

Araştırma Makalesi/ Research Article

**Intelligence as Covert Statecraft: The OSS, CIA's
Predecessor, in Neutral Turkey, 1939-1945**

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Abstract

During World War II, the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) ran clandestine operations in neutral Turkey that became a lever of Allied diplomacy. The aim of this article is to explain how these covert activities shaped Ankara's wartime neutrality and postwar alignment by integrating close archival analysis with international relations theory. The study is important because intelligence is often treated as background noise in accounts of neutrality and alliance formation; placing it at the center clarifies how states recalibrate choices under uncertainty and threat. Methodologically, the article conducts a qualitative case study using U.S. wartime archives such as; OSS field reports, cables, and diplomatic correspondence and interprets the evidence through realist balance-of-threat

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and institutionalist lenses, tracing mechanisms, collection, influence, and quid-pro-quo bargaining, that link operations to policy outcomes. The analysis finds that OSS networks in İstanbul generated timely reporting on Axis movements and eroded German influence, reinforcing Allied leverage to distance Turkey from the Axis. At the same time, President İsmet İnönü and his advisers practiced "intelligence diplomacy," selectively cooperating with Allied espionage to extract aid and security assurances while maintaining formal neutrality. Outcomes include Turkey's late-war rupture with Germany and a smoother path into the postwar U.S. led free world. The article contributes to the literature by utilizing the intelligence as a tool of statecraft that works in tandem with diplomacy, sharpening explanations of neutrality under threat, and offering an empirically grounded concept, "intelligence diplomacy", that travels to other cases of small-state hedging.

Keywords: OSS, World War II, Intelligence diplomacy, Active Neutrality, Dogwood, Evros Mission.

Dış Politika Aracı Olarak İstihbarat: İkinci Dünya Savaşı Döneminde Tarafsız Türkiye'de CIA'nın Öncülü OSS'nin Operasyonları

Öz

II. Dünya Savaşı sırasında ABD Stratejik Servisler Ofisi (OSS), tarafsız Türkiye'de Müttefik diplomasisinin kaldırılardan biri hâline gelen gizli operasyonlar yürüttü. Bu makalenin amacı, arşiv belgelerinin yakın okumalarını uluslararası ilişkiler kuramıyla birleştirerek bu faaliyetlerin Ankara'nın savaş sırasındaki tarafsızlığını ve savaş sonrası yönelimini nasıl şekillendirdiğini açıklamaktır. Çalışmanın önemi, tarafsızlık ve ittifak oluşumunu açıklayan anlatılarda istihbaratın çoğu kez arka planda kalmasına; onu analizin merkezine yerleştirmenin belirsizlik ve tehdit altında devlet tercihlerini nasıl yeniden kalibre ettiğini görünür kılmasına dayanmaktadır. Yöntemsel olarak çalışma, ABD savaş dönemi arşivlerinden örneğin; OSS saha raporları, telgraflar, diplomatik yazışmalarından yararlanmakta, nitel bir vaka incelemesi yürütmekte ve bulguları realist tehdit dengesi ve kurumsal yaklaşımınla yorumlamakta; operasyonlardan politikaya uzanan mekanizmaları, bilgi toplama, etki süreçleri ve karşılıklı tavizlere dayalı pazarlık, izlemektedir. Analiz, İstanbul'daki OSS ağlarının Mihver hareketleri hakkında zamanlı raporlar üreterek Alman nüfuzunu aşındırdığını ve Türkiye'yi Mihver'den uzaklaştırmaya dönük Müttefik baskısını güçlendirdiğini göstermektedir. Aynı anda Cumhurbaşkanı İsmet İnönü ve yakın çevresi, resmî tarafsızlığı korurken Müttefik istihbaratıyla seçici iş birliği yaparak yardım ve güvenlik güvenceleri elde etmeye yönelik bir "istihbarat diplomasisi" uygulamıştır. Çıktılar, Türkiye'nin savaşın sonuna doğru Almanya ile bağları

koparmasını ve savaş sonrasında ABD tarafından liderliği yürütülen özgür dünyaya daha pürüzsüz bir geçiş yapmasını içermektedir. Çalışmanın literatüre katkısı, istihbaratı diplomasiyle eşgüdüm içinde işleyen bir dış politika aracı olarak kuramsallaştırmak, tehdit altındaki tarafsızlığa dair açıklamaları keskinleştirmek ve küçük devletlerin dengeleme/tehdit stratejilerine uygun bir "istihbarat diplomasisi" örneği ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: OSS, CIA, II. Dünya Savaşı, İstihbarat diplomasisi, Active Tarafsızlık, Dogwood, Evros Misyonu.

Introduction

Turkey's proclaimed neutrality during World War II masked exceptional geostrategic leverage. Controlling the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, the only sea corridor between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, Ankara sat astride Allied and Axis lines of communication and near essential raw materials. Washington recognized this early. In September 1940, the U.S. State Department instructed its mission in Ankara that the United States "*desires to acquire the chrome now above ground in Turkey as a part of its defense program,*" an unmistakable sign of American strategic interest in Turkish resources.¹ London reached similar conclusions; keeping Turkey aligned, or at least benignly neutral, would deny Germany bases and secure air access for Allied operations against Axis energy targets in the region. This geostrategic calculus rested not only on the Straits' chokepoint value under the Montreux Convention (1936) but also on Turkey's role in regional resource flows that could strengthen or starve Axis war production. By late 1944, a second strategic pressure point had emerged. Prime Minister Winston Churchill informed President Franklin D. Roosevelt that Marshal Stalin had formally raised the question of revising the Montreux regime to gain freer Soviet naval passage through the Straits, evidence that the "*Turkish question*" would outlast the European war.²

¹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), 1940, vol. III (Washington, DC, 1958), pp. 951-52

² Winston S. Churchill to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 19 Dec. 1944, in *Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington, DC, 1955), pp. 911-12.

Within this context, American intelligence in Turkey moved from mere observation to active instrument. The OSS, created in 1942 under William J. Donovan, built stations in İstanbul and Ankara to collect, liaise, and, when useful, shape outcomes. Covert reporting on German-Turkish commerce reinforced Allied bargaining over strategic commodities; combined with British assessments, it helped frame a campaign to curtail Axis access to Turkish chromite ore. The chrome export statistics cited in the House of Commons on 18 April 1944 (56,000 tons to the Allied powers and 47,000 tons to Germany in 1943) not only attest to Ankara's calibrated engagement with both blocs as a means of sustaining strategically profitable neutrality, but also supplied empirical leverage for intensifying Allied pressure.³

A week later, British officials announced that Turkish chrome exports to the Axis had ceased as of the morning of 21 April 1944.⁴ Meanwhile, Allied special services tightened the logistics vise. In March-May 1944, an OSS Special Operations team working with Greek partisans (ELAS) just across the border in Axis-occupied Thrace demolished two railway bridges on the İstanbul-Sofia-Salonika line, interrupting the flow of Turkish-origin materials to the Reich; the mission's after-action report records that only limited freight could pass over a makeshift span in the days that followed.⁵ Diplomatic pressure and clandestine interdiction thus converged. Ankara banned chrome shipments to Germany in late April 1944, then broke relations

³ UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 18 April 1944, vol. 399, cols. 7-8, "Turkish Chrome Ore (Exports)" (stating that "there have been no exports during the past fifteen months to satellite or neutral countries")

⁴ Ahmet K. Demirel, "The Political and Economic Consequences of Turkey's Chrome Trade during the Second World War," *Bellelen* 65, no. 244 (2001), pp. 762-763; Mac Carey, "How Did Turkey, Completely Surrounded by Warring Powers, Remain Neutral During Most of World War II?," HistoryNet, 15 August 2023 (updated 22 August 2023).

⁵ OSS İstanbul-Cairo report, "Demolition of Railway Bridges in Thrace," 5 June 1944, U.S. National Archives (NARA) RG 226, Entry 210: noting limited freight movement post-sabotage; OSS İstanbul-Cairo report, "Demolition of Railway Bridges in Thrace," 5 June 1944, NARA RG 226, Entry 210, The report notes limited freight movement post-sabotage. See also "Trakya'da Bir Tren Köprüsü Yıkıldı," *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul), 2 June 1944, p. 1.

with Berlin on 2 August 1944; the İstanbul daily *Son Posta* bannered the rupture on its front page the next morning.⁶

These steps capped a long period of Allied courtship, visible at the Adana/Yenice Conference in January 1943 and in subsequent high-level meetings,⁷ during which İnönü's government calibrated neutrality against shifting threats. Domestically, Ankara coupled foreign-policy adjustments with visible moves against pro-Nazi and ultra-nationalist circles in 1944, signaling its orientation even before formal belligerency.⁸ In February 1945, Turkey declared war on Germany, largely a symbolic gesture but sufficient for postwar positioning. The upshot was strategic: Allied statecraft, overt and covert, secured Turkish cooperation, or at least non-cooperation when it mattered most, denying Germany resources and potential bases at a critical juncture.⁹

This study asks whether OSS intelligence operations in neutral Turkey shaped not only the outcome of the Second World War but also Turkey's longer-term orientation toward the United States and the Western bloc. While OSS missions were conceived in the first instance as instruments to monitor Axis activity, counter enemy propaganda, and interdict smuggling networks, they also created new channels of contact between American officials and Turkish elites. By triangulating OSS records, diplomatic correspondence, and contemporary press, the research traces how clandestine initiatives overlapped with overt diplomacy: wartime sabotage planning and intelligence-gathering reinforced Allied demands over chrome exports, while quiet cultivation of journalists, business figures, and security officials familiarized Turkish actors with an emerging American role in regional security. In

⁶ *Son Posta* (İstanbul), 3 Ağustos 1944, p. 1.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, The Near East and Africa*, vol. IV, Washington, D.C., 1964, ch. 60, "Exchange of messages between President Roosevelt and President İnönü regarding the Churchill-İnönü meeting at Adana (Yenice), 30–31 January 1943."

⁸ On 1944 moves against pro-Nazi and ultra-nationalist circles (Racism-Turanism cases), Hülya Öztekin, "1944 İrkçılık-Turancılık Davası ve Basındaki Tartışmalar," *Selçuk İletişim*, Vol 11, No 1, 2018, p. 212-36.

⁹ Synthesis based on the documentary record of embargo and interdiction: U.S. Department of State, FRUS 1944, cooperation vol. V, doc. 901 (chrome stoppage) and Donovan to FDR, 18 June 1944 (bridge demolitions disrupting Axis logistics).

doing so, OSS work effectively foreshadowed the United States' deeper political and strategic engagement in Turkey after 1945. The argument advanced here is that OSS operations in Turkey were not merely tactical wartime maneuvers but early steps in the construction of a postwar relationship, smoothing Ankara's passage from contested neutrality to integration in the Western alliance system under the Truman Doctrine and NATO.

Conceptual and Theoretical Context

Intelligence is best conceived as a constitutive modality of statecraft rather than a residual "missing dimension," a point established by classic correctives that move intelligence from the periphery of diplomatic history into mainstream international relations. Andrew and Dilks' formulation have been consolidated by functional and historical syntheses: one diplomat described secret intelligence as "the missing dimension of most diplomatic history," warning that its absence distorts our understanding of other, accessible dimensions.¹⁰ C Herman embeds assessment, cooperation, and implementation in the machinery of government, showing how intelligence and policy co-produce outcomes,¹¹ while Andrew's global survey normalizes intelligence within the architecture of international politics.¹² Primers such as Gill and Phythian supply the analytic vocabulary and link capabilities, tasking, consumers, and effects to theory-building, placing intelligence alongside other instruments of power.¹³

this reconceptualization, Bezci's notion of "intelligence diplomacy" makes explicit that access, controlled sharing, and liaison rules can be traded in foreign policy, enabling states to convert informational assets into leverage, and his empirical work shows how such bargaining operates in practice.¹⁴ A complementary strand recasts secret services

¹⁰ Christopher M. Andrew and David Dilks (eds.), *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1984), pp. 1-3.

¹¹ Michael Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 137-64 and 200-18.

¹² Christopher M. Andrew, *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence*, New Haven, 2018, pp. 1-6.

¹³ Peter Gill and Mark Phythian, *Intelligence in National Security: A Critical Introduction*, 3rd ed., London, 2018, pp. 1-10.

¹⁴ Egemen B. Bezci, *Turkish Intelligence and the Cold War: The Turkish Secret Service, the US and the UK*, London, 2019, pp. 1-10.

as diplomatic actors. Scott's "clandestine diplomacy" captures how services do not only inform negotiations but shape them by enabling deniable contact, back-channel assurance, and covert implementation when public channels are constrained.¹⁵ Cormac characterizes covert action as a vital yet highly sensitive tool of statecraft,¹⁶ while Warner's reassessment emphasizes that efficacy rests on trust, authorization, and disciplined partner management.¹⁷ Classic policy analyses and historical syntheses reinforce the normality rather than the exceptionality of covert instruments in modern governance and highlight principal-agent frictions inside executive systems.¹⁸

Within this architecture, liaison politics functions as a policy instrument, not a technical afterthought. Sims shows its transactional logic, where access is exchanged for influence under secrecy and tradecraft constraints, while Westerfield's analysis identifies informal norms that stabilize otherwise fragile bargains.¹⁹ Walsh formalizes the international politics of sharing and explains how institutional design and power asymmetries shape flows, gatekeeping, and restraint.²⁰ Aldrich maps transatlantic liaison as durable security governance,²¹ Svendsen theorizes liaison as an institution that both reflects and reshapes alliances, and Goodman's official history demonstrates how the Joint Intelligence Committee placed assessment and liaison at the

¹⁵ Len Scott, "Secret Intelligence, Covert Action and Clandestine Diplomacy," *Intelligence and National Security* 19, no. 2 (2004), p. 330 (pp. 322–341).

¹⁶ Rory Cormac, *Disrupt and Deny: Spies, Special Forces, and the Secret Pursuit of British Foreign Policy*, Oxford, 2018, p. 1

¹⁷ Michael Warner, "A Matter of Trust: Covert Action Reconsidered," *Studies in Intelligence* 63, no. 4 (December 2019), pp. 33-34.

¹⁸ Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 8th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA, 2019, chap. "Covert Action," pp. 283-312; John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA*, Chicago, 2006, pp. 3–27.

¹⁹ H. Bradford Westerfield, "America and the World of Intelligence Liaison," *Intelligence and National Security* 11, no. 3 (1996), pp. 523-60.

²⁰ James Igoe Walsh, *The International Politics of Intelligence Sharing*, New York, 2010, pp. 1-7.

²¹ Richard J. Aldrich, "Transatlantic Intelligence and Security Cooperation," *International Affairs* 80, no. 4 (2004), pp. 731-53.

core of Whitehall's policy process.²² In Bezci's application to Turkey, these logics intersect in asymmetric partnerships where a strategically located but militarily constrained state trades site access and unique collection for guarantees and aid, thereby manufacturing leverage unavailable through formal diplomacy alone.

Intelligence-enabled economic statecraft clarifies mechanism and effect. Pairing sensitive collection with sanctions, resource denial, and targeted disruption can increase precision, credibility, and monitoring capacity while reducing the overt costs of coercion. Baldwin's framework situates information within the cost-benefit calculus of senders and targets,²³ and Mulder's history explains how sanctions became a routine lever of modern power.²⁴ Read alongside postwar practice in intelligence liaison²⁵ and contemporary analysis of *active measures*,²⁶ the literature shows how covert means and networks integrate with economic pressure into a single repertoire of influence calibrated to visibility and deniability. The scope conditions for these mechanisms are clearest where secrecy is institutionally valued, partners are asymmetric in capabilities, and geography creates intelligence rents such as transit corridors, intercept sites, or neutral hubs. Rubin's portrait of İstanbul as a wartime "spy capital," among neutral hubs "the most hotly and openly contested," and Süleyman Seydi's case study of a Nazi spy on British premises complement this view by tracing vulnerabilities and frictions in neutral-city tradecraft, including cover mechanisms and shared premises.²⁷ American records on OSS's Adana outpost further place planning and logistics in Turkey

²² Michael S. Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Volume I: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis*, London, 2014, Introduction, pp. 1-8.

²³ David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft*, Princeton, 1985, p. 52.

²⁴ Nicholas Mulder, *The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War*, New Haven, 2022, p. 5.

²⁵ Richard J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence*, London, 2001, pp. 31-33

²⁶ Thomas Rid, *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare*, New York, 2020, p. xv.

²⁷ Barry Rubin, *Istanbul Intrigues*, New York, 1989; Süleyman Seydi, "The Intelligence War in Turkey During the Second World War: A Nazi Spy on British Premises in İstanbul," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (2004), pp. 75-85.

within broader Mediterranean and Balkan schemes, and Nicholas Tamkin's synthesis threads intelligence evidence directly into Anglo-Turkish strategy, showing how clandestine means shaped bargaining power between London, Ankara and, at times, Moscow.²⁸

Literature Review

Classic works on Turkey's World War II policy largely focus on high-level diplomacy and balance-of-power strategy, with little sustained attention to intelligence. Annette Baker Fox's pioneering study analyzes small-state bargaining dilemmas; Edward Weisband reconstructs Ankara's maneuvers in 1943-45; Frank G. Weber examines German-British competition for Turkish allegiance; and Selim Deringil elaborates the concept of "*active neutrality*" to describe Turkey's wartime stance. These accounts, while rich in diplomatic detail and methodologically careful in their use of ministerial papers and published correspondence, devote limited consideration to clandestine instruments, even where intelligence activities affected bargaining leverage; for example, Allied efforts to choke off Turkish chrome exports or covert operations in neutral zones.²⁹

A second wave of scholarship reframes Turkey's wartime diplomacy by integrating clandestine instruments into the analysis, treating liaison structures, covert logistics, and neutral-zone tradecraft as constitutive of "active neutrality." Christopher Andrew and David Dilks crystallize the methodological turn by calling secret intelligence the "missing dimension of most diplomatic history," whose absence "distorts our understanding of other, accessible dimensions."³⁰ Barry Rubin portrays Istanbul as a wartime "*spy capital*," among neutral hubs "*the most hotly and openly contested*," and reproduces an OSS assessment that

²⁸ Robert Cossaboom and Gary Leiser, "Adana Station 1943-45: Prelude to the Post-War American Military Presence in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 1 (1998): pp. 73-86; Nicholas Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union, 1940-45*, New York, 2009.

²⁹ Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*, Chicago, 1959, pp. 173-75; Edward Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1943-1945: Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics*, Princeton, 1973, pp. 130-35; Frank G. Weber, *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain, and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War*, Columbia, MO, 1979, pp. 85-90; Selim Deringil, *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türk Dış Politikası*, İstanbul, 1994, p. 59-67.

³⁰ Andrew and Dilks, *ibid*, pp. 1-3.

"Turkey offers a base of penetration into the entire enemy-occupied Southeastern Europe," thereby situating the Turkish platform as both listening post and operational springboard.³¹ Suzan Süydi's case study of an Abwehr penetration inside British premises complements this view by tracing vulnerabilities and frictions in neutral-city tradecraft, including cover mechanisms and shared premises.³² American records on OSS's Adana outpost further place planning and logistics in Turkey within broader Mediterranean and Balkan schemes; and Nicholas Tamkin's synthesis threads intelligence evidence directly into Anglo-Turkish strategy, showing how clandestine means shaped bargaining power between London, Ankara, and, at times, Moscow.³³

American OSS activity in neutral Turkey, long overshadowed by high diplomacy, has also come into sharper focus. Studies of the OSS Adana station argue it functioned as a forward base whose wartime routines anticipated the United States' post-1945 footprint in the eastern Mediterranean, supported by operational details on low-signature tradecraft; for instance, minimizing radio transmissions to reduce counterintelligence risk.³⁴ Meanwhile, OSS counterespionage was institutionalized when "on 1 March 1943, Donovan created the Counter Intelligence Division. Three months later, he created instead a separate Counter-Espionage branch X-2," entrenching liaison with MI5/MI6 and controlling the flow of ULTRA to U.S. operations.³⁵ For Istanbul specifically, Project NET-1 described Turkey as "*a base of penetration into the entire enemy-occupied Southeastern Europe,*" a characterization that coheres with Rubin's depiction of the city's dense and contested clandestine ecosystem. As the history of intelligence matured, scholars began to treat clandestine instruments as integral to statecraft, long "*the least understood and most under-theorized area*

³¹ Barry Rubin, *Istanbul Intrigues: Espionage, Sabotage, and Diplomatic Treachery in the Spy Capital of World War II* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), 60 (neutral hubs passage); 126–27 (OSS "Project NET-1" quotation)

³² Süleyman Seydi, "The Intelligence War in Turkey During the Second World War: A Nazi Spy on British Premises in Istanbul," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (2004): pp. 75–85

³³ Cossaboom and Leiser, *ibid.*, pp. 73–86.

³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 73–75.

³⁵ Robert Crowden, "A Pioneering Experiment: OSS Double-Agent Operations in World War II," *Studies in Intelligence* 58, no. 2 (2014): pp. 65–75

of international relations.”³⁶ Turkish-language research has likewise examined Allied economic warfare over chrome and the limits of coercion; one detailed study concludes that “economic warfare was not successful in Turkey,” with observed German shortfalls due “less to the success of Allied economic warfare and more to the policy of the Turkish Government.”³⁷ In short, both international and Turkish historiography now recognize espionage and covert operations as variables that structured options, shifted payoffs, and, at times, determined outcomes.

Methodology

This article adopts a qualitative historical design grounded in multi-archival research and rigorous source criticism. To reconstruct OSS activity in and around Turkey, the core evidentiary base comes from declassified U.S. government holdings, especially U.S. National Archives (NARA) Record Group 226 (OSS records). These include field reports, station cables, X-2 counterintelligence files, and high-level memoranda from OSS headquarters. İstanbul station situation reports, agent communications, and the 1944 X-2 review of sources provide first-hand evidence on OSS objectives, tradecraft, and liaison dynamics with Allied and Turkish counterparts. To balance the American record, the study integrates British and Turkish sources. From the British side, Foreign Office correspondence, Parliamentary debates (*Hansard*), and War Cabinet papers (supplemented by published official histories and wartime diaries, since many MI6 files remain closed) allow triangulation of Anglo-American cooperation and overlapping SOE/OSS initiatives. On the Turkish side, records from the Cumhurbaşkanlığı State Archives in Ankara, especially the Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi (BCA) collections of the Foreign Ministry (Hariciye) and the National Security Service (MAH), shed light on Ankara’s management of neutral-capital espionage and its carefully calibrated intelligence-sharing with the Allies. Memoranda from 1942-43 are particularly valuable for tracing how Turkish officials handled the influx of Allied and Axis agents

³⁶ Christopher M. Andrew, “Intelligence, International Relations and ‘Under-Theorization’,” in Peter Jackson and Len Scott (eds.), *Understanding Intelligence in the Twenty-First Century: Journeys in Shadows* (London, 2004), pp. 170–184

³⁷ Murat Önsoy, *The World War Two Allied Economic Warfare: The Case of Turkish Chrome Sales* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Erlangen, 2009), Conclusion.

and negotiated the terms of liaison. Utilizing these indigenous sources aims to correct Western-centric narratives and foregrounds Turkish agency.

Across all repositories, claims have been cross-checked wherever possible; for example, aligning an OSS cable's account with a British diplomatic report or with contemporaneous Turkish press coverage, and weighed against the well-known challenges of the neutral spy milieu: fabrication, double agents, rumor networks, and planted disinformation in wartime İstanbul. Memoirs and "insider" accounts, e.g. postwar recollections by intelligence officers, are used cautiously and contextualized with attention to motive, audience, and hindsight bias. Analytically, the article employs *intelligence diplomacy* as its organizing lens: the idea that states leverage liaison, selective sharing of intelligence, and discreet operational cooperation as a form of diplomatic currency to advance policy aims while preserving deniability. Following Egemen Bezci's usage, this framework helps explain both Allied practice and Turkish bargaining, how İnönü's government managed covert relationships to enhance Turkey's security and extract benefits such as military aid and guarantees while still maintaining official neutrality. In sum, the methodology marries diplomatic history with intelligence studies: it builds a multi-sourced evidentiary base and interprets it through a conceptual approach that treats intelligence as integral statecraft rather than as a peripheral adjunct to "real" diplomacy or warfare.

Case Study 1: The OSS "Dogwood" Network in İstanbul

Neutral Turkey's wartime posture and geography made İstanbul a genuine intelligence entrepôt, a city where refugee flows, consular offices, and commercial firms provided ideal cover for espionage.³⁸ In late 1942 and early 1943, the OSS established a full station in İstanbul to complement its presence in Ankara.³⁹ In the field, the clandestine network coalesced around a Prague-born engineer resident in İstanbul (cryptonym *DOGWOOD*), managed day-to-day by OSS İstanbul deputy chief Archibald L. Coleman (cover name *Cereus*).⁴⁰ Lieutenant Colonel

³⁸ Rubin, *ibid*, pp.1-4.

³⁹ Rubin, *ibid*, pp. 97-98. (Donovan's approval; Macfarland's arrival via Cairo; first OSS-İstanbul cable 4 May 1943).

⁴⁰ Rubin, *ibid*, pp. 194.

Lanning “Packy” Macfarland served as overall station chief.⁴¹ Coleman’s own internal narrative of the İstanbul station details the structure and tradecraft of the Dogwood chain: American personnel operated under consular and business cover in Beyoğlu;⁴² recruitment focused on anti-Nazi German, Hungarian, Romanian, and Balkan émigré circles;⁴³ and a reporting pipeline fed raw intelligence to OSS Cairo, which relayed it onward to Washington’s Secret Intelligence (SI) and X-2 (counterintelligence) branches.⁴⁴ At the Washington level, an X-2 review in mid-1944 situated the İstanbul effort within a broader Allied audit of sources and methods, ultimately assessing the reliability of Dogwood’s product and the security of its operations compared to parallel British efforts.⁴⁵

By early 1944, the Dogwood network was providing a stream of intelligence on Axis intentions and on Turkey’s dealings with Germany. Much of this reporting had immediate diplomatic relevance. For example, OSS sources in İstanbul tracked German pressure over chromite exports and high-frequency political signals from the German Embassy, precisely the matters being discussed concurrently in Allied diplomatic cables and in Ankara’s own policy debates. These clandestine reports gave British and American negotiators in Ankara a crucial edge: they knew in near-real time what promises or threats the

⁴¹ Scott Anderson, *The Quiet Americans: Four CIA Spies at the Dawn of the Cold War, A Tragedy in Three Acts*, New York, 2020 (see chapter: “Operation Dogwood,” published excerpt confirming Macfarland as OSS İstanbul chief).

⁴² Elaine Pasquini, “Remembering U.S. Presence in İstanbul’s Beyoğlu Neighborhood,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, 18 July 2018 (on the long-standing U.S. mission premises in Pera/Beyoğlu).

⁴³ Barry Rubin, *Istanbul Intrigues*, New York, 1989, pp. 118–120 (Balkan businessmen/emigré recruitment; couriers; tradecraft); Yad Vashem Documents Archive, “OSS documents on the ‘Dogwood’ operation” (on parallel Hungarian/Balkan rescue and émigré channels intersecting OSS work).

⁴⁴ Studies in Intelligence (CIA), “A Pioneering Experiment: OSS Double-Agent Operations in World War II,” Vol. 58, No. 2 (2014) (background on creation/role of X-2 in Washington); National Archives (NARA), RG 226, Entry 210 (finding aid noting US Army Forces Middle East/OSS semi-monthly reports, 1943-44), Washington, 2009.

⁴⁵ Archibald F. Coleman, “Narrative Account of the Organization and Activities of the DOGWOOD Project” (2 Nov. 1944), U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) release, doc. no. 0000493983; Theater Officer (X-2) Pouch Review, “X-2, İstanbul,” 10 Aug. 1944, NARA RG 226, Entry 99, Box 35.

Germans were communicating to the Turks. Armed with that knowledge, Allied envoys could tailor their counter-offers and warnings with greater credibility and precision. Indeed, during the heated chrome negotiations of April 1944, Dogwood's field reports on German expectations and negotiating posture helped the Allies frame their ultimatum that Turkey suspend chrome sales to the Axis.⁴⁶

In the Turkish newspapers, the chrome embargo story dominated headlines throughout April. *Cumhuriyet* ran a sequence of front-page reports ("Krom İhracatımız ve İngiliz Basını," *Our Chrome Exports and the British Press*, 9 Nisan 1944; "Krom İhracatımız," *Our Chrome Exports*, 14 Nisan 1944; "Krom Hakkında Verdiğimiz Karar," *The Decision We Made About Chrome*, 21 Nisan 1944).⁴⁷ Meanwhile *Son Posta* on 14 Nisan 1944 headlined the Allied demand that Turkey cease chrome shipments immediately.⁴⁸ The temporal chain is striking: diplomatic telegrams, clandestine OSS intelligence from İstanbul, and Turkish press coverage all converged in late April 1944, showing how secret information flows buttressed Allied policy at a decisive moment.⁴⁹

As the Dogwood network expanded in 1943-44, it also drifted into more ambitious and correspondingly risky endeavors.⁵⁰ In the spring of 1944, Dogwood operatives became entangled in an ill-vetted scheme involving a purported German dissident group; in reality, this was a

⁴⁶ Theater Officer Pouch Review, "X-2, İstanbul," 10 August 1944, Folder 2, Box 35, Entry 99, RG 226, National Archives, College Park (mid-1944 X-2 assessment of the İstanbul station); CIA FOIA, "The Tangled Web" (internal retrospective noting the İstanbul debacle and Wisner's assignment to straighten out the station); CIA FOIA, "Narrative Account of the Organization and Activities of the DOGWOOD Project," 2 November 1944 (internal OSS review material).

⁴⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 9 Nisan 1944, p. 1; *Cumhuriyet*, 14 Nisan 1944, p. 1; *Cumhuriyet*, 21 Nisan 1944, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Son Posta*, 14 Nisan 1944, p. 1.]

⁴⁹Rubin, *ibid*, pp. 105-07.

⁵⁰ Arch F. Coleman, *Narrative Account of the Organization and Activities of the DOGWOOD Project* (2 Nov. 1944), CIA FOIA, doc no. 0000493983. (Contemporary OSS station history describing the "Cereus-Dogwood" structure and growth.); Center for the Study of Intelligence (CIA), "OSS Double-Agent Operations in World War II," *Studies in Intelligence* (2019), esp. on X-2 methods and double-cross inheritance from the British. (Context for how Abwehr/Allied double-agent playbooks collided in 1943-44.

double-agent play run by the Abwehr to penetrate Allied intelligence.⁵¹ Around the same time, the exposure risk underscored by the *Cicero* affair, Elyesa Bazna, the valet to the British ambassador in Ankara, who photographed embassy documents for Germany, heightened British concerns that OSS İstanbul might be too lax on security.⁵² By mid-1944, British counterespionage officers (the SIS/MI6 Section V branch, OSS's counterpart to X-2 abroad) grew alarmed that Dogwood's practice of purchasing reports was opening dangerous cracks.⁵³ An OSS internal review followed. The resolution, though painful for OSS, was strategically sound: Washington heeded British advice and agreed to shut down the Dogwood chain to prevent further compromise.⁵⁴ In July 1944, OSS İstanbul terminated Dogwood's operations, with select assets handled thereafter via British channels.⁵⁵ This episode became a crucible for U.S.-UK intelligence relations: OSS took the hard decision, and trust rebounded. By late 1944, Anglo-American cooperation in Turkey and the Balkans had returned to a high level of integration.⁵⁶ And veterans of İstanbul, most famously Frank

⁵¹ Theater Officer Pouch Review, "X-2, İstanbul," 10 Aug. 1944, RG 226, Entry 99, Box 35, U.S. National Archives (NARA College Park). (Assesses German-fed deception to OSS via İstanbul channels.)

⁵² Dorothy J. Keatts, "Footnote to Cicero," *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1957). (Authoritative postwar review of the Cicero case and its ramifications for Allied security in neutral Turkey.)

⁵³ The National Archives (UK), catalogue entry: "Use of ISOS by Section V during Second World War," HW 19. (Establishes the role of MI6 Section V as the British overseas counter-espionage branch-OSS X-2's functional counterpart.); Coleman, *DOGWOOD Project Narrative* (2 Nov. 1944), CIA FOIA 0000493983, passim (on finances, purchased reporting, and tradecraft concerns discussed between OSS Cairo, İstanbul, and Washington).

⁵⁴ "X-2, İstanbul" Review, 10 Aug. 1944, RG 226, Entry 99 (NARA). (Internal counterintelligence audit of sources/methods feeding Dogwood; details of false reports on Romania/Bulgaria.); Scott Anderson, *The Quiet Americans* (New York: Doubleday, 2020), excerpt. (By late spring 1944 Washington alarm over İstanbul's Dogwood prompted immediate remedial action and leadership changes.)

⁵⁵ "Official Enemies, Secret Allies-Part III," *Hungarian Review* (2011): "On 31 July 1944 Wisner disbanded the Dogwood Chain no longer desirable or justifiable." (Provides the operative termination date and rationale.)

⁵⁶ CIA FOIA, "The Tangled Web" (declassified study of Allied deception *Plan ZEPPELIN*), noting the post-Dogwood "debacle" and Wisner's summer 1944 arrival to rebuild OSS

Wisner, soon helped lay the foundations of the early CIA-MI6 Cold War partnership.⁵⁷

Case Study 2: The Evros (Meriç) Bridge Sabotage Operation (29-30 May 1944)

By 1943-44, neutral Turkey had become one of the most densely contested intelligence arenas of the war, with İstanbul and Ankara hosting operatives from the OSS, Britain's MI6 and Special Operations Executive (SOE), the Soviet NKVD, and a host of Axis agencies. This crowded ecosystem reflected Turkey's pivotal location astride the Straits and at the interface of the Balkans and the Near East, a geography offering both access and deniability for covert action. From the American and British perspective, Turkey provided a rare vantage point into Nazi-occupied southeastern Europe and a springboard for operations supporting regional resistance movements. From the Turkish perspective, however, any clandestine activity on or across its borders had to be handled with extreme caution so as not to violate neutrality or invite Axis retaliation. These constraints set the stage for the OSS's most audacious covert initiative in Turkey's vicinity: the sabotage of key railway bridges on the Turkish-Greek frontier in the late spring of 1944. The target was the vital rail line running through the Evros (Meriç) River region of Thrace, which carried Turkish chrome ore and other materials into Axis Europe.⁵⁸

OSS planners, working in concert with British SOE, conceived the operation as a way to sever Germany's logistical artery without directly implicating Turkey. In March 1944, a small OSS Special Operations team based in Cairo infiltrated Axis-occupied western Thrace from the Turkish side, almost certainly with quiet acquiescence from local

Istanbul and re-mesh with British efforts; cf. OSS Reports, October 1944 (FDR Library digitization) for on-the-ground Allied integration

⁵⁷ CIA/CSI, "The Determined Spy: The Turbulent Life and Times of CIA Pioneer Frank Wisner," *Studies in Intelligence* 69, no. 2 (June 2025): reassignment to İstanbul in June 1944 and subsequent Bucharest command.

⁵⁸ Robert E. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak-Gl Dagger: Marines of the OSS* (Quantico: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 10 May 1979), ch. VII; see the Hyper War edition for the Evros mission context and target set.

Turkish authorities along the frontier.⁵⁹ The OSS team linked up with Greek guerrillas, sources describe them as *andartes* in the Evros district, often ELAS-affiliated, who controlled remote sections of northeastern Greece.⁶⁰ Over the next two months, OSS and Greek fighters reconnoitered the rail infrastructure and coordinated plans with SOE liaisons. In the late hours of 29–30 May 1944, the combined OSS–Greek team struck: using explosives provided in part through OSS channels, they demolished two strategic railway bridges, one near Svilengrad on the Maritsa/Evros line and another roughly 12 km east of Alexandroupolis, on the wider İstanbul–Sofia network, effectively cutting the main rail connection between Turkey and Axis Europe.⁶¹

The demolitions were precise, dropping large sections of the spans into the riverbeds. In the immediate aftermath, German transport along the route was reduced to a trickle; contemporary OSS accounts and U.S. Marine Corps histories note that only light freight could pass makeshift repairs for weeks, with several months required to restore anything approaching normal capacity.⁶² Significantly, the operation was orchestrated to preserve Turkish deniability. The sabotage occurred just beyond Turkey’s border on occupied Greek territory, and it was executed by Greek partisans under Allied direction. No Americans were captured or overtly visible at the scene. Thus, Ankara could plausibly claim it had no involvement in the incident, even while privately breathing a sigh of relief at the outcome.⁶³ The Evros raid

⁵⁹ On infiltration from neutral Turkey via the OSS caïque base at Kuşadası and the State Department veto on striking the international border bridge to preserve Turkish neutrality, see Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak-Gl Dagger*, ch. VII.

⁶⁰ For OSS liaison with Greek *andartes* in Evros during the operation (often overlapping with ELAS formations), see “Bringing Down the Bridges,” *Warfare History Network*, which summarizes the Evros Mission’s composition and local guerrilla links; use alongside Mattingly for triangulation.

⁶¹ William J. Donovan to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 18 June 1944 (FDR Presidential Library, *President’s Secretary’s File*, Box 4), summarizing that one bridge lay near Svilengrad on the İstanbul–Sofia axis and the other ~12 km east of Alexandroupolis, and that cutting both severed Turkey’s rail connection to Axis Europe

⁶² Mattingly, *ibid.*, ch. VII (contemporary OSS/USMC accounts that repairs took months and only light traffic moved via makeshift fixes in the interim).

⁶³ For the operation’s deniable design, action on occupied Greek soil by Greek fighters under Allied guidance; no U.S. capture; and the general OSS–SOE coordination, see Mattingly, *ibid.*, ch. VII.

neatly complemented Allied diplomatic pressure, which was reaching its peak on İnönü's government at exactly the same time.

In fact, the bridge bombings took place in the midst of a concentrated Allied campaign to push Turkey into severing its remaining economic ties with the Axis. Just weeks before the sabotage, on 20 April 1944, Turkey announced an immediate ban on all chrome ore shipments to Germany; the U.S. embassy reported that the decision took effect "as of 7 o'clock" that evening following a statement to the Grand National Assembly.⁶⁴ This long-delayed step followed blunt British and American *démarches* and parliamentary scrutiny in London highlighting the scale of early-1944 chrome flows to Germany.⁶⁵ Concurrent with these developments, the secret OSS/SOE action in Thrace ensured that any remaining stockpiles or back-channel shipments of Turkish chrome could not easily reach German industry. In the ensuing months, as German defeat loomed and Allied military aid and security assurances to Turkey solidified, Ankara took the further step of breaking diplomatic relations with Germany at midnight on 2 August 1944.⁶⁶

By the time Turkey formally declared war on Germany in February 1945, the country had long since ceased contributing to the Nazi war effort. The Evros operation thus represents the kinetic side of intelligence-as-statecraft: a covert action designed to achieve a strategic economic outcome that conventional diplomacy alone had struggled to accomplish. German planning documents compiled under Albert Speer in mid-1944 register mounting raw-material and transport bottlenecks, into which the loss of Turkish chromite, and the temporary severing of the Thrace rail corridor, fits as an aggravating factor.⁶⁷ From

⁶⁴ FRUS 1944, Vol. V, Doc. 901 (Ankara to State, 21 April 1944): the Turkish foreign minister's announcement halting chrome exports to Axis countries, effective the evening of 20 April 1944.

⁶⁵ Hansard (UK House of Commons), 18 April 1944, "Turkish Chrome Ore (Exports)," vol. 399, cc. 7–8, detailing the scrutiny of Turkey's chrome exports as Allied pressure peaked; also, FRUS 1944, Vol. V, Doc. 906 (Hull to Ankara, 5 May 1944) framing the embargo as a turning point in economic warfare strategy

⁶⁶ FRUS 1944, Vol. V, Doc. 949 (late July/early August reporting): Turkish decision to break diplomatic and economic relations with Germany as of midnight 2 August 1944.

⁶⁷ Jonas Scherner, "Bericht zur deutschen Wirtschaftslage 1943/44," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 55, no. 3 (2007): doc. ed. and analysis of the Speer ministry's mid-1944

the Allied viewpoint, the sabotage validated the value of special operations: it was a clandestine strike that, combined with diplomatic and economic measures, helped neutralize a resource pipeline that had been benefiting the Axis.

From the Turkish viewpoint, the operation was tolerable because it occurred outside Turkish territory and under the cover of Greek partisans; contemporary records reflect no direct German military retaliation against Turkey over these bridge attacks. Berlin's protests, if any, achieved little. In sum, the Evros bridge sabotage illustrates how covert action and diplomacy worked in tandem. OSS and SOE could strike indirectly at Axis supply lines while Allied diplomats simultaneously drove home to İnönü that time was running out to join the winning side. Shortly after these events, Turkey decisively tilted toward the Allies, a realignment achieved through a calibrated blend of pressure and clandestine intervention. In other words, the Evros case exemplified how covert action could serve as a kinetic complement to traditional diplomacy.⁶⁸

Discussion: Intelligence, Coercion, and Turkish Policy change in 1943-45

Seen from Ankara rather than Washington or London, Allied intelligence activity in Turkey did not constitute a peripheral "sideshow" but a structured instrument that altered incentives, narrowed options, and ultimately helped to precipitate decisive Turkish policy moves in 1944-45. The OSS mattered within that structure in two ways. First, as a *generator* of information about Axis logistics and clandestine trade that policymakers could weaponize in diplomatic bargaining. Second, as a *vector* for coercive and deniable action that made Allied threats credible without overtly violating Turkish neutrality. Read together, the Dogwood episode for intelligence collection and liaison politics and the Evros sabotage, covert action

economic survey, which catalogs material and transport constraints facing the Reich; while not a chrome-only memo, it is the best contemporaneous synthesis into which the loss of Turkish chromite and the temporary severing of the Thrace corridor plausibly slot as aggravating factors.

⁶⁸ For a succinct mission narrative emphasizing the OSS–SOE–guerrilla interplay and the specific Evros line geography, see Mattingly, *ibid.*, ch. VII; for the Alexandroupolis–Svilengrad line.

aimed at a critical rail choke point, show how clandestine tools amplified leverage on a neutral state that the Allies could neither invade nor ignore completely due to her strategic location and capacity.⁶⁹

Throughout 1943, U.S. and British negotiating positions on chrome rested not only on public arguments about “aid for compliance,” but also on a continuously refreshed stream of detail about the mechanics of German-Turkish exchange, volumes, routes, port clearances, and the re-negotiation of the 1941 Clodius arrangements. FRUS cables from Ankara and London track both the Allied preclusive-buying campaign and the residual German lifeline by rail and sea; they show U.S. officials explicitly assessing how rupturing rail communications would diminish Germany’s ability to receive Turkish commodities.⁷⁰

This is intelligence pressed directly into policy: it identified where to squeeze (transport nodes), which contracts and ministries to pressure (Eti Bank, Communications), and how to pace threats and inducements.⁷¹ The public statistical trace, Hansard answers in April 1944 showing substantial chrome exports to Germany early that year, provided political cover for tougher Allied measures.⁷² OSS Istanbul’s Dogwood chain, built out of émigré Germanic and Balkan circles, illustrates how an American HUMINT network could both enrich the Allied picture and stress Allied liaison. Archibald L. Coleman’s internal narrative lays out the network’s structure, cover, and reporting flow to Cairo and then Washington’s SI and X-2 branches.⁷³

British counter-espionage officers, reading ISOS (Abwehr/SD) decrypts and comparing source claims, grew concerned that Istanbul

⁶⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1943, vol. IV, “Efforts to acquire Turkish chrome and to prevent its sale to Germany,” ch. 67; FRUS, 1943, vol. IV, doc. 1188; doc. 1228–1229.

⁷⁰ FRUS, 1943, vol. IV, doc. 1229 (“We believe that the rupture of rail communications would greatly reduce German receipts of Turkish chrome.”).

⁷¹ FRUS, 1943, vol. IV, docs. 1218 (Eti Bank and Ministry of Communications); 1224–1225 (contract performance and Axis movements).

⁷² UK House of Commons, *Hansard*, “Turkish Chrome Ore (Exports),” 18 Apr. 1944; 25 Apr. 1944.

⁷³ Archibald L. Coleman, *Narrative Account of the Organization and Activities of the DOGWOOD Project* (2 Nov. 1944), CIA FOIA

was over-buying and under-validating.⁷⁴ An X-2 theater “pouch review” of 10 August 1944 captures the audit logic: double-agent ploys were muddying streams, and some Istanbul reporting was polluted by German deception.⁷⁵ Following British urging, notably Section V officers who had the advantage of signals-borne cross-checks, OSS closed Dogwood on 31 July 1944, while quietly salvaging selected assets under British channels.⁷⁶ This painful decision mattered beyond tradecraft housekeeping: it demonstrated to Ankara and London alike that U.S. operators would subordinate a prized unilateral chain to coalition discipline and Turkish security sensitivities. The immediate cost in collection bought a longer-run gain in Anglo-American trust and in British willingness to share highly sensitive product, including ISOS relevant to Turkish questions.⁷⁷

If Dogwood dramatized the information side of leverage, the Evros bridge attacks of 29-30 May 1944 showed the kinetic counterpart. In a memorandum to President Roosevelt on 18 June 1944, Donovan explicitly tied the demolition of two Maritsa/Evros bridges to the overarching objective “*to interrupt shipments of chrome,*” highlighting how covert action supported economic war.⁷⁸ Operational narratives and Marine Corps histories fill in the details: an OSS team infiltrated from the Turkish frontier into Axis-occupied Thrace, coordinated with ELAS partisans and SOE liaisons, and dropped spans on the Istanbul–Sofia–Salonika line in a manner hard to repair quickly.⁷⁹ Reporting in the following weeks recorded only light freight making it through as makeshift fixes failed under heavy loads, exactly the kind of outcome that translated into bargaining power at the embassy table in Ankara,

⁷⁴ The National Archives (UK), HW 19/321, *Use of ISOS by Section V*.

⁷⁵ Theater Officer Pouch Review, X-2, Istanbul,” 10 Aug. 1944, RG 226, Entry 99, NARA-CP

⁷⁶ “Official Enemies, Secret Allies, Part III,” *Hungarian Review* (2011): Wisner disbands Dogwood 31 July 1944; corroborated by CIA FOIA, *The Tangled*

⁷⁷ Jeffery, MI6, and HW 19 catalogue records indicating Section V’s distribution of Ultra/ISOS product to policy customers and selected allies.

⁷⁸ William J. Donovan to President Roosevelt, memorandum, 18 June 1944, FDR Library (“two railway bridges across the Maritsa [Evros] River were destroyed to interrupt shipments of chrome”).

⁷⁹ Robert E. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak-Gl Dagger: Marines of the OSS* (USMC, 1989); John Mancini, “Bringing Down the Bridges,” *Warfare History Network*.



even as it preserved Turkish deniability by striking just beyond the border and under a Greek partisan flag.⁸⁰

The strongest test of impact is chronological. On 20 April 1944, after a sustained Allied campaign of pressure, Turkey's foreign minister announced an immediate ban on chrome exports to Axis destinations.⁸¹ Public parliamentary exchanges in London that same week acknowledged the scale of the previous flows and the urgency of stopping them.⁸² Within weeks, OSS reported the bridge demolitions; by 30 June and again on 1 August, Allied *démarches* pressed Ankara to move from economic severance to a break in relations, coupled with promises of assistance and the resumption of military supplies if Turkey complied.⁸³ On 2 August 1944 the Turkish cabinet decided to sever relations with Germany; on 23 February 1945 the Grand National Assembly declared war on Germany and Japan.⁸⁴ The sequence is over-determined, Soviet advances, the Balkans turning, Allied air and naval pressure, but the clandestine pieces contributed at *precise decision points*: they made Allied threats of blockade and isolation credible, highlighted the vulnerability of the rail artery, and offered Ankara a path to compliance that preserved neutrality's formalities while signaling strategic realignment.⁸⁵

None of this makes Turkey a passive chessboard. Recent scholarship conceptualizes Ankara's approach as "intelligence diplomacy": selective liaison, calibrated toleration of certain Allied activities, and targeted repression of Axis (and later Soviet) clandestine operations as a bargaining currency.⁸⁶ The MAH and police services tightened the screws on foreign agents in 1944, while high-visibility prosecutions of pan-Turanist circles signaled to both Moscow and London a turn

⁸⁰ Donovan memo, *ibid.*

⁸¹ FRUS, 1944, vol. V, doc. 901 (20 Apr. 1944 chrome ban).

⁸² *Hansard*, "Turkish Chrome Ore (Exports)," 18 Apr. 1944.

⁸³ FRUS, 1944, vol. V, docs. 930 (30 June *démarche*), 948 (assurances for rupture), 949

⁸⁴ FRUS, 1944, vol. V, doc. 949 (break with Germany, 2 Aug. 1944); Imperial War Museums, "Turkey Enters the War," photograph K 8889 (Parliament, 23 Feb. 1945).

⁸⁵ FRUS, 1944, vol. V, doc. 910 (blockade threats and calibration).

⁸⁶ Egemen Bezci, "Turkey's Intelligence Diplomacy during the Second World War," *Journal of Intelligence History* 15:1 (2016).

toward discipline at home and reliability abroad.⁸⁷ Those moves were rooted in a sober reading of threat trade-offs, fear of Germany “now,” fear of Russia “after,” and in a desire to secure postwar standing by showing timely solidarity without inviting invasion. The deniable character of Evros, and the consultative handling of Dogwood’s closure, helped Ankara manage risk: they aligned Allied pressure to Turkish red lines on sovereignty while furnishing domestic proof that the Allies were prepared to curb their own excesses.

The Anglo-American intelligence relationship in Turkey began in friction, British suspicion of an impulsive OSS juxtaposed with American mistrust of British information hoarding where imperial equities were felt. By late 1943-44, the pattern had changed: co-location, joint debriefs, exchange of documents, and a pragmatic division of labor (SIS/SOE networks long embedded; OSS adding resources and access). Authorized SIS histories and archival guides make clear that Section V functioned as the conduit for sharing ISOS-derived counter-espionage assessments with selected Allied partners, including the Americans at Cairo and Istanbul where policy utility was evident.⁸⁸ The Dogwood decision in July 1944 crystallized that integration: it was a costly but strategic act of deference that bought deeper sharing and tighter joint targeting in the second half of 1944.⁸⁹

Allied statecraft paired clandestine means with economic coercion across neutral theaters: Spain’s “wolfram crisis” ended with a May 1944 cap on tungsten exports to Germany, enforced by oil leverage; Sweden’s ball-bearing lifeline was addressed through joint intelligence, blockade-running, and special operations such as *Bridford*.⁹⁰ But Turkey presented a distinct geometry: a formally allied neutral astride the Straits, with unique Soviet sensitivities and an Axis-facing rail corridor that linked its economy to Central Europe. The OSS/SOE strike on the

⁸⁷ FRUS, 1944, vol. V (Turkey chapter); Coleman, *Dogwood Narrative* (tradecraft and liaison).

⁸⁸ Jeffery, MI6; TNA, HW 19 series guides; St Albans Museums, “Secret Operations” (Section V’s wartime base and role).

⁸⁹ CIA FOIA, *The Tangled Web* (Wisner to Istanbul, 1944) and X-2 pouch review.

⁹⁰ FRUS, 1944, vol. IV, doc. 396 (Spain wolfram cap, May 1–2, 1944); NBER Working Paper H-132, “U.S. Economic Warfare in Spain” (overview); on Sweden and *Bridford*, EHS Working Paper (2011).

Evros bridges had no exact Spanish or Swedish analogue: it targeted an *international* rail artery at the border, preserved Turkish deniability, and was explicitly keyed to a specific commodity flow (chrome) the diplomacy was simultaneously strangling.

The wartime learning curve, how to integrate clandestine collection, special operations, economic warfare, and diplomacy, fed directly into the early Cold War. Veterans of Istanbul, Frank Wisner most notably, carried liaison habits and a sense of “intelligence as statecraft” into the CIA; U.S. policy formalized the blend in 1947 with the Truman Doctrine, which explicitly yoked aid and security guarantees to keeping Turkey and Greece in the American orbit; and by 1952 Turkey had joined NATO, institutionalizing the wartime pattern of intelligence-centred partnership. The OSS did not “cause” Turkish alignment, Soviet pressure after 1945 and broader geostrategic shifts would have been decisive in any case, but the Istanbul station *accelerated* and *shaped* the path by helping the Allies to diagnose the leverage points in Turkey’s economy and transport links, make calibrated, deniable demonstrations of will, and build a liaison ethic with MAH and SIS that smoothed the final turn.

Indeed, the OSS impact on Turkish foreign policy is best specified not in heroic anecdotes but as *marginal leverage at decisive moments*, produced by the coupling of clandestine information and clandestine action to overt economic and diplomatic instruments. That coupling, tightened by coalition learning in the wake of Dogwood and dramatized by Evros, helped to push an astute but risk-averse neutral across the April–August 1944 threshold and to lock in alignment by early 1945. This is precisely the pattern later codified in U.S. and NATO practice: intelligence not as a parallel track but as a constitutive pillar of statecraft toward strategically pivotal states.

Limitations & Alternative Interpretations

A rival reading treats Turkey’s late-war realignment as structurally over-determined by the conventional balance rather than nudged by clandestine pressure. In this view, once the Wehrmacht’s strategic position deteriorated and Allied air-sea predominance eroded the Reich’s mobility and productive capacity, Ankara’s break with Berlin became a near-automatic consequence of prudent statecraft. Classic accounts that foreground Turkish diplomatic finesse, “small-state”

calibration under great-power pressure, sustain this interpretation and emphasize continuity in İnönü's cautious neutrality more than any catalytic effect of intelligence.⁹¹ A broader strategic literature, likewise, suggests that by 1944 the material logic of Allied dominance would have compelled Turkish accommodation in any case.⁹²

The argument advanced here does not dispute the primacy of Turkish calculation; it reframes *when* and *how* that calculation moved. Several pieces of contemporaneous evidence show Allied intelligence and covert action tightening the timetable and shaping the menu of acceptable choices. ULTRA-derived assessments and embassy/OSS reporting provided decision-relevant granularity, on German logistics, on the resilience of Axis supply routes, and on the credibility of Allied threats, that fed directly into Anglo-American bargaining.⁹³ Economic warfare policy, as codified by the Ministry of Economic Warfare and analyzed in *The Economic Blockade*, was repeatedly coordinated with intelligence cues about rail and maritime choke points.⁹⁴

The Turkish chrome embargo announced on 20 April 1944 falls precisely at the apex of this integrated pressure campaign; it was followed within weeks by an OSS memorandum to President Roosevelt explicitly linking the demolition of two Evros/Maritsa bridges to the objective of interrupting chrome shipments, and then by intensified U.S.-U.K. *démarches* urging a full rupture with Germany, achieved on 2 August 1944.⁹⁵ In short, the conventional-power trajectory explain *why it tilted when it did* and *on what terms*. To be clear, no controlled counterfactual can “prove” decisiveness. But the temporal clustering of intelligence-grounded bargaining, deniable sabotage keyed to a specific commodity flow, and Turkish policy shifts supports the claim that clandestine instruments accelerated and structured an

⁹¹ Weisband, *ibid*, Introduction, p. 3, “Realignment of Turkish Foreign Policy,” p. 257; Deringil, *ibid*, pp.200

⁹² Weber, *ibid*, p.290.

⁹³ Hinsley, *ibid*, pp-3-15.

⁹⁴ W. N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, Vol. II, 1942–1945 (London: HMSO, 1959), “Turkey,” pp. 525; “Supply-Purchase, 1943,” pp. 547; data tables on Axis imports incl. Turkey p. 665.

⁹⁵ FRUS, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1944*, Vol. V (*The Near East, South Asia, and Africa; The Far East*), Document 901 (20 April 1944).

outcome that might otherwise have arrived later or with greater reputational cost to Ankara.⁹⁶ Source constraints counsel caution. Much British SIS material remains inaccessible to ordinary researchers; Keith Jeffery's authorized history was based on privileged access to MI6's closed archive, a reminder that public documentation is partial by design.⁹⁷

Turkish intelligence archives (MAH/MİT) are likewise selective, recent micro-releases underline how little of the twentieth-century record is yet open, though diplomatic files have become more available via the Turkish Diplomatic Archives program. On specific episodes, notably Cicero, the evidentiary base includes self-serving memoirs alongside later reconstructions; critical scholarship is therefore essential to filter contemporary narratives.⁹⁸ None of these lacunae invalidates the argument; they mark the edges of current knowledge and the payoff to further declassification. Triangulation across FRUS, British economic-warfare documentation, authorized intelligence histories, and Turkish diplomatic sources already allows a cautious but positive inference: espionage and covert action formed part of the causal machinery by which Allied policy narrowed Ankara's options and hastened its turn.

Conclusion

Viewed from the angle of statecraft rather than operations history, OSS activity in neutral Turkey exemplifies an early U.S. practice of integrating clandestine collection and deniable action into coercive bargaining with a pivotal neutral. HUMINT networks such as Dogwood contributed not merely "color" but discrete claims about clandestine trade and Axis vulnerabilities that could be operationalized in diplomacy; covert action, exemplified by the Evros bridge demolitions,

⁹⁶ Tamkin, *ibid.*, pp. 135–166 ("Allied pressure and Turkish choices, 1943–44"); Bezci, *ibid.*, pp. 33–40.

⁹⁷ Jeffery, *ibid.*, pp. xix–xxi; p. 580

⁹⁸ L. C. Moyzisch, *Operation Cicero* (London: Wingate, 1950; reprints 1952/1969), Part I, pp. 7–28 (Ankara setting and first contacts); Part III (Embassy document flow), p. 48; Richard Wires, *The Cicero Spy Affair: German Access to British Secrets in World War II* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), ch. 2 "Turkey and the Powers," pp. 13–28; ch. 9 "The Contest for Turkey," pp. 113–128; ch. 14 "The Affair in Retrospect," pp. 187–204.

furnished a targeted and plausibly deniable demonstration of resolve keyed to an economic lever the Allies were already squeezing. Read together with the chrome embargo and the August 1944 rupture, these instruments show intelligence not as a sideshow but as a modality through which Allied threats and assurances were made credible, specific, and timely.

The liaison habits and bargaining grammar rehearsed in Ankara (exchanging information for access and applying deniable pressure for policy movement) carried into the early Cold War and shaped the U.S. approach to the “Northern Tier.” If one locates Turkey’s post-1945 alignment within the broader arc of containment, the wartime experience looks like a prototype of the integrated repertoire later associated with the CIA: intelligence as policy instrument, fused with economic leverage and diplomatic sequencing. In the Turkish case, that fusion did not “cause” alignment, but it bounded and biased choices at pivotal moments, lowering the political and security costs of cooperation for Ankara and smoothing the path to a Western security partnership. The analytical payoff of restoring intelligence to the narrative is therefore twofold: it sharpens causal timing in 1944-45, and it clarifies the institutional genealogy of postwar Anglo-American–Turkish intelligence cooperation.

In essence, the OSS-led intelligence diplomacy of World War II laid the foundation for Turkey’s voluntary postwar integration into the Western bloc. The trust, liaison habits, and strategic understandings developed through wartime OSS operations smoothed Turkey’s transition into the U.S.-led alliance system, as reflected in its accession to NATO and enduring bilateral security arrangements with the United States in the early Cold War.

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