definitely co-operate with the western countries in the post-war years. In addition, the British Prime Minister seemed to be very sure about the Soviets since he predicted that they would have to spend their efforts for internal reconstruction in order to recover from the destruction of the war.<sup>87</sup> In any case, if the Russians had become a danger in future as the Turkish authorities thought, Ankara would find an international organisation that would as a whole support Turkey.<sup>88</sup> For all of these what was now better for Turks was that their country "should be strong and closely associated with" Britain and the US.<sup>89</sup> For Churchill, there was nothing worried about, "it was, after all, in Turkey's interest to place herself in line with the victorious nations."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.4, pp.706-709. Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.193. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.173. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.173.

<sup>85</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.4, p.609. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.174.

<sup>86</sup> Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.194. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.174. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.174.

<sup>87</sup> Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.194. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.174. Sarıay, *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, p.32. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.174.

<sup>88</sup> Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.194. Sarıay, *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, p.32. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.174.

<sup>89</sup> Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.174. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, pp.188-189.

<sup>90</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.189. See also: Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.249-252.

The Adana meetings concluded on February 1, 1943. According to Churchill and the British Ambassador, Sir Hughe, the conference was successful, because it was understood that “we could count on them [Turks], if required, as soon as they were adequately equipped.”<sup>91</sup> Particularly Churchill appeared to be satisfied by İnönü as to the future of Turkey’s relations with the Allies. To him, “there is no doubt the Turks have come a long way towards us”.<sup>92</sup> He was also convinced that his ‘*Pensée Matinales*’ had worked very well and deeply impressed Turkish delegations, as well as his own British diplomats accompanied him.<sup>93</sup>

Interestingly enough, Churchill’s thoughts affected general Turkish public opinion rather than the Turkish delegation that was present in Adana. Indeed, the reaction of Turkish public opinion to the conference and his personality as an intellectual man and a British Prime minister was favourable in appearance. Referring much to the existence of ‘traditional amity’ between the Great Britain and Turkey, Turkish newspapers generally welcomed this conference.<sup>94</sup>

However, the Adana meetings marked that the Turks and British had different opinions about each other and conflicting objectives in their minds while coming together. According to Erkin’s conviction, during the Adana Conference and in the months following it the Turks and the British had used entirely different languages.<sup>95</sup> In this respect, “when the British spoke of wanting Turkey ‘to be strong’ they meant ‘for war’. When the Turks spoke of their needs to be strong they meant ‘so that we can stay out’.”<sup>96</sup> However, it was to a great extent true that the Turkish

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190. George.E. Kirk, *Survey of International Relations: the Middle East in the War 1939-1946*, London: Oxford University Press, 1952, pp.456-458. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.174. Arthur Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide, 1939-1943: A Study Based on the Diaries and Autobiographical Notes of Field Marshal The Viscount Alanbrooke, K.G., O.M.*, Collins: London, 1956, p.573.

<sup>92</sup> Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol.4, p.609. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.174. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.146.

<sup>93</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.189. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.144. To make a good impression, Churchill was accompanied by top ranked British generals and important diplomats. See for the British delegation: Bryant, *The Turn of the Tide*, p.570.

<sup>94</sup> For official communiqués issued after the Adana Conference and leading articles on the subject published in Turkish newspapers see: *Ayın Tarihi*, February 1943, pp.110-139. Also see, *Yeni Sabah*, 3 February 1943. *Cumhuriyet*, 4 February 1943.

<sup>95</sup> Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.199.

<sup>96</sup> Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.144.

government apart from public opinion was also impressed by the British delegation. This is mainly because, there was nothing bad in appearance for Ankara. They heard Churchill's words encouraging their policy and giving assurances for Turkey's future concerning a new international order that would be established after the war concluded. In addition, Turkey would be given a chance to play an important role in the construction of a new Europe as a European country. Nevertheless, the Turkish government particularly the Prime Minister, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, and Foreign Minister, Numan Menemencioglu were not entirely convinced on the future of Russia that would not become a threat for Turkey, as argued by Churchill.<sup>97</sup>

Nevertheless, it would not be an exaggeration to note here that Turkey's future was outlined in Adana, a future which did not only concern Turkey's war time policies, but also its place in international relations as a whole after the war. Indeed, all subsequent conferences and meetings of the Allied powers, with Turkey or without it, would mainly repeat the Adana meetings' decisions, except for an open invitation to Turkey to declare war against the Axis powers, which was decided at the Cairo Conference. After the Adana meetings, as the Allied pressure would intensify on persuading and preparing Turkey to take active part, it would not change its neutrality, even though this neutrality would gradually be biased towards the Allied powers. With the passage of time, Turkey would also adjust its internal and external policies and then sever its economic and political ties with Italy and Germany before declaring war against the Axis powers in February 1945. As noted by Churchill in his morning thoughts, then Turkey would closely associate with the western world, leading by Britain and the USA.

On the other hand, as for the Russian question, quite contrary to his anticipation in the morning thoughts, Turkey's estrangement from Russia would much deepen. Russia's foreign policy towards Turkey would remain unchanged in substance, but become more obvious. Not surprisingly enough, as a Turkish scholar aptly put it, Moscow's policy was almost always declared to be in favour of Turkey when Russia weak, but whenever felt powerful Moscow would not hesitate to want at least some bases in the Turkish Straits. Nonetheless, one point in this context

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<sup>97</sup> Erkin Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri, pp.194, 196, 199-202. Howard, Turkey, the Straits and US Policy, p.174. Deringil, Turkish Foreign Policy, pp.145-146.

should be clarified. There was not a direct link between Russia's attitude towards Turkey in 1945 and Turkey's policy during the World War II, as argued elsewhere.<sup>98</sup> Again interestingly enough, there was however a strong correlation between the attitudes of Britain and the USA and Turkey's wartime record. Indeed, Turkey's relations with the western powers seriously deteriorated during the war and this would continue until the declaration of Marshall aid program, simply because of the Turkish non-belligerency in this period. Turkey's reluctance to go into the war until February 1945, in spite of strong Allied pressure, would anger the western powers and cause its 'loneliness' when Russia challenged it in 1945. Even before this date, at the Conference of Teheran, Stalin would use this neutrality at the expense of Turkey and finally obtain from Churchill and Roosevelt what he wanted related to Turkey. At Teheran, it was at least in appearance agreed that Turkey would fall under Russia's sphere of influence and Russians could claim certain rights on the Turkish Straits. In this respect, it would not be irrelevant to argue that there was also a significant correlation between Russia's policy towards Turkey and the attitude of the western powers. If the Soviets had dared to want something from Turkey after the Second World War, it was a logical outcome of the western leaders' behaviour, especially that of Churchill, as much as the historical aspirations of Russians. On the other hand, had Turkey not taken an active part in the war as a belligerent country on the side of the Allied powers at times when particularly Britain wished, it was not a policy that was designed against the western powers' interests. Nor Turkey's integration with the western world after the War was not a direct result of the western powers' support to the cause of Turkey against the Russian threat. That is because, when Turkey decisively turned its face towards the western powers, it would find itself isolated and friendless in its struggle against the Soviet imperialism. With such a record, it was strange but enough ironic for Turkey to insist on integration with the western states that had at least for a while left it alone at a time when it had terribly needed some friends.

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<sup>98</sup> Baskın Oran, "Türkiye'nin Kuzeyindeki Büyük Komşu Sorunu Nedir? Türk Sovyet İlişkileri 1939-1970", **SBFD**, Vol.XXV, No.1, Mart 1970, pp.51-52. Tschirgi, **Laying Foundations**, pp.125 ff.

### The Reasons why Ankara did not enter the War

At this juncture one might ask why Ankara did not enter into the war until February 1945 on the side of Britain and the USA at the least when they warned the then Turkish government for the consequences of its aloofness after the war. There are indeed several reasons, perhaps overlapping with each other, as to why Turkey kept itself out of the War until 1945 at a time the war approached to the end. One of the reasons was related to Turkey's outlook towards Germany and Russia upon which we have touched in the previous pages. In addition to the above-mentioned explanations, it should also be noted here that Turkey certainly believed Germany as an essential factor of balance and peace in Europe.<sup>99</sup> For many Turks, the future of this continent would much depend on the future of Germans. That is why, the Turks anxiously followed the outcome of the Casablanca Conference declaring that the Allied powers would wage the war unless Germans surrounded unconditionally.

For the Ankara government, it was such a decision that was not only very far away from finding solutions for the current problems of the war, but it would also complicate them.<sup>100</sup> That is simply because, it would create a critical power vacuum in Europe, which would be filled by a more perilous state than the nazi-Germany: namely the communist Russia.<sup>101</sup> The revenge psychology of the Allied powers against Germans would cost them very high. According to the accounts of Erkin, Turkish authorities had always warned the western ambassadors in Ankara of a dangerous future waiting Europe. To the Turks, in the absence of Germany, which was thought to be a shield against the communist expansionism, it would be more than unlikely to stop Stalin's communist Russia.<sup>102</sup> On this point, the western powers especially London were seen

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<sup>99</sup> Erkin *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.190.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.188-190.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p.191.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p.191-192. During his service in Turkey as German Ambassador von Papen was nicknamed as the 'Angel of Peace'. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.168. Turkish policy makers believed him to be a sincere man and an anti-Bolshevik. *Ibid.*, p.146, 150-151. Erkin also records that von Papen was always anxious the future of bolshevism as much as Germany's. Erkin *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.176, 191-192.

by Turkish authorities as ignorant and insensitive.<sup>103</sup> Apart from this, pushing Turkey into the war was in fact like a double-edged knife as well. Even though Germany could be sacrificed for the sake of a general peace in Europe, it was not clear that what sort of contribution to the Allies Turkey could do. Militarily speaking, it was generally known that although it kept a large number of men under service, Turkey was certainly in a weak position vis a vis Russia and Germany.<sup>104</sup> Despite all problems, however, some in London still saw Turkey as a country that could share considerable part of the war's burden.

Perhaps in theory just Turkey's declaration of war seemed to be an asset in itself, but realist Turks thought just the reverse. To them, Turkey would be a burden much more than an asset for the Allied powers, if went into the war, simply because this would inevitably anger Germans. There was a problem at this point: Who would defend Turkey that had merely outdated weapons in the event of German offence, particularly by aeroplanes?<sup>105</sup> At the first Cairo Conferences held in November 1943, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Menemenciöđü, had only this question in mind when Eden met him to bring Turkey into the war or at least to get permission to use Turkish air bases.<sup>106</sup> At the end of the Conference, Menemenciöđü spoke him in the following manner: "You want to sacrifice us in order to make Russians happy. In case we go now into the war, the Straits and İstanbul will easily fall under German occupation. Shall we then await Russians' coming to beat Germany and to save İstanbul? Do you think that in such a situation Russians would save İstanbul only for me?"<sup>107</sup> Several months later, at the very same

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.192.

<sup>104</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.192.

<sup>105</sup> As also stated by Sir Hughe, there was indeed such a German threat that "could not lightly be disregarded". Notably, after the Adana meetings, "Germans intensified their threat of action and especially of air bombardment should Turkey declare [war] against them... A few bombs on [İstanbul]... would have created a situation which might have thrown the whole country into confusion." *Ibid.*, p.191.

<sup>106</sup> This First Cairo Conference that was held on November 5-7 was different from the famous Cairo Summit Conference of Turkish, British and America leaders that started on December 4, 1943. For more information on the former see: TCDB, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları*, pp.152-160. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.154-157. Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.212-215; Esmir and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.181-183.

<sup>107</sup> TCDB, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları*, p.160. Gürün, *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası*, pp.103-104. Sarımay, *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, p.34.



place during the second Cairo meetings,<sup>108</sup> the Turkish President, İnönü would repeat the very same concern, though he accepted Turkey's entry into the war in principle. He told how insufficient Turkey's arsenal was to Roosevelt and Churchill and said that at such a stage Turkish entry would prove a liability rather than an asset for the Allies. The occupation of the Straits and Istanbul would be only good for Germans, or a 'savour' that would later come to Turkey's help.<sup>109</sup> It was clear that this savour would not be someone else, but only Russia that was regarded by Turkish policy makers as the principal danger.<sup>110</sup>

Second reason for Turkey's aloofness during the war stemmed from economic circumstances.<sup>111</sup> Just as Turkey did not have a modern military power, so was its economy.<sup>112</sup> Infrastructure was insufficient and there was a few industrial establishments centred around İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara only.<sup>113</sup> Its foreign trade also concentrated on a few materials and few countries.<sup>114</sup> One of the most important customers for rare Turkish surplus commodities and the best supplier for Turks' needs in capital equipment and medium priced consumption goods was

<sup>108</sup> For Turkish documents of the Second Cairo Summit Conference see: TCDB, **İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları**, pp.189-206. For some account of the Conference from the angle of Turkey: Yuluğ Tekin Kurat, "Kahire Konferansı Tutanakları (4-7 Aralık 1943) ve Türkiye'yi Savaşa Sokma Girişimleri", **Belleten**, Vol.XLVII, No.185, January 1983, pp.295-348. Gürün, **Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası**, pp.113-122. Sarıay, **Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi**, pp.36-37. Deringil, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, p.154-157. Erkin, **Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri**, pp.215-220. Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", pp.185-187. As also noted by Erkin, for the first time in history Turkey and the USA represented by their presidents had such a high level contacts with each other. **Ibid.**, p.120.

<sup>109</sup> Esmer and Sander, "İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası", p.185.

<sup>110</sup> Tschirgi, **Laying Foundations**, p.124. Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, p.142.

<sup>111</sup> **Ibid.**, p.88.

<sup>112</sup> A general information of Turkish economy during the war can be found in Great Britain Export Promotion Department. E. R. Lingeman, **Turkey: Economic and Commercial Conditions in Turkey**, HMSO: London, 1948. For a brief analysis see: Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, particularly Chapter III, pp.88-115.

<sup>113</sup> Nuri Eren, "The Foreign Policy of Turkey", in Joseph E. Black and Kenneth W. Thomson (Eds.), **Foreign Policies in a World of Change**, Harper and Row: New York, p.302.

<sup>114</sup> A. C. Edwards, "The Impact of the War on Turkey", **International Affairs**, pp.390-392. Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.95-100.

Germany.<sup>115</sup> As Sir Hughe properly understood the situation, “if Turkey’s natural political orientation was towards Great Britain, there were inescapable facts which had compelled to look to Central Europe [particularly Germany] for close commercial relations”.<sup>116</sup> Physical approximation<sup>117</sup> and historically strong economic ties with Germany<sup>118</sup> which went back to the Ottomans’ time had affected at least to some extent the wartime policy of Turkey.

Nonetheless, during the War Turkish exports to Germany became a controversial subject as much as it caused much discussion and discontent with the Allies, because they consisted of strategic materials such as cotton, olive oil, dried fruits, copper, and chrome mainly.<sup>119</sup> The last item was of great importance since Turkey was one of its biggest exporters and it was heavily used in industry to produce war materials in particular.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, especially for this Turkey would be subject to a great pressure from both sides of the war.<sup>121</sup> From the Allied point of view, Turkish trade with Axis powers, namely chrome export, should be stopped without any delay.<sup>122</sup> For Ankara, it was however a substantial and vital item in its trade with Germany, simply because it made it possible to pay off the price of Turkey’s import in return.<sup>123</sup>

There was another factor which deeply affected Ankara’s wartime policy but the students of Turkish foreign policy dwelt on hardly: the treatment of Turkey in negotiations, secret or open, and the behaviour of the Allied powers towards Turkey. Apart from the question of how they would furnish Turkey militarily, they could in fact not make a clear-cut policy that would be offered to the Turkish government. Perhaps

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p.390.

<sup>116</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.145.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>118</sup> Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.98-99.

<sup>119</sup> W. N. Merdlicott, “Economic Warfare”, in Arnold Toynbee and Veronica Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946: the War and the Neutrals*, OUP: London, 1956, p.30-31.

<sup>120</sup> According to an author, “Chromium is to modern industry as yeast is to bread, but without it there is no bread”. Arthur Kemp, “Chromium: A Strategic Material”, *Harvard Business Review*, Winter 1942, p.199. Cited also in Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.110.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.101-114.

<sup>122</sup> Merdlicott, “Economic Warfare”, pp.84-86. Kirk, “Turkey”, p.360-361.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p.360.

Churchill was eager to press on Turkey to go into battlefields on their side without wasting any time, but neither Roosevelt nor Stalin did openly approve this policy. In fact, there was a great confusion among them as to when and how this policy was to be implemented. Above all, both the United States and the Soviet Union appeared to be determined not to open a new front in the Balkans instead of the western front.<sup>124</sup> As it can be understood from the previous discussions as well, such a view plainly contradicted with Churchill's plans to use the Balkan option through Turkey as well. In reality, during the war the big three did never come to stay on the same line at the same time regarding the would-be position of Turkey.<sup>125</sup> When Russia was insisting on the point of bringing in Turkey, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed, for example, at the Quebec Conference, the time was not suitable to do so.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, it became obvious during the Teheran Summit Meetings that Stalin seemed not to be in favour of Turkey's active participation in the war while the others now thought just the reverse.<sup>127</sup>

Before closing this subject, one more point should be noted here: British policy itself confused on this subject matter, let alone the others' behaviours. It was not clear that the Foreign Office<sup>128</sup> in particular, and British officials in general were determined as much as their Prime

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<sup>124</sup> US. Department of State, **FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943**, Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1961, particularly pp.497-508. Kuniholm, **The Origins of the Cold War**, pp.40-41. Howard, **Turkey, the Straits and US Policy**, pp.182-186. Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.196-197.

<sup>125</sup> Kuniholm, **The Origins of the Cold War**, pp.40-42.

<sup>126</sup> US. Department of State, **FRUS: The Conferences Washington and Quebec, 1943**, Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1970, p.1131. W. Churchill, **Closing the Ring**, Mufflin: Boston, 1951, p.58. Howard, **Turkey, the Straits and US Policy**, p.177. Kuniholm, **The Origins of the Cold War**, p.33.

<sup>127</sup> **FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943**, pp.497-536. Kuniholm, **The Origins of the Cold War**, pp.40-42. Howard, **Turkey, the Straits and US Policy**, pp.182-186. For reasons that have been offered to explain why Stalin reversed Soviet policy on the question of Turkish entry see Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.197-198, and particularly footnote 22 at p.198.

<sup>128</sup> At the beginning of 1944, Eden advised Churchill that "we should have to abandon our policy of trying to force Turkey into the war." Eden, **The Reckoning**, p.534.

Minister as to press on Turkey to join in their war.<sup>129</sup> As surveyed by Roger Louis, anti-Turkish sentiments of British officials were even an indispensable part of wartime relations.<sup>130</sup> In unpublished private wartime writings Louis noticed many examples of enduring image of terrible Turk among British officials. Of them, Oliver Harvey's diary of February 1943 tells much in the following quotation: "[The] Turks look less and less like coming into the war. I'm glad. They have no lot or part in what we are fighting for. They are backward and barbarous"<sup>131</sup>

The last, but not the least important factor, was Turkey's concern about the future of Europe and the Soviets' place at peace table. It should be, however, noted that at this point Ankara's concern was related to British post-war plans much more than the Turks' own convictions about Russia. That is because, Ankara had the impression that as far as Turkey was concerned, Britain did not seem to understand Turkey and its friendly warnings on this subject.<sup>132</sup> Nor did the Americans show tangible interest in Turkey's concerns in fact.<sup>133</sup> But leave a side Americans, for the Turkish government, the behaviour of Britain was much more notable than those of the others, mainly due to historical

<sup>129</sup> Eden, for example, stated at the Moscow Conference, which was held on 19-30 October 1943, that "under present conditions... Turkey would, as our partner in the offensive, probably be more of a liability than an asset". US. Department of State, **FRUS, 1943**, Vol.I, Washington, D.C., 1963, p.584. Howard, **Turkey, the Straits and US Policy**, p.179. Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.169-170. According to Erkin's disclosures, in January 1944 at a time when Menemencioğlu informed the British Ambassador in Ankara that Turkey would be ready to take arms on their side, if they wished, the British government did not reply it. Interestingly enough, expecting a favourable answer from London, the Turkish Foreign Minister succeeded in persuading his government to approve his suggestion to the Ambassador. Erkin, **Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri**, pp.225-226. See also: Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, pp.223-224.

<sup>130</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, **The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States and Post-war Imperialism**, Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1988, p.75.

<sup>131</sup> *Harvey Diaries Add. MSS, 56400*. As quoted in Wm. Roger Louis, **The British Empire in the Middle East**, p.75, fn.53.

<sup>132</sup> This psychological distress among Turkish decision-makers was obvious. After the Cairo Conference, the British insistence for some basis in southern Turkey disturbed Menemencioğlu in particular. It was his wonder who or what was to defend the Northeast and the littoral of the Black Sea. His answer was more than a nightmare: Russians. Weisband, **Turkish Foreign Policy**, p.221.

<sup>133</sup> Kuniholm, **The Origins of the Cold War**, p.33.

reasons.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, as also pointed out by Kuniholm, Britain's failure to consider Turkish advice, which was made particularly at the Adana Conference about Russia's post-war intentions, had since then left the Turkish government "with further distrust of Britain".<sup>135</sup> At the beginning of 1944, this aspect of the British-Turkish relations was openly subject to Turkish newspapers and seriously criticised on the grounds that the British side was now asking them to throw themselves into the War, without delivering enough military equipment and any guarantee on the future.<sup>136</sup> *Vatan* published one of the most significant and outrageous articles on this matter that was written by a leading journalist under the title of "The Two Britons".<sup>137</sup> According to the article, "the good Briton is the flower of mankind", since his appraisals always take account of all sides of any problem. "But there is also the Bad Briton" who "adopts all disguises, resorts to all intrigues".<sup>138</sup>

Perhaps during the Second World War the Turks was not fully informed about the substance of discussions taking place between the Allied powers on the future of their country. At the first half of the war they only felt that there was something strange going on in these discussions about Turkey. But it has later been proved by the documents available on the discussions that the Turks were not wrong in their feelings and convictions. Let alone many other issues, it was enough to know that the Britons and Americans had already agreed in principle that the Soviets deserved to claim something in Eastern Europe, Baltic, Balkans, Poland, and Turkey for the security of Russia.<sup>139</sup> Therefore, it should not be seen as an exaggeration to record here that the western powers were ready to sacrifice Turkey for the sake of Russia's comfort. Even more before Stalin made explicit his intentions about Turkey, with

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<sup>134</sup> A significant editorial in the *Times* and a speech delivered by Churchill vehemently alarmed decision makers in Ankara. According to the editorial, after the war Europe would be divided into two zones as West and East and their responsible in terms of keeping peace would be Britain and Russia, respectively. *Times* 10 March 1943. Also Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.148-149.

<sup>135</sup> Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.33.

<sup>136</sup> Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.147.

<sup>137</sup> Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Vatan*, 14 February 1945.

<sup>138</sup> As cited in Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.147, For sceptical articles on Britain see also Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.148-149.

<sup>139</sup> See for example Eden's discussions with Roosevelt: Eden, *The Reckoning*, pp.430-441.

their own behaviours at conferences from Teheran to Potsdam it was the western powers themselves who incited Russians to take action, which would eventually result in the famous Molotov declaration of 1945 and “war of nervous” with Turkey. This line of western policy regarding Turkey was to change, but just when the west realised that they also needed Turkey, perhaps more than the Soviets, because of its strategic location and Russia’s plans. These plans were jeopardising their interests openly, and the USSR was a danger to their own security in Europe and in Middle East as much as Turkey’s.

It was indeed very obvious that during the War and in the months following it Turkey was badly treated by the Allied powers among their secret meetings. Particularly Churchill displayed a very dubious attitude in this period, whatever he had reason behind.<sup>140</sup> At the Conference of Teheran, he deliberately declared Stalin that should Turkey reject entering into the war on their side, “its post-war rights in the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles would be affected.”<sup>141</sup> According to the British Prime Minister, the Soviets that held such an extensive land “deserved” the access to warm water ports and this question “could be settled agreeably as between friends.”<sup>142</sup> At the same time, he told that he saw no objection to Russians’ legitimate demands on the regime of the Turkish Straits.<sup>143</sup> Although he essentially agreed with Stalin on this matter, Churchill said that he could not advise him to act now at a time when they were “all trying to get Turkey into the war.” Churchill did not hesitate expressing his wishes as to see “Russian fleets, both naval and merchant, on all the seas of the world.”<sup>144</sup> In appearance, Churchill tied up the Soviets’ demands with the question of persuading Turkey to join

<sup>140</sup> Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.199-200. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.40-42.

<sup>141</sup> *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, p.536. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.39. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.186. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.199.

<sup>142</sup> *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, p.566. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.42. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.186. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.199.

<sup>143</sup> *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, p.566. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.42. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.186. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.200.

<sup>144</sup> *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, p.567. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.40-41. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.186. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.199.

the Allies and in every occasion repeated his well-known arguments in the same direction. Another day at Teheran, he took the responsibility of presenting to the Turkish President "the ugly case which would result from the failure of Turkey to accept the invitation."<sup>145</sup> To him, this invitation created "a priceless opportunity" for Turkey to be able to have a sit at the peace table after the war and it would make it possible to take the advantages of being associated with the victorious states.<sup>146</sup> He was still ready to offer something substantial, but in case of Turks refused once again his proposals, "they would wash their hands of Turkey, both now and at the peace table."<sup>147</sup> Churchill further assured Molotov that such an action taken by Turkey would bring about "a change in the regime of the Straits."<sup>148</sup> As for the Americans, Roosevelt did not raise any objection to these discussions.<sup>149</sup> But, what he essentially wished to see was that the Turkish Straits "made free to the commerce of the world and the fleets of the world, irrespective of whether Turkey entered the war or not."<sup>150</sup>

At the following Summit Conference in Cairo, in December 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt met with the Turkish President İnönü and Churchill presented there the decision of the big three in Teheran concerning Turkish entry into the war.<sup>151</sup> By accepting this invitation, Turkey should take the advantages, Churchill stressed, that "would be permanent and lasting, more particularly from the point of view of Turkish relations with Russia."<sup>152</sup> He repeated once again that if Turkey

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<sup>145</sup> FRUS: *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, pp.585-593. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.43-44. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.186. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.200.

<sup>146</sup> Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, pp.186-187.

<sup>147</sup> FRUS: *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, p.588. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.187. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.200.

<sup>148</sup> FRUS: *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, pp.536, 588, 848. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.187.

<sup>149</sup> Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.40-41. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, pp.186-87.

<sup>150</sup> FRUS: *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, p.848. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.44. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.187.

<sup>151</sup> Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.44-50. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.188-193. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.201-215.

<sup>152</sup> FRUS: *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, pp.690-698, 741, 751-752, 754. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.46. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.189.

missed this chance, later it might find itself alone, “not on the bench, but wandering about in Court.”<sup>153</sup> The main point on which the western the western powers stay to persuade İnönü was their policy regarding Turkey after the war. Whilst Churchill implicitly threatened Turkey that Britain would not take any interest in case of Russian- Turkish conflict,<sup>154</sup> and explicitly reminded that Turkey would be isolated after the war,<sup>155</sup> Roosevelt pressed his Turkish counterpart to accept their invitation “if Turkey did not want to find herself alone after the war.”<sup>156</sup>

### Turkey Goes to the War

Although Turkey accepted in principle the invitation<sup>157</sup>, it did not enter the war until 1945. This Turkish reluctance had since the Second Cairo Conferences caused a substantial discontent in its relations with the Allies, particularly with Britain.<sup>158</sup> However, as also stated by Erkin, Turkey strictly kept its faith in the principles of the Turco-British pact of 1939.<sup>159</sup> “From top to down, all Turkish leaders leading by İnönü” wholeheartedly believed in the policy of friendship with the Great Britain in particular and those nations who fought for “the benefit of civilisation and freedom”. To this effect, Turkey spent all its efforts during the war, even though Britain severed its relations in February 1944.<sup>160</sup> In fact, Turks did not hesitate to express their feelings, despite some constraints emerging from the realities of the war. In November 1943, İnönü said in a speech “we wish the victors of this world war to be civilisation and humanity.”<sup>161</sup> Certainly, the civilisation and humanity represented by the West in his generation’s understanding. The British Ambassador in Ankara, Sir Hughe noted that “there was not any doubt as to where the

<sup>153</sup> FRUS: *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, p.691. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.40-41. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.189. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.210.

<sup>154</sup> FRUS: *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, pp.691, 694, 751-756. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, p.46. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.210.

<sup>155</sup> Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.161.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p.163.

<sup>157</sup> Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, pp.40-41. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.189. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.212-213.

<sup>158</sup> Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.219-224.

<sup>159</sup> Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.231-232.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.228, 232. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.200.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p.193.



President's sympathies lay."<sup>162</sup> Indeed, two years latter from that speech, İnönü clarified that Turks sympathies were with Britain, without any doubt.<sup>163</sup> As an answer of speculations and accusations about Turkish belligerency, he also declared that there was only Turkey as a country that openly sided with Britain and France at the beginning of the war, and kept close contacts with them during the war.<sup>164</sup> According to Sir Hughe, "the Turks were driven by hard practical consideration".<sup>165</sup> He also indicated several times that "one thing was never in doubt, namely Turkey's intense desire for an Allied victory and her recognition of the fact that her own prosperity if not her existence depended on the close friendship of the Allies and in particular of Great Britain."<sup>166</sup> Similarly, American Ambassador in Ankara, Steinhardt also observed this state of Turkish psychology, as far as it is understood from his dispatches to Washington in March 1945. According to him, the "meekness" of Turkey during the war should have been emerged from their calculations for an inevitable tussle with the Soviets. As for Turkey's outlook on Britain, his feeling was that in event of a conflict between the Soviets and Britain, Turks would not hesitate to come in their lot to help the British "with enthusiasm".<sup>167</sup>

This enthusiasm should not be seen as an empty goodwill show. This is simply because, after the Adana Conference as Turkey provided some important services for the Allies especially for Britain, it also took some concrete measure in order to shift its external and internal policy in accordance with the Allies' demands. In September 1943 at a time when Britain asked for Turkey to use Turkish mainland and communication facilities in order to supply for its military forces in the Dodecanese Islands, the Turkish government rendered every helps during the operation and evacuation of the British forces, "without the slightest

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p.193.

<sup>163</sup> TBMM, *Zabıt Ceridesi* (Tutanak Dergisi) (The Records of the TGNA), Dönem (Session) 7, Vol.XXV, TBMM: Ankara, 1945.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.170.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.185-204, at 204.

<sup>167</sup> US. Department of State, *FRUS, 1945*, Vol.VIII, Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1969, pp.1225-1128.

hesitation".<sup>168</sup> It was however obvious that such an assistance had at this period a greater risk than at any other time for Turkey.<sup>169</sup>

The second example of Turkey's attempts to appease the Allies, this time the Soviet Union in particular, was a governmental decision to banish the activities of pan-Turanists and to arrest some of their leading figures. According to İnönü himself, Turanists became a danger to the very existence of the Turkish republic and acted against Turco-Russian historical friendship.<sup>170</sup> In parallel with this policy change, the *Varlık Vergisi* was also cancelled on 15 March 1944 and all related penalties were written off as a positive response to the pressures of the western powers.<sup>171</sup> However, as also pointed out elsewhere,<sup>172</sup> all of these would not be enough to placate neither Russians nor the western powers. Therefore, İnönü had to do something more.

Meanwhile, the chrome issue had become a headache for Turkey in its relations with the Allies. In order to satisfy British and American demands concerning this matter<sup>173</sup> the Turkish Foreign Minister announced on 20 April 1944 that all chrome arrangements with Germany was to cancel.<sup>174</sup> About two months later, the so-called pro-German

<sup>168</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, p.193.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p.193. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.150-152.

<sup>170</sup> *Ayn Tarihi*, Vol.126, May 1944, pp.23-29. Çalış, "Pan-Turanism and Europeanism", pp. 107-108. Ataöv, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 119-120. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.174. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.244-246.

<sup>171</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (Second Edition), London: Oxford University Press, 1968, pp.299-300. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.236. Çalış, "Pan-Turanism and Europeanism", pp. 107-108. Sarıay, *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, p.38. Faik Ökte, *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*, İstanbul: Nebioğlu Yayınevi, 1951, pp.197-213. For a background information leading to the cancellation of this tax see also: Lewis V. Thomas and Richard N. Frye, *The United States and Turkey and Iran*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., pp.95-98. Kirk, "Turkey", p.358.

<sup>172</sup> Erkin, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.242. Lewis, *The Emergence of the Modern Turkey*, p.302. Sarıay, *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, pp.37-38. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.166. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.256-257. Kirk, *The Middle East in the War*, p.461.

<sup>173</sup> On April 1944, the British and the US ambassadors in Ankara protested the Turkish government with very identical notes for shipping chrome to Germany. For the notes of the protest and Menemencioglu's reaction see US. Department of State, *FRUS, 1944*, Vol.V, Washington, D.C., 1965, pp.825-827. For a background and these notes see TCDB, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları*, pp.217-219.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

foreign minister, Menemenciöglü resigned from his post, because he resisted to the Allies' pressures on Ankara to stop the Axis shipping. After him the İnönü government interpreted the Montreux Convention in a way suited Britain's demands and virtually closed the Straits to the Axis powers' ship. As a next step, in conformity of the British government's proposal, the Turkish Grand National Assembly unanimously voted, on 2 August 1944, for a resolution in favour of breaking-off of relations with Germany.<sup>175</sup>

In the following months, Turkey continued its gestures to gain the sympathy of the western powers. It allowed all British and American shipping to pass the Straits for transporting supplies to the Soviet Unions.<sup>176</sup> At last, the formal Turkish declaration of war against Germany and Japan came on February 23, 1945. Foreign Minister, Hasan Saka delivered a speech before the members of the Turkish Assembly in order to explain developments leading to the declaration of war. He told that the new British Ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson, had visited him with a memorandum from the Yalta Conference of big three stating that only those nations which declared war on the Axis before March 1 1945, would be invited to San Francisco Conference.<sup>177</sup> According to Saka, it was "a possibility and opportunity to contribute decisively to the Allied cause."<sup>178</sup> In the same vein, the Turkish Premier, Saraçoğlu commented this proposal as an extra opportunity to show how Turkey "put its words, arms and hearts on the side of *democratic nations*."<sup>179</sup> A member of the parliament, Şemsettin Günaltay stated that the governmental motion to declare war on Germany and Japan should be regarded as the logical outcome of Turkey's alliance with Britain.<sup>180</sup> To him, Turkey had since the very beginning of the war been on "the side of democratic states" and spent all its efforts "to stop those states who wanted to revive the era of

<sup>175</sup> TBMM, *Zabıt Ceridesi* (Tutanak Dergisi) (The Records of the TGNA), Dönem (Session) 7, Vol.XIII, TBMM: Ankara, 1944, pp.3-11.

<sup>176</sup> Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.208.

<sup>177</sup> TBMM, *Zabıt Ceridesi* (Tutanak Dergisi) (The Records of the TGNA), Dönem (Session) 7, Vol.XV, TBMM: Ankara, 1945, p.126. TCDB, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları*, p.244.

<sup>178</sup> TBMM, *Zabıt Ceridesi*, Dönem (Session) 7, Vol.XV, p.127.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p.131.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, pp-127-128.

Pharaohs.”<sup>181</sup> Other speakers in the Assembly also put emphasise on Turkey’s praise for the victory of democratic states and historical friendly relations with Russia as well as with Britain.<sup>182</sup> In the following days, similar comments by leading columnists or as editorials, which warmly applauded the Assembly and the government, took place in the Turkish newspapers.<sup>183</sup> Of them, it could be enough to quote here only Nadir Nadi from *Cumhuriyet* who had labelled as the most ‘pro-Axis’, or Germanophile of Turkish journalists. In the following day of the Assembly’s meeting, he wrote under the title of “The Historical Decision”: “we always saw the fate of civilisation and mankind as hinging on an Allied victory.”<sup>184</sup>

Four days later from the declaration of war, Ankara also signed the United Nations Declaration.<sup>185</sup> On March 6, 1945, through the American Ambassador in Ankara who acted on behalf of sponsoring countries, Turkey was officially invited to the United Nations Conference on International Organisation which was to be held between April 25-June 26, 1945, at San Francisco.<sup>186</sup> Enthusiastically, Turkey participated in it as a founding state and signed the Charter of the UN at the end of the Conference. About two months later, the Turkish Grand National Assembly also approved this charter and then Turkey became an original member of the UN.<sup>187</sup>

In the meantime, Japan surrendered unconditionally and on 15 August 1945 the Second World War ended officially.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128.

<sup>182</sup> For the debates see: *Ibid.*, pp.126-131. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp.302-303.

<sup>183</sup> For leading editorials see: *Ayn Tarihi*, February 1945, pp.50-60.

<sup>184</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 24 February 1945. *Ayn Tarihi*, February 1945, pp.58-59.

<sup>185</sup> Mehmet Gönübol, *Turkish Participation in the United Nations 1945-1954*, Ankara: SBFYD Yayınları, 1963, p.2. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy*, p.208-216.

<sup>186</sup> *Ayn Tarihi*, Vol.136, March 1945, p.250. Gönübol, *Turkish Participation in the United Nations*, p.2. Sarıay, *Türkiye’nin NATO’ya Girişi*, p.41.

<sup>187</sup> Gönübol, *Turkish Participation in the United Nations*, pp.2-11. For the law 4801, which approved the UN Charter on 15 August 1945, see: *Düstür*, Tertip III, Vol.26, p.216.

### Conclusions

During the Second World War, Turkey followed a very realistic foreign policy and did not surrender itself to any power or power blocks blindly, despite the fact that it had sympathy towards the Allies. Turkish decision-makers were indeed able to implement a multi-faceted diplomatic relations with all the sides in the War and therefore they enabled to remain neutral until the end of the War. Perhaps sometimes they seemed to be in favour of one of the warring factions, but they did this in order to keep their relations in balance without entering into the War. At the very beginning of the War, they realised that Turkey could afford such a war neither financially nor militarily. Only the way of diplomacy left them a room to ensure their security and integrity.

As far as it is understood from the approaches of the Turkish leaders towards the Allies, Turkey's problem after 1942 in particular was not to enter the War on their side only, but the leaders of the country had the experience to make calculations about what would happen to them when the War ended in that or this way. At this point they surely wanted not to be invaded by Germany and saved by the Red Army. They knew that they would not solve this dilemma without someone's help, leave aside the problem of Nazis and Communists. This someone was of course Britain or the USA. However, both of these countries paid only a lip service to Turkey's warnings about the Soviet factor. It is enough interesting that many asks why Turkey remained neutral in this War, but forget to look at the dubious actions of the Allies against Turkey. However, the relative weights of the Russian factor and the Turkish policies of the Allied powers in Turkey's active neutrality in this war so much clear that none can deny it. In addition, the developments of international relations after the War proved Turkey to be right certainly.

### Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'nin güvenlik arayışı ve bu bağlamda Sovyetler Birliği faktörünün taşıdığı anlamı tespit etmektir. Aynı dönemle ilgili olarak Türk Dış Politikası üzerine yapılan çalışmalarda özellikle Türkiye'nin neden savaşa dahil olmadığı sorusuna pek çok cevap üretilmeye çalışılmış, ancak Türkiye'yi savaş boyunca derinden etkilemiş birbiriyle yakından bağlantılı iki önemli faktörün rolü, yani, Sovyet faktörü ve bu faktörü zaman zaman açığa çıkaran ve zaman zaman da açıkça Türkiye'ye karşı kıskırtan Müttefiklerin tavırları, kanaatimizce, yeterince analiz edilmemiştir. Özellikle Türkiye'yi savaşa sokmak için İngiltere Başbakanı Churchill'in oynadığı Sovyet kartı açıktır ki, bir yandan Stalin'in iştahını kabartırken öte yandan da, Ruslar'ın kendileri için tarihten gelen anlamını çok iyi bilen Türk liderlerini, sadece bu savaşta değil savaş sonrası olması muhtemel yeni uluslararası düzende de, Türkiye'nin güvenliği konusunda derin kaygılara sevk etmişti.