

THE SOVIET TERRITORIAL DEMANDS FROM TURKEY: 1939-1946

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ABSTRACT

THE SOVIET TERRITORIAL DEMANDS FROM TURKEY: 1939-1946

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This thesis seeks to explore the Soviet territorial claims on Turkey during the period between 1939-1946. The main argument of this thesis is that the Soviet demands from Turkey during the World War II were expansionist in nature, as opposed to the view that they were defensive. The Soviet leadership formulated these demands before the German invasion of the Soviet territories when the Soviet Union did not have significant security concerns and maintained superiority during the war.

This thesis is composed of six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and the second chapter looks at the historical context of Turkish-Soviet relations. Chapter Three examines the Soviet demands for military bases and territorial concessions from Turkey immediately after the Second World War. The fourth chapter discusses planning of settling Armenians in Turkish territories. This chapter also examines the initial US response to the Soviet demands. Chapter Five analyzes the United States' adoption of a hard-line attitude towards the Soviet Union with respect to these demands and also how the US reaction led to the Soviet withdrawal of demands. The last chapter is the conclusion.

Keywords: Political History, Neo-realism, Turkey, the Soviet Union, Second World War

ÖZ

SOVYETLER'İN TÜRKİYE'DEN TOPRAK TALEPLERİ: 1939-1946

Remzi Öner Özkan

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tez, Sovyetler'in 1939-1946 döneminde Türkiye'ye yönelik ortaya koyduğu toprak ve üs taleplerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Tezin ana argümanı, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sırasındaki Sovyet taleplerinin savunma amaçlı olduğu görüşlerinin aksine, bu isteklerin genişleme amaçlı olduğudur. Sovyet liderliği bu talepleri, Sovyet topraklarındaki Alman işgali öncesinde, ülkesine yönelik ciddi bir güvenlik tehdidinin bulunmadığı ve savaşta üstünlüğü elinde tuttuğu bir dönemde formüle etmiştir.

Bu tez, 6 bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm giriş bölümü olup, ikinci bölümde, Türk-Sovyet ilişkilerinin tarihsel gelişimi incelenmektedir. Üçüncü bölümde, Sovyetler'in İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın hemen sonrasında Türkiye'den toprak ve askeri üs talepleri incelenmektedir. Dördüncü bölümde, Ermeni nüfusun Türk topraklarına yerleştirilmesi planını tartışmaktadır. Bu bölümde ayrıca, ABD'nin Sovyet taleplerine ilişkin tutumu incelenmektedir. Beşinci bölümde ABD'nin bu talepler karşısında Sovyetler Birliği'ne karşı çok sert bir tutum takınmasının, ayrıca ABD'nin tepkisinin Sovyetler'in taleplerini geri çekmesine yol açmasının analizi yapılmaktadır. Son bölüm sonuç bölümüdür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Siyasal Tarih, Neo-realizm, Türkiye, Sovyetler Birliği, İkinci Dünya Savaşı

To My Father Rasim Özkan

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes Turkish-Soviet relations from the end of the First World War to the early years of the Cold War. It focuses particularly on the years between 1939-1946, during which the Soviet Union formulated and tried to ensure the fulfillment of its territorial claims against Turkey's eastern regions and the Turkish Straits.

During the last centuries of the Ottoman Empire and in the first decades of the Turkish Republic era, Russia and its successor the USSR were one of the most important and influential countries in Turkey's foreign policy. Relations between both countries covered a wide spectrum ranging from conflict to close cooperation. Following the 1917 revolution in Russia up until the beginning of World War II relations between the two countries were very close. During that period Moscow was the closest capital to Ankara. During this period, Turkey never took any important steps in its foreign policy without consulting first with Moscow.¹

Even prior to the Second World War, when Ankara was seeking a kind of security umbrella from Britain and France in order to protect itself from the destructive effects of the war, Turkey never neglected to consult with Moscow.² However, during the war, relations began to deteriorate due to various factors. There are several reasons for this: New defense requirements for both countries as revealed by the war; the impact of relations with third countries on their bilateral relations; the impact on bilateral relations of the global post war arrangements discussed during the final years by the war.

¹ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.314-316

² İlhan Uzgel and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu. "İngiltere'yle İlişkiler (Relations with Britain)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I (Turkish Foreign Policy: Events, Documents and Interpretations from the War of Independence to Contemporary Era Vol. I)*, edited by Baskın Oran, 258-277: İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, pp.274-275

Close cooperation between the two countries during the first two decades of the Turkish Republic; came to a breaking point during the Second World War. During this period of the war, the Soviet Union tried to reverse its decision to withdraw from Turkey's eastern territories following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in accordance with the terms of the Brest-Litovsk agreement. Bilateral territorial problems, which had been resolved by a compromise between Moscow and Ankara together with Revolution in Russia and the National Liberation War in Turkey, were revived during the tense years of the Second World War. During this period the Soviet Union strongly laid claims to bases and some territories in Turkey.

Main academic studies on this topic include *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995* (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995), *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar* (Turkish Foreign Policy: Events, Documents and Interpretations from the War of Independence to Contemporary Era),” and detailed studies on Turkish-Soviet relations by A. Suat Bilge and Kamuran Gürün.³ An inter-alliance conference, the Potsdam Conference, that was convened in July 1945, attended by Soviet, US, and British leaders was the first international platform where the Soviet Union voiced its demands from Turkey before its Western partners. Because of that, this conference's official records give official and unquestionable proof of the existence of these demands and they end the mystery over the subject.⁴ During discussion of these demands and with no official records to prove that the Soviets were indeed making such demands, some claimed that Turkey was exaggerating the demands in order to draw closer to Western camp. Interestingly enough, although the US Government declassified the Potsdam Conference documents and made them public in the 1960's proving that the Soviets

³ *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I (Turkish Foreign Policy: Events, Documents and Interpretations from the War of Independence to Contemporary Era Vol. I)*, edited by Baskın Oran. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001; *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996; A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992; Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991

⁴ *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference)*, 1945 Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945 and *Foreign relations of the United States, diplomatic papers, 1945. General : political and economic matters Vol.II* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945.

did make such demands,⁵ this evidence, which could have ended the debate, was not been referred to in the main academic studies on Turkish diplomatic history until the 1990's.

The first reference to the Potsdam documents is in the study of Kamuran Gürün's "*Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953* (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953), published in 1991.⁶ He even analyzed the Potsdam Conference in his former study "*Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar* (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)", published in 1983,⁷ in which he writes about the Conference quoting extensively from Churchill's memoirs. This long discussion on the subject of Turkish foreign policy seems to have ended when Kamuran Gürün referred to the Potsdam documents in 1991. After this study of Kamuran Gürün, A. Suat Bilge referred to these same documents in his study called "*Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri 1920-1964* (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)", published a year later. He writes that many discussions about the Soviet demands had been made by that time (1992). He adds: "After these verbal and written official statements from the most senior Soviet officials there should be no doubt left at all on these subjects." He remarks that these documents undeniably show the Soviet Union demands. He draws attention to the fact that while the question as to the existence of official Soviet demands had been debated until that time, there should no longer be any doubt left as to their existence.⁸

Furthermore, US documents show that the Washington administration adopted a hard-line policy against the Soviet demands. The significance of the battleship

⁵ *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945; and *Foreign relations of the United States, diplomatic papers, 1945. General : political and economic matters* Vol.II Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945

⁶ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953* (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, pp.291-298

⁷ Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar* (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era). Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, p.154

⁸ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964* (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964). Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, pp. 288-289

Missouri's visit to Turkey is well known. However, this thesis researches the background of this visit - that is the US policies that supported Turkey against the Soviet Union. According to US documents, the US even envisaged a war with the Soviet Union. These documents are very useful for understanding US policy on Turkey.⁹ Moreover, some other US documents show that Turkey's proposals to US diplomats in Ankara and Washington also influenced the general shifting of US policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union from goodwill negotiations to opposition in the last months of 1945. That is, US diplomats' suggestions to their governments regarding Turkey contributed to the shift in US policy regarding the Soviet Union.¹⁰

In this context, this study analyzes with the help of official documents how the claims were shaped during the German-Soviet alliance and after the commencement of German-Soviet hostilities. In addition, it focuses on the roots of the commencement of the Turkish-Western rapprochement in the post-war period. Western policies during the war shifted in Turkey's favor. The shifting of Western policies just after the War, in parallel with Soviet demands, is also analyzed. The study tries and demonstrates how the West's policy turned from bargaining with the Soviets on their demands from Turkey to rejecting them outright. Moreover, Soviet demands may be counted as one of the main causes of the Western-Soviet rift and the starting of the Cold War. The US State Department and British Foreign Office documents mentioned below are used to demonstrate these policies.

The main argument of this thesis is that the Soviet demands from Turkey during the Second World War were expansionist in nature, as opposed to the view that they were defensive because the Soviet leadership formulated these demands before the German invasion of Soviet territories when the Soviet Union did not have significant security concerns but superiority in the war. Furthermore, the Soviets withdrew these

⁹ "Telegram by the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris (Memorandum agreed upon by State, War, Navy Depts re Turkey and the Soviet Union-Acheson Memorandum), Washington, August 15, 1946." In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, p.840

¹⁰ "Telegram by the US Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, September 27, 1945." In *Foreign relations of the United States: diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p. 1251

demands not because they achieved a satisfactory level of security for the Soviet Union but because of the Western pressure.

The US official documents show very hard American pressure on the Soviets to withdraw their demands. The claims, which fueled strongly the lack of confidence between the two countries, also had global affects. It is possible to argue that the claims against Turkey were among those that triggered the polarization of the World after World War II into Eastern and Western Blocs. Some documents, which are analyzed in this thesis, shows that the US side had even been ready to apply military might in order to force the USSR to withdraw its claims on Turkey. This attitude supports the argument that maintains there was Western pressure for Turkey against the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it shows Turkey's strategic importance for the US at the end of Second World War.¹¹

Raising the Armenian question also supports the argument that claims the Soviet demands were expansionist nature. The Armenian question was re-introduced by the Soviet Union for various reasons after the Second World War. Accordingly, tens of thousands of Armenians from various countries were encouraged to immigrate to the USSR after the war years by Moscow promising to resettle them in Turkey's eastern provinces. While arguing the subject a study by Karen Khachatrian, an Armenian academician, is particularly beneficial.¹²

This thesis is based on the political neo-realist approach to international relations. According to Kenneth Waltz, international politics can be thought of as a system with a precisely defined structure. The conditions of the system as a whole influence state behavior. In international structure states act as independent sovereign political units. States are similar in terms of needs but differ in their ability to achieve them. The positional placement of states in terms of ability primarily defines the structure. The structure then limits cooperation among states through fear of relative gains

¹¹ United States Department of State, *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers (volumes 1940-1949)*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office

¹² Karen Khachatrian. "Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives)." *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003)

made by other states and the possibility of dependence on other states. The desires and relative abilities of each state to maximize power results in a “balance of power” that shapes international relations.¹³

“In the history of international relations, ... results achieved seldom correspond to the intentions of actors why they are repeatedly thwarted? The apparent answer is that causes operate among the actors collectively that are not found in their individual characters and motives. Balance-of-power theory catches, and distinguishes between, causes and effects at the level of the units and at the level of the system.”¹⁴

“Realpolitik indicates the methods by which foreign policy is conducted and provides a rationale for them. (...) If there is any distinctively political theory of international relations, balance-of-power theory is it.”¹⁵

“The relations that prevail internationally seldom shift rapidly in type or in quality. They are marked instead by dismaying persistence, a persistence that one must expect so long as none of the competing units is able to convert the anarchic international realm into a hierarchic one.”¹⁶ “The world is not made up of independent parts but of units that are dependent and independent in widely different degrees.”¹⁷

This neo-realist approach to international relations explains the topic of this thesis adequately. In fact, from 1939 to 1946 the anarchic conditions of the system determined the relations between Turkey as a limited power and the USSR as a major world power. As a result, under the influence of another great power's (the United States) strategic needs after the War, the permanent principles governing relations between Ankara and Moscow were shaped.

The USSR raised claims against Turkey during the war. The claims date back to the pre-war period during the Soviet-Nazi negotiations. During the talks regarding both countries' areas of influence the Soviets claimed the Straits were within its sphere of interest. These demands against Turkey were dragged from the pre-war to the post-

¹³ For a deeper analysis of the neo-realist theory of international relations, see, Kenneth N. Waltz. “Theory of International Politics.” In *Handbook of Political Science, International Politics*, Vol. VIII, edited by Fred J. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, 1-85: Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975

¹⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz. “Theory of International Politics.” In *Handbook of Political Science, International Politics*, Vol. VIII, edited by Fred J. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, 1-85: Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975., pp.69-70

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72

war period for various reasons. Under the new bipolar world conditions, the Soviet Union kept up its claims. Therefore, the response to the claims was also shaped by the global conditions in that the United States, being a global power in its own right, plus its alliances in Europe prepared a response to the Soviet Union.

The main sources of reference for this study are official archive documents. In this context, the main archive used in the study is made up of “Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)” documents, published by the US Government. These documents have been particularly useful in understanding the US’s fundamentally changing policy on Turkey between the final years of World War II and 1946, and in analyzing Soviet territorial demands on Turkey. Furthermore, another source is the official archive of the UK Government’s Foreign Office documents on British-Soviet bilateral negotiations following the German attack on the USSR. These documents helped to clarify British-Soviet understandings on Turkey in the months just after starting of German attack on the USSR.¹⁸ In addition, a collection of documents on Nazi-Soviet Relations, published by the Allied Forces after the War was also useful for defining the historical roots of the Soviet Union's demands on Turkey voiced after the war.¹⁹

Furthermore, archive documents from the former Soviet republics are quoted from related studies. One of these studies is the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) of the US Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.²⁰ Documents compiled in a cooperation program between scholars from the United States and the former Soviet Union republics are used. These documents show when the Soviet Union formulated its demands of Turkey, and also when it started preparations to ensure the fulfillment of them. One example of these preparations is a plan called the Armenian Repatriation Plan.²¹ According to the documents, Soviet

¹⁸ PRO FO 954/25A “*Mr. Eden’s Visit to Moscow*”

¹⁹ *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office.* Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948

²⁰ http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=1409 accessed in December 25, 2009

²¹ Svetlana Savranskaya and Vladislav Zubok. “Cold War in the Caucasus: Notes and Documents from a Conference.” In *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin* (Woodrow Wilson Center), Issue 14/15, (Winter 2003-Spring 2004): 399-409.

leadership under Stalin encouraged Armenian immigrants within the Soviet Union to settle in the Turkish territories, which they planned to invade. This thesis is also noted by the Armenian scholar and archive official Karen Khachatrian.²² Karen Khachatrian's studies also have very useful for learning about the Soviet Union's Armenian policy after World War II, which was carried out by the Moscow Government in order to support its territorial demands on Turkey. There is also strong evidence about the Armenian Repatriation Plan and its objectives in Western official archival sources.²³

According to Cold War International History Project documents, there was strong criticism of previous leaderships' policies with respect to Turkey voiced by the new leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev. He accused the former leaderships of engaging in the wrong policies, and thus losing Turkey. During the Plenum meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) on 28 June 1957,²⁴ Khrushchev says Turkish-Soviet relations were very friendly but that Turkey "supported the American imperialism" due to the Soviet Union's wrong policy towards this country.

The second chapter, that follows the introduction, examines the essential bilateral and multilateral agreements establishing the basis for Turkish-Soviet relations up until the Second World War. Agreements, which demarcated Turkish-Soviet frontier and regulated navigation on the Straits together with the 1925 treaty, which outlined the general framework for these two countries' relations, are explained along with their historical backgrounds. During the years prior to the Second World War security seeking was an issue. After the war started the Soviets' claims began to appear during Turkish-Soviet and Nazi-Soviet negotiations. Soviet designs on

²² Karen Khachatrian. "Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives)." Vertikalii Istorii (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003)

²³ "Letter 459/2/46 by Office of the British Political Representative, Bucharest, 29th October, 1946 to Northern Department, Foreign Office." In FO 286/1184, "Repatriation of Armenians in Greece" and other British Foreign Office documents; United States Department of State, *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers (volumes 1940-1949)*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

²⁴ "Transcript of a CC CPSU Plenum, Evening 28 June 1957." In *The Woodrow Wilson Center Cold War International History Project Archive*.

Turkish territories during World War II existed early on in the war and the subject of Turkey occupied an important place in the negotiations and later on in the tensions between Soviet Union and Germany.

The third chapter examines the deep surges of the Soviet Union's Turkey policies after it was attacked by Germany. Just six months after from the German attack Stalin met with the United Kingdom's Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, who was visiting Moscow, and suggested rewarding Turkey with the Dodecanese Islands and territories from Northern Syria for its neutral policy. Shortly after defeating Germany, the Soviet Union made its territorial demands from Turkey. Many written documents concerning these demands are quoted in different parts of this study. Stalin refused to speak about its demands from Turkey at the Tehran Conference, in 1943 but opened them up at the Potsdam Conference in 1945 to its allies. The UK and the US were hesitant about the claims right from the start when raised by the Soviet Union.

In the fourth chapter, diplomatic documents and academic studies are cited demonstrating that the Soviet Union not only put the demands on the negotiation table, but had also begun preparations to ensure the fulfillment of these claims. One such example of this was inviting Armenians of different countries to immigrate to the Soviet Union. However, the US's Soviet policy began to shift from negotiating with Moscow to one of opposing Moscow and constituted one of the biggest obstacles facing the Soviets' demands on Turkey (in addition to other possible factors such as Turkish determination to put up armed resistance to any possible Soviet occupation and so on).

The fifth chapter analyzes the US policies, which were already firmly opposed to Soviet demands. This shift in US policy began with a warning by US diplomats in Ankara and Moscow. In the end, the US Administration adopted a policy that even included use of force against the Soviet Union in order to convince it to abandon its demands from Turkey. This attitude of the United States was also one of the precursors of the Cold War. Due to the tough policy against the Soviet Union, the Moscow administration stepped back in 1946-1947 and on Stalin's death the new

leader Khrushchev accused the former leadership of “losing” Turkey. The last chapter is the conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Introduction

Turkish-Soviet relations underwent a major transformation between the 1920's and the second half of the 1940's. There was great enormous tension in relations after World War II when the USSR demanded territorial concessions from Turkey. When the Soviet Union demanded these concessions from Turkey it pressured to alter some agreements that had been signed when relations were excellent in the 1920's. In this chapter, initially these essential bilateral and multilateral agreements, which establish the fundamentals of Turkish-Soviet relations until World War II, are reviewed. Also, an analysis is made of both countries' international efforts to enhance their security in the following decade, the 1930's, due to the threat of war. This process also marks the beginning of mistrust between two countries. Then an analysis is made of the first evidence of Soviet ambitions regarding Turkey, which were shaped after the leadership in Moscow signed a pact with Nazi Germany. The USSR tried to get Germany's approval for its plans concerning the Straits and the southern area of Batumi, that is the area that includes Turkey's eastern regions. These were similar to the demands that the Soviet Union put before Turkey after the war.

2.2. Turkish-Soviet Relations after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution

Relations between Turkey and Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 continued to be stable until the years leading up to World War II. During this period both parties demarcated the frontier.²⁵ The border problem in Turkey's eastern

²⁵ For further information on frontier regulations between Turkey and Russia of the period, see, Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, pp.1-132; A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighbourhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, pp.1-112

regions with Russia stemmed from the 1878 Berlin Agreement. Following the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russia War, under the agreements of San Stefano and Berlin, the provinces of Kars, Ardahan and Batumi were transferred to Russia. Russia also occupied during the World War I the provinces of Trabzon, Erzurum, Erzincan and Van until the summer of 1916. With the onset of 1917 war-weary Turkey was expecting peace. When the Bolsheviks came to power in exhausted Russia with the October Revolution the path to peace appeared.²⁶

After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia the new regime declared the country's withdrawal from the war and made public all of the Tsarist Government's secret agreements. One of these secret agreements was one that former Tsarist Russia had signed with its allies in March 1915.²⁷ Moreover, Russia's new rulers signed the Erzincan Truce with Turkey on 5 December 1917.²⁸ Later, as a result of the Brest-Litovsk treaty on 3 March 1918, which the Ottoman Empire also signed, the eastern frontier of the Ottoman Empire returned to the line before the 1877-78 war and before the status established by the 1878 San Stefano and Berlin agreements. According to the agreement, Russian forces had to withdraw from Eastern Anatolia within a six-month period, Kars, Ardahan and Batumi were to be returned and the Armenian militias were to be disbanded.²⁹

These agreements should not simply be considered a goodwill gesture to Turkish side by the Bolsheviks after the Revolution. Both sides approached one another in a period when they needed each other. In this period there was some tension and some

²⁶ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.9

²⁷ Baskın Oran. "1919-1923: Kurtuluş Yılları (1919-1923: Liberation Years)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 95-238. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.157; A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.4

²⁸ Baskın Oran. "1919-1923: Kurtuluş Yılları (1919-1923: Liberation Years)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 95-238. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p. 156.

²⁹ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.21

disagreements between them and the Soviet side even stepped back after operations in the Caucasus by Ottoman troops, and declared the Brest-Litovsk treaty as invalid in November 1918. However, the Soviet Government was shaken by civil war in early 1919 and there were even suspicions about the future of the October Revolution. As conditions changed so too did the attitude of the Soviet Government. In a nutshell, the relations between Bolshevik Russia and the Ottoman State could be qualified as strained relations.³⁰

In this period the demarcation of the final frontier, which remained the same, was set by a series of agreements signed by the Ankara Government with Moscow and with regional countries. The first one was the Gyumri agreement, signed on 2 December 1920 with Armenia. According to this agreement, the eastern provinces, which were marked by the Sevres Treaty as Armenian territories, were left to Turkey.³¹

On the same day as the signing of the Gyumri agreement a pro-Moscow government took control of the capital city Yerevan, and a few months later the Turkish-Armenian frontier was confirmed by Moscow. According to the Friendship Treaty of 16 March 1921, which was signed in Moscow by the Government of Ankara and the Soviet Russia Government, it was agreed that the provinces of Kars and Ardahan also belonged to Turkey.³² On 13 October 1921 Turkey signed the Kars Agreement with Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. The Soviet Russian representative official also attended the signing. By this agreement these three Caucasian states agreed and confirmed the frontier that had been demarcated in the 16 March Moscow Treaty.³³

These agreements were followed by the Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality, signed in Paris on 17 December 1925 by the foreign ministers Tevfik Rüştü Aras and Georgy Chicherin. This last treaty was a sign of more rapprochements between both

³⁰ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.24

³¹ Mehmet Gönlübol and Cem Sar. "1919-1938 Yılları Arasında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy Between 1919-1938)." In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 1-133. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.24

³² *Ibid.*, p.27

³³ *Ibid.*, p.40

countries. It was the Soviets who proposed the treaty that would be questioned by Moscow after World War II. In 1924, Foreign Minister Chicherin proposed to Turkish Government a reinforcement of the 1921 Moscow agreement with the principle that guarantees “in the event of a signatory state's war with a third party, the other signatory state will have a friendly neutral attitude” and that bans “the parties from joining any groups hostile to one another.” The treaty was signed the following year.³⁴

Thus, the Ankara Government, which had not been able to solve completely its problems with the Western states during the Lausanne Conference, accepted the USSR as a power that it could rely on.³⁵ According to the 1925 Treaty, the parties of the agreement should not intervene in each other's affairs by force, should not have alliance agreements with third countries detrimental to each other, should not join third countries' hostile acts against the other.³⁶

These agreements and the Turkish-USSR frontier since the establishment of the Soviet Union by Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia and the Caucasus Republics on 30 December 1921 were questioned by Moscow towards the end of the Second World War. But due to a series of developments, including the policy shift in the Western camp regarding the Soviet claims against Turkey, which resulted in the Washington administration adopting a firm attitude against these demands, the frontier has remained unchanged until today. In the days after World War II the US State Department advised the President of the only nuclear power of the world to risk even a war with the USSR. The determination of the United States was instrumental in the Soviet side failing to achieve its claims, as is analyzed in Chapter Five.

³⁴ *Soviet Foreign Policy*, Vol I. Moscow: USSR Foreign Ministry, quoted in Kamuran Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.109

³⁵ Erel Tellal. “SSCB'yle İlişkiler, 1923-1939 (Relations with the USSR 1923-1939).” In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 314-356: İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.315

³⁶ Mehmet Gönlübol, Cem Sar. “1919-1938 Yılları Arasında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy Between 1919-1938).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 1-133. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, pp.77-78

2.3. Turkey's Foreign Policy in Search of Security in the Late 1930's

Turkish-Soviet relations were friendly between 1923-1930 and this country was the only major power that Turkey could depend on after the National Liberation War. But, in the 1930's Turkey was in search of diversity in its foreign policy and during this period it established regular relations with various countries including the United Kingdom and France. Relations with the Soviets were at their best in 1934, but then began to decline. Although this decline was not obvious in the beginning, it became particularly clear after the 1936 Montreux Convention, and it became very apparent as war drew nearer.³⁷

During the period 1933-1936 the Straits were the most important subject of bilateral relations.³⁸ Until that time the Straits were a subject of the 1923 Bosphorus Convention prepared during the Lausanne Conference. The terms of navigation set by this Convention, which included the demilitarization of the area and the establishment of an International Commission for overseeing the passing of foreign ships, restricted Turkish sovereignty over the Straits.³⁹ With the signing of Montreux Convention on 20 July 1936, "Turkish sovereignty over the Straits was re-established."⁴⁰

However, Montreux also marks a turnaround in Turkish-Soviet relations. During the two months of the conference, severe tension between the Turkish and Soviet

³⁷ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.133

³⁸ Gönlübol, Mehmet, and Sar, Cem. "1919-1938 Yılları Arasında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy Between 1919-1938)." In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 1-133. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.109; For an analysis on Straits and Russian-Turkish relations, see, Mensur Akgün. "Geçmişten Günümüze Türkiye ile Rusya Arasında Görünmez Bağlar: Boğazlar." In *Dünden Bugüne Türkiye ve Rusya, Politik, Ekonomik ve Kültürel İlişkiler*, edited by Gülten Kazgan, Natalya Ulçenko, 45-83: İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2003.

³⁹ Gönlübol, Mehmet, and Sar, Cem. "1919-1938 Yılları Arasında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy Between 1919-1938)." In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 1-133. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.120

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.126

delegations was frequently experienced. After Montreux relations were no longer as close as before.⁴¹

While the threat of war was near by the 1939, Turkey conducted diplomacy with the aim of enhancing its security. During these months, Turkey was making efforts to approach the United Kingdom, France and the USSR in order to counter the German-Italian threat.⁴² Ankara sought a Turkish-Soviet agreement by way of a balance to the Turkish-British agreement, which was being worked on. On the other hand, Ankara was not in the intention to depart from the Soviet Union.⁴³ However no result was reached from the negotiations with the USSR's Vice Foreign Minister Potemkin, who came to Ankara at the end of April 1939 for this agreement. Besides that, the USSR thought that the United Kingdom and France were trying to orient Germany against Russia and began to search for an agreement with Berlin.⁴⁴

Turkey signed a declaration with the United Kingdom on 12 May 1939. According to this declaration, both countries declared that in the case of any attack in the Balkans which could lead to war, Turkey and the United Kingdom would be in cooperation and would help each other, and they declared their readiness to talk on the security of the Balkans. Another document bearing the same content was signed on 23 June 1939 with France.⁴⁵

Finally, after Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Nonaggression Pact on 23 August 1939 German troops entered Poland and the long-awaited war started. The USSR also entered Poland from the East on September 17 according to the Pact with Germany. During the initial period, the Soviet-Nazi time of alliance, the Soviet

⁴¹ Erel Tellal. "SSCB'yle İlişkiler, 1923-1939 (Relations with the USSR 1923-1939)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 314-356: İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, pp.321-322

⁴² İlhan Uzgel and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu. "İngiltere'yle İlişkiler (Relations with Britain)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 258-277: İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.274

⁴³ Fahir Armaoğlu. *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi 1914-1995 (The Political History of the 20th Century 1914-1995)*. İstanbul: Alkım Yayınevi, 1996, p. 355

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 275

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 275-276

Union's and Germany's priority for Ankara was the closing of the Straits to Allied warships by Turkey and the guarantee of Turkey's full neutrality. Both countries referred to the great importance of the Bosphorus and its hinterland in Bulgaria. Turkish-Soviet negotiations on a mutual assistance agreement, talks that began with the USSR Vice Foreign Minister Potemkin in April 1939, continued after the war began. Foreign Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu went to Moscow on 24 September at the invitation of the Soviet side. Saraçoğlu explained the aim of his visit was to negotiate on a mutual assistance pact covering the Black Sea, the Balkans and the Bosphorus.⁴⁶

However, Soviet-German friendship influenced the negotiations. The Soviet side offered to put its reservation regarding Germany into the planned agreement.⁴⁷ According to a document, which was published by the Allies in 1948,⁴⁸ Germany made a demand of the USSR concerning that reservation saying: “...The pact would not obligate the Soviet Government to any kind of assistance aimed directly or indirectly against Germany.”⁴⁹

The second offer the Soviets brought to the table when negotiating with Şükrü Saraçoğlu was the signing of a pact between the two countries that envisaged “common defense of the Straits by Turkey and the Soviet Union.”⁵⁰ This would mean a Soviet military presence on the area of Bosphorus. According to Nazi era documents, while negotiations were continuing with Saraçoğlu in Moscow the Soviets told the Germans about the consultations with Turkey saying that they were

⁴⁶ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, pp.133-134

⁴⁷ İlhan Uzgel and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu. “İngiltere'yle İlişkiler (Relations with Britain).” In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 258-277: İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.276

⁴⁸ Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948

⁴⁹ “Telegram from Berlin by the Reich Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union Schulenburg, October 7, 1939.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, p.117

⁵⁰ A. Şükrü Esmer and Oral Sander. “İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy in World War II).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 137-185. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.142

trying Ankara to adopt full neutrality and to close the Bosphorus. According to Nazi documents, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov stated in the evening of 8 October: “Since 1 October no meeting has [taken place] with the Turkish Foreign Minister and that the outcome of the negotiations cannot as yet be surmised. (...)” Vyacheslav Molotov explained that the Soviet Government was pursuing the aim of persuading Turkey to adopt full neutrality and to close the Dardanelles, as well as to aid in maintaining peace in the Balkans.”⁵¹ The Soviet proposal to Saraçoğlu to close Bosphorus to all countries excluding the USSR was mentioned in the document of the “secret protocol” proposal by the Soviet side.⁵²

In his study, which analyzed the Soviets' claims against Turkey, Baskın Oran notes that Şükrü Saraçoğlu went Moscow for three days but stayed there for 22 days, and that during the negotiations Vyacheslav Molotov essentially asked to Turkey “to close down the Bosphorus to outsiders and to sign a pact about common defense of the Straits.” Baskın Oran comments that these demands were not compatible with Turkey's independence.⁵³

The negotiations show that the Soviet Union did not want to sign a mutual assistance agreement without getting a major concession from Turkey. This major concession was control of the Straits. It could not be expected that Turkey would ever accept making its defense during wartime dependent on Soviet permission.⁵⁴ This situation could be regarded as the beginning of the emergence of the main disagreements between Turkey and the Soviet Union.

⁵¹ “Telegram from Moscow by the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Schulenburg) to the German Foreign Office, October 9,1939”. In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, pp.120-121

⁵² A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.138

⁵³ Baskın Oran. “Türkiye'nin 'Kuzeydeki Büyük Komşu' Sorunu Nedir? Türk Sovyet İlişkileri 1939-1970 (What is Turkey's 'Big Neighbor in the North' Problem? Turkish-Soviet Relations 1939-1970).” *SBF Dergisi* XXVI, No.2 (1970): 41-93, p.49

⁵⁴ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.145

“Unacceptable Soviet offers about the Straits were made to Foreign Minister Saraçoğlu who went to Moscow on 25 September 1939, offers which they later started to negotiate with Nazi Germany in a bid to close a mutual assistance agreement, marked the beginning of the emergence of disagreements between Turkey and Soviet Union.”⁵⁵

Saraçoğlu returned to Turkey on 17 October without signing any agreement because of these Soviet demands. As a result, “1939 was the year that marked the end of Turkish-Soviet friendship. The last talks and negotiations over a mutual assistance agreement started on 14 April that year concluding without result on 15 October.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, Saraçoğlu's visit marked the first time during wartime that the Soviet Union made a demand of the Straits envisaging sharing the sovereignty of this waterway. Soviets pursued this demand until the end of the war.

2.4. Turkey and Soviet-German Negotiations

While Saraçoğlu was on his way back to Turkey, the Turkish-British-French Pact was signed on 19 October 1939.⁵⁷ Thus, as the Second World War kicked off, Turkey's common path with the Soviet Union, which Ankara had always tried to keep friendly since the National Liberation War years, diverged.⁵⁸ According to Baskın Oran, the USSR, which found itself in danger because of the oncoming war, felt stronger while in a pact with the Germans and so started to press to Turkey in order to ensure closing of Bosphorus.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ A. Suat Bilge. “Kıbrıs Uyuşmazlığı ve Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (Cyprus Conflict and Turkish-Soviet Relations)” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 338-427. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.388

⁵⁶ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.175

⁵⁷ İlhan Uzgel and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu. “İngiltere'yle İlişkiler (Relations with Britain).” In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 258-277: İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.276

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.277.

⁵⁹ Baskın Oran. “Türkiye'nin 'Kuzeydeki Büyük Komşu' Sorunu Nedir? Türk Sovyet İlişkileri 1939-1970 (What is Turkey's 'Big Neighbor in the North' Problem? Turkish-Soviet Relations 1939-1970).” *SBF Dergisi* XXVI, No.2 (1970): 41-93, p.49

While the Soviets gave special importance to the Straits during negotiations with Saraçoğlu and offered to defend the area jointly, Moscow also raised the issue in the German-Soviet negotiations with the Soviets trying to convince the German side also to have a say in controlling the Bosphorus. According to records of the Nazi-Soviet negotiations,⁶⁰ the Soviet's claims on the Straits occupied an important place in the relations between Germany and the Soviet Union, who later turned to fight one another. According to these documents, it is also obvious that the Soviet Union was dissatisfied with Turkey's policy and tried to convince Germany to have a say in controlling the Straits. Because of this special interest in the Bosphorus the Soviet Union also gives special attention to Bulgaria, as the hinterland of this strategic waterway. According to German Ambassador in Moscow, Vyacheslav Molotov invited the Italian Ambassador to his Ministry on 26 June 1940 and during the conversation, he said that according to his estimates the war was nearly over, and he voiced his country's demands. While he remarked on his country's relations with Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria and mentioned the Soviets' interests in these countries, Vyacheslav Molotov continues by saying, "They are supporting Bulgaria's aspiration to have a passage into the Aegean Sea," and then says the following about Turkey:

"The Soviet Government regards Turkey with deep suspicion. (...) Soviet suspicion of Turkey was intensified by the Turkish attitude in regard to the Black Sea, where Turkey desired to play a dominant role, and the Straits, where Turkey wanted to exercise exclusive jurisdiction. (...) In the Mediterranean, the Soviet Government would recognize Italy's hegemony, provided that Italy would recognize the Soviet Government's hegemony in the Black Sea."⁶¹

In this conversation, the Soviet Foreign Minister expressed his country's disregarding for Turkey's rights over the Bosphorus, which had been restricted by the 1936 Montreux Convention and his country's aspiration for hegemony in the Black Sea. By assuming that the end of war is in the winter of 1940, during this conversation with Italian Ambassador on 26 June 1940, Vyacheslav Molotov not

⁶⁰ Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948

⁶¹ "Telegram from Moscow by the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Schulenburg) to the German Foreign Office, June 26, 1940." In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, pp.160-161

only expressed his ideas about controlling the Bosphorus, but also showed his country's interest in Turkey's eastern territories. He indicates that the Soviet Union was interested in land south of Batumi, i.e. eastern Turkey. He says, “The Soviet Government was citing a Turkish threat to Batumi, against which it would have to protect itself toward the south and southeast...”⁶²

According to Kamuran Gürün, it could be claimed that “Russia (...) might be planning an action in eastern Turkey on the pretext of protecting Batumi.”⁶³ In this context, it could be argued that not only the Soviet Union's demands on the Straits, but also its claims on Turkey's eastern region, which the Soviets clearly put before Turkey after World War II, actually emerged during the first period of the war, during the period of German-Soviet entente. Soviet pressure over Turkey's northwestern and northeastern regions was obvious and its claims over the Bosphorus were there from the beginning until the end of the war. Nevertheless, demands on the other region, northeastern Turkey, were put before Turkey during the later periods of the war.

The Soviets' interest in the region from Bulgaria to the Bosphorus during the early period of the war was also expressed by Stalin. When Stalin was responding to some questions by the British Ambassador he said, “No power has the right to an exclusive role in the consolidation and leadership of the Balkan countries. The Soviet Union does not claim such a mission either, although it is interested in Balkan affairs.”⁶⁴ In other words, the Soviets would not accept any intervention by any country, including Germany, in the Balkans, and the USSR had special interests in that area. After that Stalin remarked about Turkey and, according to the German Ambassador, “declared that the Soviet Union was in fact opposed to the exclusive jurisdiction of Turkey over the Straits and to Turkey's dictation of conditions in the Black Sea.”⁶⁵

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, p.75

⁶⁴ Vyacheslav Molotov gives the memorandum of Stalin-British Ambassador Cripps meeting on the instructions from Stalin. V. “Telegram from Moscow by the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Schulenburg) to the German Foreign Office, July 13, 1940.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, p.168

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

British Ambassador in Ankara Sir Knatchbull Hugessen also gave information to the Turkish Foreign Ministry concerning this interview between the British Ambassador in Moscow Sir Stafford Cripps and Stalin on 13 July 1940. According to this information, Stalin said: “The question of controlling the Bosphorus should be regulated and all the Black Sea countries should join the regulation process. Unless and until this question is resolved, Soviet-Turkish relations can never be satisfactory.”⁶⁶

The Bosphorus was so important that even in later times, during the months when Germany parted ways with the Soviet Union and declared war against it, it can be seen that the question of the Straits was again one of the most important items in German-Soviet relations and tensions. During this process, the main negotiations between Germany and the Soviet Union were held in Berlin in November 1940. While the aim of the negotiations in Berlin between the USSR and Germany in November 1940 was to establish both countries' new areas of influence in the world, these meetings also marked of the beginning of the rift between them. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov came to Berlin and negotiated with Hitler on his country's demands. Russian military historian Lev A. Bezimensky cites from the notebook of Vyacheslav Molotov, which is kept in the Russian archives, noting that Stalin dictated to his foreign minister 14 clauses, which were to be conveyed to Hitler. One of these handwritten items, noted down by Vyacheslav Molotov himself was about Turkey: “The question on Turkey and its fate cannot be decided without our participation, we have serious interests in Turkey.”⁶⁷

According to the minutes of the Hitler-Molotov conversation, the document shows that the Soviet side came to the negotiations in Berlin with the offer that the 1939 agreement of sharing areas of influence should be reinforced by deciding on new areas from the Balkans to India. According to the memorandum, Vyacheslav Molotov said this about areas of influence in the world: “In the opinion of the Soviet

⁶⁶ Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, pp.75-76

⁶⁷ Lev A. Bezimensky. “*Kak Stalin Hatil Padelit Mir c Gitlerom (How Stalin Wanted to Share the World with Hitler)*.” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 8, 1996.

Government the German-Russian agreement of last year represented only a partial solution. In the meanwhile, other issues had arisen that also had to be solved”.⁶⁸

Then, Vyacheslav Molotov details what he means by these new areas of influence. He gives a priority to the Balkans, including Turkey as a potential Soviet area of influence. He asks Hitler, “What is the significance of the New Order in Europe and in Asia, and what role will the USSR be given in it?” and adds, “These issues must be discussed during the Berlin negotiations and during the expected visit of the Reich Foreign Minister to Moscow, on which the Russians are definitely counting. Moreover, there are issues to be clarified regarding Russia's Balkan and Black Sea interests with respect to Bulgaria, Rumania, and Turkey.”⁶⁹

During the meeting a day later between Vyacheslav Molotov and Hitler on 13 November 1940 the Führer commented on the areas of influence saying that the ones in the West had already been determined and that it was now time to discuss those in the East: “Now that the West has been thus settled, an agreement in the East must now be reached. In this case it is simply a case of relations between the Soviet Russia and Turkey, but also in the Greater Asian Sphere.”⁷⁰ According to the minutes, Vyacheslav Molotov responded: “He wanted to discuss first a problem closer to Europe, that of Turkey.” He referred to the Crimean War and to events World War I and said of the Straits that they were “England's historic gateway for an attack on the Soviet Union.” He continued, “Because of the historical threat to his country through the Straits, the Soviet Union demanded 'real guarantees, not only on paper'.”⁷¹ Soviet officials at international meetings for many years would use this

⁶⁸ “Memorandum of the Conversation Between the Führer and the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Molotov, in the Presence of the Reich Foreign Minister, the Deputy People's Commissar, Dekanosov, as well as of Counselor of Embassy Hilger and Herr Pavlov, Who Acted as Interpreters, on November 12, 1940.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, p.232

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ “Memorandum of the Conversation Between the Führer and the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Molotov in the Presence of the Reich Foreign Minister and the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Dekanosov, as Well as of Counselor of Embassy Hilger and Herr Pavlov, Who Acted as Interpreters, in Berlin on November 13, 1940.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, p.243

⁷¹ *Ibid.* pp. 244-245

description of “real guarantees, not only on paper” when bringing Soviet claims on the Bosphorus to the agenda. This term means, “Soviet bases in Bosphorus or joint defense of the Bosphorus with Turkey.”

According to the minutes of the Hitler-Molotov conversation, although Soviet Minister said, “Russia wants to obtain a guarantee against an attack in the Black Sea via the Straits not only on paper but 'in reality'(...)", Hitler did not make any commitment about this demand. He only stated “(...) The possibilities of safeguarding Russia's interests as a Black Sea power would have to be examined further...”⁷²

2.5. Soviet-German Disagreements over Turkey

Vyacheslav Molotov returned to Moscow without any agreement but talks on a treaty on sharing sphere of influences continued. On 25 November 1939 Vyacheslav Molotov invited the German Ambassador in Moscow to the Ministry. In this meeting, he stated in detail his country's offers, and the talks in Berlin about how the East should be shared between two countries as sharing the West had been completed before. This meeting indicates that while Hitler avoided talking with Vyacheslav Molotov in Berlin about how to share the area including the Straits, the Soviet side insisted that Germany should recognize the Soviets' rights on the Straits. In this meeting Vyacheslav Molotov declared his country's readiness to sign a Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan and transform it into a Four Power Pact. However, he stated that their joining the pact would only be concomitant to concluding an agreement on the sharing of new spheres of interest. As for this, he stated four essential conditions. He declared that as soon as the German side accepted these four Soviet conditions, they would join the Tripartite Pact. The German Ambassador in Moscow Schulenburg sent a telegram marked “Very urgent, for the Reich Minister in person” to Berlin and informed his minister about these

⁷² *Ibid.* p. 246

four Soviet conditions.⁷³ The second and third of these four conditions declared by Vyacheslav Molotov are directly related to Turkey. The second condition is about a Soviet base in the Straits:

“The Soviet Government is prepared to accept the draft of the Four Power Pact (...) provided that within the next few months the security of the Soviet Union in the Straits is assured by the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, which geographically is situated inside the security zone of the Black Sea boundaries of the Soviet Union, and by the establishment of a base for land and naval forces of the USSR within range of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by means of a long-term lease.”⁷⁴

Here, the Soviets' demands for military bases in the Straits are very clear and they show that when Vyacheslav Molotov negotiated with Hitler in Berlin on 13 November what he meant when he said “Real guarantees, not only on paper, in the Straits.” He meant a base for the land and naval forces of the USSR. In addition, the third condition is about Turkey's eastern territories; the other Soviet pressure on Turkey. In this article the Soviets seek the territories to the south of Batumi, the area that includes also Turkey's eastern regions to be recognized “as the center of the Soviet Union's aspirations”. The article stated: “The Soviet Government is prepared to accept the draft of the Four Power Pact (...) provided that the area south of Batumi and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the Soviet Union's aspirations.”⁷⁵

It should be recalled here that during the Berlin talks the Soviet side also referred to a possible threat to Batumi from the south, Turkey, as remarked before. It is also clarified by Vyacheslav Molotov in a conversation in Moscow as “the area south of Batumi (...) (should be) recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union.” This was also linked to the second Soviet demand on the Straits that was put before Turkey after the war in Turkey's eastern regions.

⁷³ “Telegram by the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Schulenburg) to the German Foreign Office, November 26, 1940.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, pp.258-260

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

In this conversation in Moscow between Vyacheslav Molotov and the German Ambassador the Soviet side seeks amendments on the Nazi draft of the Four Power Pact, which was drawn up during the Berlin negotiations in the light of these four essential conditions. Vyacheslav Molotov comments about their amendment:

“In accordance with the foregoing, the draft of the protocol concerning the delimitation of the spheres of influence as outlined by the Reich Foreign Minister would have to be amended so as to stipulate the focal point of the aspirations of the Soviet Union south of Batumi and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf.”⁷⁶

This first amendment offer is related to Soviet interests in Turkey's eastern territories, which are situated to the south of Batumi. It means that the Soviet Union, which raised claims to these Turkish territories after the Second World War in 1945, actually introduced this claim initially in 1939. Then the Soviet side offered a second amendment in order to provide the Soviet Union a military base in the Straits. Vyacheslav Molotov says,

“Likewise, the draft of the protocol or agreement between Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union with respect to Turkey should be amended so as to guarantee a base for light naval and land forces of the U.S.S.R. On [*am*] the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by means of a long-term lease, including-in case Turkey declares herself willing to join the Four Power Pact-a guarantee of the independence and of the territory of Turkey by the three countries named.”⁷⁷

Then the Soviet Minister offered a military measure against Turkey if it were to reject it. He said, “This protocol should provide that in the event Turkey refuses to join the Four Powers; Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union agree to work out and to carry through the required military and diplomatic measures, and a separate agreement to this effect should be concluded.”⁷⁸

The Soviet conditions which were necessary for their joining the Tripartite Pact include these three points, which were also vital for Turkey and Turkey's independency: 1. The area south of Batumi should be recognized as a Soviet sphere of interest, 2. Germany and others should guarantee the Soviet Union a base for

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Soviet naval and land forces in the Straits, and 3. If Turkey refuses to join the pact, i.e., refuses to accept these Soviet conditions, the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy would carry them out through “the necessary military and diplomatic measures” against Turkey. This third item is very important in understanding the Soviet Union's position on Turkey. This country does not hesitate to apply military force against Turkey if necessary. This point is also important for analyzing the Soviet demands put before Turkey after the War, which are discussed in the following chapter.

These demands put forward by the Soviet Union were not met by Germany. On the contrary, Germany started military preparations towards Bulgaria, which the Soviets had declared to be within its sphere of interest along with the Straits. Due to German military mobilization towards Bulgaria, the Soviets began to take a tougher stance against Berlin. The German Ambassador in Moscow was invited to the Russian Foreign Ministry on 17 January 1941⁷⁹ and Minister Vyacheslav Molotov reminded him of the Soviet conditions for transforming the Tripartite Pact into a Four Power Pact through the participation of the Soviet Union, which he himself had stated to the Ambassador during the meeting of 25 November but which still had not been responded to by Germany. He then noted his country's annoyance at the German mobilization in the Balkans. He said, “According to all reports available here, German troops are concentrated in great numbers in Rumania and are ready to march into Bulgaria with the aim of occupying Bulgaria, Greece, and the Straits.”⁸⁰

At the end of the conversation, with decisive wording, he recalled that the area was a “Soviet security zone” and added, “Any foreign military presence in Bulgaria and the Bosphorus would be counter to the Soviet Union's interests.” He said that his Government “has stated repeatedly to the German Government” that it considered the territory of Bulgaria and the Straits as a security zone for the USSR and that “it cannot remain indifferent to events that threaten the security interests of the USSR.” These tough words concluded with a warning: “In view of all this, the Soviet Government regards it as its duty to give notification that it will consider the

⁷⁹ “Telegram by The German Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Schulenburg) to the German Foreign Office, January 17, 1941.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, pp.270-271

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

appearance of any foreign armed forces on the territory of Bulgaria and of the Straits as a violation of the security interests of the USSR.”⁸¹

The German response to this tough attitude of the Soviets, at least in the beginning, was one of stalling, until the declaration of war on the USSR by Hitler. Foreign Minister Ribbentrop informed Moscow that they would analyze the terms of the Soviets agreement with Italy and Japan, and said, “I hope that in the near future we will discuss these questions with Soviet Government.” According to a note by Ribbentrop, which was submitted to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, he commented on the German mobilization in Balkans: “Germany is (...) carrying out certain (German) troop concentrations in the Balkans, which have the sole purpose of preventing the British from gaining any foothold on Greek soil”.⁸²

However, the real intention of Germany was expressed by Foreign Minister Ribbentrop to Japan's Foreign Minister Matsuoka during their conversation in Berlin on 27 March 1941. The German Minister says that the USSR's conditions for joining to Tripartite Pact were “unacceptable.” He adds that the Soviets were seeking a base in the Bosphorus and a strong influence in Balkans, and that these demands were unacceptable. He continues: “Germany needs the Balkan Peninsula above all for her own economy and is not inclined to let it come under Russian domination”.⁸³ Hitler also expressed his disturbance about Soviet insistence on its demands “to draw closer to Finland and the Dardanelles” during a conversation with the German Ambassador in Moscow Count von der Schulenburg on 28 April 1941.⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² “Telegram by the Reich Foreign Minister to the State Secretary in the German Foreign Office (Weizsäcker), January 21, 1941.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, pp.271-272

⁸³ “Memorandum of the Conversation Between the Reich Foreign Minister and Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka in the Presence of Ambassadors Ott and Oshima at Berlin on March 27, 1941.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, p.284

⁸⁴ “Conversation of the Führer with the Ambassador Count von der Schulenburg, on April 28, 1941.” In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, p.332

It is obvious that the Turkish issue, or Soviet demands from Turkey, was one of the most important areas of disagreement between Germany and the Soviet Union before the start of the Nazi-Soviet war, and this issue could be accepted as one of the reasons or at least pretexts for Germany's aggression against the Soviet Union. While the Turkish issue covered an important part of this historical period, the Nazi-Soviet War, this question also was an important factor in the starting of the Cold War, as analyzed in Chapter Five.

Hitler never planned to accept Soviet influence in the Balkans or the Straits. According to what Henry Kissinger writes, Hitler's plan was different from what Vyacheslav Molotov offered during the Berlin negotiations. He writes that months before, as early as July 1940, when Vyacheslav Molotov went to Berlin, Hitler had already ordered preliminary staff plans for a Soviet campaign.⁸⁵ “For Hitler the die was already cast. As early as the day of Vyacheslav Molotov's arrival in Berlin, Hitler had ordered all preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union to continue, with the final decision to be delayed until an operational plan had been approved.”⁸⁶ According to Henry Kissinger, by the fall of 1940 tensions were mounting at such a rate that the two dictators made what would turn out to be their last diplomatic efforts to outmaneuver each other. Hitler's goal was to lure Stalin into a joint assault on the British Empire so as to destroy him all the more surely once Germany's rear was secure.⁸⁷

“In Hitler's mind, the only decision had always been whether to attack the Soviet Union before or after he had defeated Great Britain. And Molotov's visit settled that issue. On 14 November, the day Molotov left Berlin, Hitler ordered the staff plans of the summer to be turned into an operational concept for an attack on the Soviet Union by the summer of 1941. When he received Stalin's proposal on 25 November, he ordered that no reply be returned. (...) German military preparations for a war on Russia now moved into high gear.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.354

⁸⁶ Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992, quoted in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.363,

⁸⁷ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.356

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.364

Soviet and German troops had already been jostling each other across the entire length of Europe since August 1940.⁸⁹ Finally, the war of nerves between both countries was followed by Germany's "declaration of war" on the USSR.

2.6. German Declaration of War against the Soviet Union, and Turkey

Germany's war declaration note, which Foreign Minister Ribbentrop signed, was transmitted as a "very urgent" message to the German Ambassador in Moscow Schulenburg on 21 June 1941, to be submitted to Vyacheslav Molotov. The declaration accuses the Soviets of violating German-Soviet agreements and states that Moscow's terms for joining the Tripartite Pact were unacceptable. It also remarks on the Soviet demands concerning Turkey as "unacceptable, such as the guarantee of Bulgaria by the USSR, and the establishment of a base for Soviet Russian land and naval forces at the Straits..." This war of declaration ends with "The Führer has therefore ordered the German Armed Forces to oppose this threat with all the means at their disposal"⁹⁰ and a day later, German troops crossed the Soviet border.

Turkey and the West also were aware albeit indirectly of the Soviet demands negotiated with Germany. A briefing transmitted by the US Charge d'Affaires in Moscow to the US State Department starts: "(...) received from a source well-known to the Department" and continues: "...other Soviet aspirations that he (the source) believed would be fulfilled are the acquisition of the lost provinces of Turkish Armenia; at least a deciding voice in the Regime of the Straits..." The two demands about bases and territory were cited in diplomatic correspondence on 14 August 1940.⁹¹

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.356

⁹⁰ "Telegram by the Reich Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union, June 21, 1941." In *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1948, pp.347-349

⁹¹ "Telegram by the US Charge in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State, August 14, 1940." In United States Department of State. *Foreign relations of the United States (FRUS) diplomatic papers, 1940. General Volume I*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940, pp.560-561

At the beginning of 1941, Bulgarian-German relations were getting close. In February 1941 a non-aggression pact between Bulgaria and Turkey was also signed.⁹² While the Soviets negotiated with Bulgaria they mentioned their claims on the Bosphorus. It is clear that Bulgaria, which was not sympathetic to the Soviet policy, informed Turkey about it before signing the Turkish-Bulgarian pact.⁹³ According to a telegram by the US Ambassador in Ankara MacMurray to Washington about his conversation with Turkish Foreign Ministry Secretary General Numan Menemencioğlu, he says that Menemencioğlu “recalled that this country had long been desirous of a better understanding with Bulgaria” and adds:

“He then told me that last November (1940) Sobolev, Secretary General of the Soviet Foreign Office, had visited Sofia on a mysterious errand which the Turkish Government learned was a proposal to enter into a pact of mutual assistance directed professedly against Turkey - a proposal which there was even some reason to believe had been gilded with an offer to assure to Bulgaria a portion of Turkish Thrace.”⁹⁴

Ambassador McMurray, in another telegram on 22 June 1941 says, “Yesterday Numan (Menemencioğlu) specified that the proposal (November proposal by Sobolev to Bulgaria) was that Bulgaria extends its frontier to the Enos-Midia line while Russia would take rest of Thrace down to Straits”.⁹⁵

While the Soviets were engaged in these efforts with Bulgaria they were also trying to conclude an agreement with Germany that would determine the area from Bulgaria to Bosphorus that was within the Soviet sphere of interest. As a result, it is obvious that the USSR policy of making demands from Turkey, which emerged at the end of the World War II, had its roots back in the first period of the war; this policy goes back to the period of the German-Soviet entente.

⁹² Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, p.79

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.78-79

⁹⁴ “Telegram by the US the Ambassador in Turkey (Mac Murray) to the Secretary of State, February 21, 1941.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, 1941. The British Commonwealth; the Near East and Africa* Volume III. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941, p.821

⁹⁵ “Telegram by the US the Ambassador in Turkey (Mac Murray) to the Secretary of State, June 22, 1941.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, 1941. The British Commonwealth; the Near East and Africa* Volume III. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941, p.871

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the new era in relations, which began after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, is reviewed. After the revolution the new Russian regime decided to withdraw from Turkey's eastern regions and it abolished the Tsarist Russian secret agreement on Turkey. During these years, both countries laid the foundations for their new close relationship by signing border agreements. However, the new international state of affairs plus the threat of war in the 1930's had an impact on these relations. After it signed an agreement with Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union began to voice its ambitions for the region including those regarding Turkey. In this context, Soviet-Nazi negotiations are analyzed in detail with the help of documents published by the allied forces after World War II. According to these documents, it is clear that the Soviet side tried to convince Nazi Germany to accept that the Turkish Straits and Turkey's eastern regions were in the sphere of Soviet interest. Therefore, I can say that the Soviets raised their demands on Turkey as early as the beginning of World War II. In addition, some documents prove that one of the problems between the USSR and Germany during their negotiations, which resulted in war between them, was the Soviet claims on Turkey.

CHAPTER 3

SOVIET-WESTERN ALLIANCE AND SOVIET DEMANDS FROM TURKEY

3.1. Introduction

The failing German-Soviet negotiations meant that Moscow could not convince Berlin to accept its plans for Bulgaria and Turkey. After being attacked by Germany, the Soviet Union turned back on the West. In this chapter, all Soviet plans for Turkey it put before its Western allies are analyzed. In this context, one of the main contacts between the USSR and the West was British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden's visit to Moscow in December 1942. According to British Foreign Office documents,⁹⁶ Stalin offered Turkey the Dodecanese Islands and territories from northern Syria. This chapter argues the possible causes of the offer. After the Stalingrad victory, the Soviet Union returned to its tough policy on Turkey and raised territorial claims against Turkey once again. According to US documents, the initial British and American attitude regarding Soviet demands from Turkey was a policy of non-interference. US President Truman's comment about the demands was meaningful. He said at the Potsdam Conference that Turkey and the USSR should settle territorial disputes themselves.

3.2. Soviet Policy towards Turkey After it was Attacked: The German Invasion and the British Position

After being attacked by Germany the USSR postponed its demands for Turkey. During the period from beginning of the Soviet-German War to the Soviet Union's Stalingrad victory the Soviet side considered that Turkey's joining the war against

⁹⁶ PRO FO 954/25A "Mr. Eden's Visit to Moscow", January 5, 1942

Germany would be strategically important and beneficial for Moscow. As soon as the German-Soviet war started the strategic importance of Turkey for the Soviet Union increased. Any Turkish preference to take part on any side could affect the outcome of the war.⁹⁷

However, this Soviet policy, which prefers Turkey joining the war, was not at the beginning of the new period that emerged after it was attacked by Germany. Initially, the Soviet Union was satisfied with Turkey's position of neutrality. Six months later it was attacked by Germany. During the visit of British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden's visit to Moscow Stalin supports the idea of "Turkey remaining outside the war as a buffer against further German penetration eastwards." Anthony Eden writes in his memorandum about a meeting with Stalin,

"Mr. Stalin expressed himself as satisfied with the course of developments in Persia, and agreed that it was in our joint interest that Turkey should remain outside the war as a buffer against further German penetration eastwards. He even advocated territorial offers to Turkey with a view to strengthening the determination of the Turkish Government to continue their present policy."⁹⁸

As remarked later in this study, both Britain and the USSR actively supported the idea of Turkey's joining the war. However, it is clear that in the beginning they were very glad that it was Turkish policy to remain outside the war. Stalin's territorial offers to Turkey "with a view to strengthening the determination of the Turkish Government to continue their present policy" was written by Anthony Eden as: "... (Mr. Stalin said) Turkey should receive the Dodecanese, with possible adjustments in favor of Greece (...) Turkey might also receive certain districts in Bulgaria, and possibly also in Northern Syria."⁹⁹

During the first conversation between Anthony Eden and Stalin the Soviet leader was already talking about "post-war regulations," even a year before his Stalingrad victory, which sealed the Soviet dominance in the war. Anthony Eden writes in his

⁹⁷ Mustafa Aydın. "İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve Türkiye, 1939-1945 (World War II and Turkey, 1939-1945)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I: 1919-1980*, edited by Baskın Oran, 399-476, Ankara: İletişim, 2001, p. 446

⁹⁸ "Memorandum by the UK Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs." In *PRO FO 954/25A, "Mr. Eden's Visit to Moscow"*, p.3

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.1

memorandum, “During my first conversation with Mr. Stalin and Mr. Molotov on the 16 December (...) Mr. Stalin set out in some detail what he considered should be the post-war territorial frontiers in Europe, and in particular his ideas regarding the treatment of Germany.”¹⁰⁰ He says during conversation with Anthony Eden on 17 December,

“The war policy of the Soviet Union has so far been that of a fighting retreat. (...) The moment has now arrived when the wearing-down process has reached the point where the Germans feel the pinch. The German soldiers are tired. (...) The Germans attempted to dig themselves in... (...) The German army is not so strong after all.”¹⁰¹

The Soviet side, seeing possible victory, makes an offer during the negotiation on 16 December 1941 of a secret protocol “concerning the map of Europe after the war.” Turkey was mentioned in the text of the secret protocol. It is interesting that Stalin offers Turkey some territories from Bulgaria, which had signed a non-aggression pact with Turkey a year before. Stalin also thought that because of its close relations with Germany, Bulgaria, which during negotiations with Germany was defined by the Soviet Union as a country in the Soviet sphere of interest, should be punished. Parts of the Soviet secret protocol offer are as follows.

“5. Turkey should receive the Dodecanese. Islands in the Aegean especially important for Greece should go to Greece, but the Dodecanese Turkey should be returned to Turkey.

(...) 13. It is desirable to adjust the boundary between Turkey and Bulgaria and include in Turkey certain of the districts south of Bourgas which are populated by Turks, as Bulgaria also ought to be punished for her attitude in the war.”¹⁰²

The Aegean Sea islands and the territories from Bulgaria appear to be a kind of gift for Turkey without any clear reason except perhaps rewarding Turkey for its position of neutrality. During the conversation between Anthony Eden and Stalin, they also touched on the Soviet territorial offers for Turkey. Anthony Eden asked, “What about the position of Turkey? Can we do anything to improve that situation?” Stalin

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1

¹⁰¹ “Record of an Interview Between the Foreign Secretary and M. Stalin, December 16, 1941.” In *PRO FO 954/25A, “Mr. Eden’s Visit to Moscow”*, p.15

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.10

answered, "Tell them they will get the Dodecanese." The conversation went as follows:

"Mr. Eden: That is very difficult with the Greeks, as the islands are mostly inhabited by Greeks and the Greek people have long planned to have them.

M. Stalin: You cannot be very strict in pursuing this nationality principle. Also in Greece, there are Turks.

Mr. Eden: Do you think it would have an effect upon the Turks!

M. Stalin: All the islands blockade the outlet from Turkey. You could arrange an exchange of islands between Greece and Turkey so that some went to one and some to other.

Mr. Eden: Some time ago when we thought we might take the Dodecanese we started conversations with Greece and Turkey, but they didn't go at all well.

M. Stalin: The Turks would also like to have Dedeagatch but we must not offend the Greeks, but I think there might be an exchange of islands."¹⁰³

Stalin, who strongly defended territorial rewards for Turkey in the Aegean Sea, also offered some territories in Syria. He asked Eden, "Could you give them something in Syria?" The British Foreign Minister answered: "I don't think it's impossible. They have claims there." Then the two politicians argued Turkey's stance on the war against Germany as follows. Here, both leaders strongly praise Turkey's neutrality because this stance provides a buffer zone preventing Germany from reaching the Middle East.

"(...) Mr. Eden: Do you think they would let the Germans go through Turkey?

M. Stalin: I doubt it.

Mr. Eden: So do I. As long as they remain a buttress against Germany, they are a great help to us.

M. Stalin: I think they must be paid for it.

Mr. Eden: But you have been giving them oil for it.

M. Stalin: But we do not want to give them too much in case they want to re-export it to Germany."¹⁰⁴

Both countries were glad of Turkey's position and the USSR leadership wanted to reward it for that. However when Turkey learned about the Stalin's policy it regarded

¹⁰³ "Record of an Interview Between the Foreign Secretary and M. Stalin, December 16, 1941." In *PRO FO 954/25A, "Mr. Eden's Visit to Moscow"*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

these presentations with suspicion. Turkey was concerned that the Soviets would convince Britain about their territorial demands of Turkey. Turkey, which always maintains that the negotiations that began in Moscow in December 1941 were in this vein, was concerned that its allies could hit it back. Information from the conference (in Moscow) also conveyed a sense of confirmation regarding these concerns of Turkey; The Turkish Government was informed that Stalin was suggesting that the Dodecanese and some territories from Bulgaria and Northern Syria should be given to Turkey. This meant to Turkey that since Stalin was offering to give Turkey some territories without any reason, he would then demand the Straits from Turkey in return for these concessions.¹⁰⁵

It cannot be claimed that this concern of Turkey was not realistic because, according to British documents concerning the same meetings between Anthony Eden with Stalin, the Soviet side was insisting on British recognition of the USSR's 1941 frontiers before the German attack. As remarked above, Stalin was sure of victory and thought that while attacking the USSR, “The Germans attempted to dig themselves in, German army is not strong after all etc.” Stalin was so sure that Germany would be defeated, he also offered to Britain to sign two agreements; one of them was on “cooperation in the Peace Settlement, i.e. Post-war regulations.”¹⁰⁶

One of the Soviet drafts offered to Britain includes post-war regulations as follows:

“The Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and His Majesty The King of Great Britain, on the other, being anxious to direct their common efforts towards the better organization of the cause of peace and towards ensuring security in Europe after the victory over Hitlerite Germany, have agreed to conclude the present Treaty...”¹⁰⁷

This Soviet draft means that the Soviet Union leadership had started to work out post-war regulations at the end of 1941. In that sense, it offered for example to divide Germany and “to transfer East Prussia to Poland.” Since the Soviet Union

¹⁰⁵ A. Şükrü Esmel and Oral Sander. “İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy in World War II).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 137-185. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, pp.160-161

¹⁰⁶ “Record of an Interview Between the Foreign Secretary and M. Stalin, December 16, 1941.” In *PRO FO 954/25A, “Mr. Eden’s Visit to Moscow”*, pp.1-5

¹⁰⁷ “Soviet Draft December 16, 1941 (Annex III).” In *PRO FO 954/25A, “Mr. Eden’s Visit to Moscow”*, p. 6

was bargaining with the West over its future frontiers in Eastern Europe, and the fate of Germany, it may be regarded that these offers concerning Turkey could also be connected with its future plans, especially in the light of the fact that it had negotiated a year previously with the Germans over Turkey's Straits and its hinterland Bulgaria. The offers cannot be regarded as if they were only connected to the battlefield conditions inside the Soviet Union because the Soviet side had already started to think about future frontiers in Eastern Europe. Therefore, these offers could be connected to the Soviet Union's future plans about its sphere of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean.¹⁰⁸

3.3. Turkey's Reservations on Entering the War

Hence, for Turkey, concern to stay out of war was a decisive factor.¹⁰⁹ Omer Kürkçüoğlu writes that Atatürk's opinion in the light of experience in World War I to the effect that Turkey should be stay out of the oncoming war was well known by İnönü, and by managing to keep Turkey out of the war, it could be regarded that he also fulfilled Atatürk's foreign policy¹¹⁰

Although the general tendency is to make analyzes in the light of actual developments during the war, the main factor which kept Turkey out of the war was the Turkish Government's suspicions about the Soviets' intentions.¹¹¹ The skepticism that set in after June 1941, when Germany attacked the USSR, originated more from the possibility of being liberated by the Soviets than by German occupation. Thus, the danger that Turkey faced soon after the war, was the one it had tried to avoid

¹⁰⁸ For British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's Moscow visit, see also, Martin McCauley. *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1949*, London: Longman Pub Group, 2003, pp. 39-40

¹⁰⁹ İhan Uzgel and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu. "İngiltere'yle İlişkiler (Relations with Britain)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 258-277: İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.277

¹¹⁰ Ömer Kürkçüoğlu. "Dış Politika Nedir? Türkiye'deki Dünü ve Bugünü (What is Foreign Policy? Today and Tomorrow in Turkey)." *SBF Dergisi*, XXXV, no. 1-4 (1980): 309-335, p.322

¹¹¹ Mustafa Aydın. "İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve Türkiye, 1939-1945 (World War II and Turkey, 1939-1945)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I*, edited by Baskın Oran, 399-476. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.448

through successful foreign policy implementation throughout the war: Staying alone with its northern neighbor which has an appetite fueled by the new international state of affairs.¹¹²

Indeed, when the German forces were repelled on the Stalingrad front and the USSR again rose as superior and the winner of the war, the pressure on Turkey re-emerged. Germany's defeat at Stalingrad was also a turning point for Turkish-Soviet relations. Moscow, which treated Turkey with understanding and as a friend after the beginning of the German military aggression against the Soviet Union, returned its former, pre-1941 position after the Stalingrad victory.¹¹³ The Soviet Union reintroduced its former hostile policy,¹¹⁴ and began a “pressure policy” against Turkey.¹¹⁵

Kamuran Gürün also writes: “Towards to the autumn of 1943 we see the signs that the Soviets have adopted a new policy towards Turkey being repeated..”¹¹⁶ A. Suat Bilge also writes that the 6th Army of (German) General Paulus surrendered on 31 January 1943 and this success made Stalin change his approach to Turkey.¹¹⁷ The Soviet Union emerged from the battle of Stalingrad as a significant power in the war. According to Baskın Oran, “the USSR sought a say on the Bosphorus whenever it felt stronger.”¹¹⁸ At this period, it could be said that the new Soviet aims regarding Turkey after the Stalingrad victory were approximately same as the claims it is had

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.475

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.450

¹¹⁴ A. Şükrü Esmer and Oral Sander. “İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy in World War II).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 137-185. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.163

¹¹⁵ A. Suat Bilge. “Kıbrıs Uyuşmazlığı ve Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (Cyprus Conflict and Turkish-Soviet Relations)” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 338-427. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.388

¹¹⁶ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.255

¹¹⁷ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.179

¹¹⁸ Baskın Oran. “Türkiye'nin 'Kuzeydeki Büyük Komşu' Sorunu Nedir? Türk Sovyet İlişkileri 1939-1970 (What is Turkey's 'Big Neighbor in the North' Problem? Turkish-Soviet Relations 1939-1970).” *SBF Dergisi* XXVI, No.2 (1970): 41-93, p.51

put before Germany.¹¹⁹ During the Hitler, Ribbentrop and Molotov negotiations in November 1940, the Soviet Union demanded also guarantees not only on paper, but for real, including land and naval bases in the Bosphorus.¹²⁰

A. Suat Bilge also draws attention to the Soviet Union's unilateral demands of Turkey during different periods. He mentions that when Germans attacked on 22 June 1941 the Soviet Union sought to draw Turkey to its side. However, when Germany began to lose its power, after the Battle for Stalingrad, Russia started to expect unilateral concessions (from Turkey). According to A. Suat Bilge, if Turkey had entered the war, this would have lightened the war burden of the Soviet Union. However, in return for this sacrifice it demanded from Ankara, it refrained from giving Turkey any satisfactory security guarantees. It pursued a method to obtain what it sought from Turkey by applying unilateral pressure.¹²¹

According to Kamuran Gürün, Russia was sure that it would emerge victorious from the war after the Battle for Stalingrad. “Perhaps it was important for the Russians to think that Turkey would enter the war and be occupied by Germans then liberated by Russians.” Whether occupied or not, a war-weary and weak Turkey would of course be just what Russia wanted.¹²² During the Cairo Conference Numan Menemencioglu put this idea to Anthony Eden and British Ambassador in Ankara Sir Knatchbull Hugessen saying that their offer of Turkey entering the war was simply to use Turkey and he adds, “If our *Çatalca* line fails and the Germans seize the Bosphorus and its hinterland, how would this benefit you? Then are we to hope that the Russians beat the Germans and come to liberate Istanbul? Would the Russians

¹¹⁹ A. Şükrü Esmer and Oral Sander. “İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy in World War II).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 137-185. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.150

¹²⁰ Baskın Oran. “Türkiye'nin 'Kuzeydeki Büyük Komşu' Sorunu Nedir? Türk Sovyet İlişkileri 1939-1970 (What is Turkey's 'Big Neighbor in the North' Problem? Turkish-Soviet Relations 1939-1970).” *SBF Dergisi* XXVI, No.2 (1970): 41-93, p.51

¹²¹ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.161

¹²² Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, p.100

liberate Istanbul for me?”¹²³ While these words were hypothetical at that time, by the end of the war it was understood that Numan Menemencioglu's remarks were realistic in the light of the Soviets refusing to withdraw from the East European countries which it had liberated, and given that its ambitions on the Straits were well known.

The Soviets so wanted Turkey to enter the war that they even applied pressure in order to force Turkey to enter the war. Russia defended this idea during the foreign ministers meeting in Moscow in October 1943. Then the Tehran Conference was convened. The issues discussed at the Tehran Conference included post-war arrangements and convincing Turkey to enter the war. During this conference, both the UK and the USA had similar attitudes to the USSR vis-à-vis Turkey. The Soviet Union and the other participants at the Conference plus the UK and the US were in consensus that if Turkey refused to enter the war, the consequences would not be pleasant for this country. In the Second Plenary Meeting on 29 November 1943, Churchill told other participants Roosevelt and Stalin,

“The British Government will go far in pointing out to the Turks that any failure to respond to the invitation of our three great powers would have very serious political and territorial consequences for Turkey, particularly in regard to the future status of the Straits.”¹²⁴

This could be a satisfactory position for the Soviets, which had always showed a close interest in the Straits. Two days later, at the tripartite luncheon on 1 December the Soviet side inquired, “What do these words mean?” Vyacheslav Molotov said, “(The Prime Minister) referred to the idea that if Turkey refused an invitation to enter the war, Great Britain would tell her that her interests in the Straits and in the Bosphorus would be adversely affected,” and added, “He wished to know what this meant?” Churchill replied saying, “He was far from his cabinet, but he personally favored a change in the regime of the Straits if Turkey proved obdurate (not to enter the war).”¹²⁵

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.103

¹²⁴ “Second Plenary Meeting minutes, November 29, 1943.” In United States Department of State. *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, The Conferences of Cairo and Tehran*, 1943. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943. p.536

¹²⁵ “Tripartite Luncheon Meeting minutes, December 1, 1943.” In United States Department of State. *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, The Conferences of Cairo and Tehran*,

Another conversation at the luncheon meeting of the three leaders on 30 November also shows that during this period the US's and the UK's approaches to Turkey were similar to the USSR's. According to the minutes of the meeting, opening the issue of Turkey Churchill says, "He felt that such a large land mass as Russia deserved access to warm water ports. He said that the question would of course form part of the peace settlement, and he observed that it could be settled agreeably and as between friends."¹²⁶

Marshal Stalin replied: "At the proper time that question can be discussed, but since Mr. Churchill has raised the question he would like to inquire as to the regime of the Dardanelles. He said that since England no longer objects, it would be well to relax that regime."¹²⁷ The Prime Minister replied, "England had now no objections to Russia's access to warm water ports, although he admitted that in the past she it had. He questioned, however, the advisability of doing anything about the Straits at the time, as we are all trying to get Turkey to enter the war." Marshal Stalin said there was no need to hurry about that question, but that he was merely interested in discussing it in general.¹²⁸

The Prime Minister said any territorial ambitions of the USSR should be satisfied. He says:

"It was important that the nations who would govern the world after the war, and who would be entrusted with the direction of the world after the war, should be satisfied and have no territorial or other ambitions. If that question could be settled in a manner agreeable to the great powers, he felt then that the world might indeed remain at peace. He said that hungry nations and ambitious nations are dangerous, and he would like to see the leading nations of the world in the position of rich, happy men."¹²⁹

1943. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943, p.589

¹²⁶ "Roosevelt-Churchill-Stalin Luncheon Meeting minutes, November 30, 1943." In United States Department of State. *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, The Conferences of Cairo and Tehran*, 1943. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943, p.566

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 568

During this luncheon meeting while the post-war arrangements were dealt with the British position was in favor of or very close to the Soviet claims. Another remark by Churchill during another tripartite luncheon meeting on 1 December 1943 shows that the British Prime Minister was well aware of the Soviet Union's pressure on Turkey. According to records, he “summed up the advantages to Turkey which would accrue if she accepted the invitation to join the war, and mentioned particularly the possibility of sitting alongside the Soviet Union at the peace table.”¹³⁰

At the same time relations between Turkey and the United Kingdom also cooled. The British military delegation held talks in Ankara in January 1944 on Turkey's joining the war and providing military assistance to Turkey, but these did not produce any result. Moreover, an instruction to the US Ambassador in Ankara was sent to tone down relations with Ankara at the request of the British.¹³¹ The toning down of relations continued for months but began to change ahead of the Potsdam Conference held in July 1945. There are indicators that Britain supported Turkey against the Soviet demands in 1945.

3.4. Soviet Diplomatic Notes to Turkey

However, firstly we will touch on the details of the Soviet demands. These claims by the Soviet Union were put on the table at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, but initially Moscow regarding Turkey had begun to change and that during the Potsdam Conference negotiated them with Turkey. The first signs of this policy appeared in 1944. That year the Soviet Union stopped insisting that Turkey join the war. During talks between the Turkish Foreign Ministry Secretary General Açıkalın and the Soviet Union's Ambassador Sergei A. Vinogradov on 16 August 1944 the Soviet side declared that the international conditions had already changed and added that the

¹³⁰ “Tripartite Luncheon Meeting minutes, December 1, 1943.” In United States Department of State. *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, The Conferences of Cairo and Tehran, 1943. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943, p.588*

¹³¹ Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, p.125

subject of Turkey's joining the war had lost its importance. After a short while, on 22 August, Turkey introduced an offer of a Turkish-Soviet joint friendship declaration but this attempt was not accepted by the USSR.¹³² So, the Turkish side's attempts, which began in May 1944, failed to open the doors for Turkish-Soviet friendship and cooperation. The Soviets thought recent developments were improving its position and they were waiting for a suitable time.¹³³ In these months the Soviet Union already could see the end of the war. (...) The Soviet Union was already thinking more about post-war regulations on the international scene than war, which was still being fought.¹³⁴

Thus, it appears that the best time for the Soviets was the first half of 1945. Before the Potsdam Conference held in July 1945 the Soviets brought the issue before Turkey. Vyacheslav Molotov submitted a note to the Turkish Ambassador Selim Sarper on 19 March 1945 that stated his country would annul the Turkish-Soviet 1925 Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality on 7 November 1945.¹³⁵ This treaty had been extended three times and was due to expire on 7 November. While the Soviet Union expressed its decision not to extend the Treaty it emphasized, "Owing to the profound changes that have taken place, especially during the Second World War, this treaty is no longer in accord with the new situation and needs serious improvement."¹³⁶ Vyacheslav Molotov then stated they were ready to negotiate with Turkey to conclude a new treaty.¹³⁷

¹³² A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, pp.257-258

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.258

¹³⁴ Mustafa Aydın. "İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve Türkiye, 1939-1945 (World War II and Turkey, 1939-1945)." In *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt. I* edited by Baskın Oran, 399-476. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.457

¹³⁵ A. Suat Bilge. "Kıbrıs Uyuşmazlığı ve Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (Cyprus Conflict and Turkish-Soviet Relations)" In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 338-427. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.389

¹³⁶ Türkkaya Ataöv. *Turkish Foreign Policy 1939-1945*, Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1965, p.126

¹³⁷ Erel Tellal. "SSCB'yle İlişkiler, 1945-1960 (Relations with the USSR 1945-1960), In *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar Cilt I* (From Liberation War to Today, Cases, Documents, Comments Vol. I), 499-521. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.501

Turkey, in its reply of 4 April 1945 expressed that “it accepted the Soviet suggestion to conclude a new treaty to replace the existing one.”¹³⁸ The Turkish reply expressed readiness to examine with attention and goodwill any proposals that the Soviet Government suggested for the conclusion of a new treaty better adapted to the present interests of the two countries.

During the second meeting between Vyacheslav Molotov and Ambassador Selim Sarper on 7 June 1945, the Soviet side declared two conditions for the conclusion of a new treaty between Turkey and the USSR. This time on 7 June 1945 the interview unlike the 19 March note, raised an issue about Turkey's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Soviets expressed as their first condition a change to the 1936 Montreux Convention.¹³⁹ Vyacheslav Molotov expressed that the straits should not be left to the will of Turkey alone.¹⁴⁰ Secondly, the Soviets claimed that the agreement that regulates the border between two countries was signed at a time when the Soviets were weak and expressed that this injustice should be rectified by ceding Kars and Ardahan to the Soviet Union. Vyacheslav Molotov received Ambassador Selim Sarper on 18 June one more time and repeated the demands. Turkey refused to speak on these items and thus the possibility of concluding a new treaty, to replace the older one, was ended.¹⁴¹

According to A. Suat Bilge, the Soviet Union began to collect in different regions the fruits of its great victory on the battlefield. Turkey was also located in these areas. After occupying Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union took control of these countries by installing the local communists in power. However, the situation was different in the region that included Turkey. Turkey did not fall under Soviet occupation. This being the case, the tactic of the Soviet Government was to force

¹³⁸ A. Suat Bilge. “Kıbrıs Uyuşmazlığı ve Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (Cyprus Conflict and Turkish-Soviet Relations)” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 338-427. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.389; For Soviet pressure on Turkey in 1945, see also, Fahir Armaoğlu. *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi 1914-1995 (The Political History of the 20th Century 1914-1995)*. İstanbul: Alkım Yayınevi, 1996, pp.426-430.

¹³⁹ Türkkaya Ataöv. *Turkish Foreign Policy 1939-1945*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1965, p.126

¹⁴⁰ Erel Tellal. “SSCB'yle İlişkiler, 1945-1960 (Relations with the USSR 1945-1960), In *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar Cilt I (From Liberation War to Today, Cases, Documents, Comments Vol. I)*, 499-521. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.502

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

concessions from the Turkish Government by making extreme demands, building up its military along the border and through propaganda.¹⁴² Turkish Foreign Minister Hasan Saka said in a speech that they wanted to improve relations with Russia; nevertheless, Turkey could not accept the way the Soviets were treating Romania and Bulgaria. Saka says in another statement that they could not cede any territory or base to the Soviet Government and that they were prepared to use armed force if necessary.¹⁴³

The next international meeting after the Soviet notes was the Potsdam Conference. According to the minutes of the conference, the Soviet claims of territory and bases in Turkey were clear. About a year and a half before the Potsdam Conference, in Tehran, Stalin had refused to discuss about his country's "possible ambitions" towards Turkey with Moscow's Western partners. As remarked above, he said on 30 November 1943 that there was no need to hurry about that question. Furthermore, in the evening of the day of the Second Plenary Meeting on 29 November 1943 in Tehran at the tripartite dinner meeting when Churchill inquired, "What territorial interests does the Soviet Union have", Marshall Stalin replied, "There is no need to speak at the present time about any Soviet desires, but when the time comes we will speak."¹⁴⁴ Churchill's question was a general inquiry and was not directly about Turkey. Stalin may have thought that the proper time had come in 1945. When his country opened the subject of demands vis-à-vis Turkey in the early months of that year the Soviet Union also put the demands on the negotiation table at the Potsdam Conference, which started on 15 July 1945.

Although the Soviets suggested to the Turkish side during the Vyacheslav Molotov-Selim Sarper meetings a new treaty to replace the 1925 treaty "in accordance with the new international situation," during the Potsdam conference the Soviet leadership tried to express the cause of the issue as if Turkey was insisting on a new

¹⁴² A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.265

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.267

¹⁴⁴ "Tripartite Dinner Meeting minutes, November 29, 1943." In United States Department of State. *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, The Conferences of Cairo and Tehran, 1943. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943, pp.554-555*

alliance treaty with the Soviets. However as remarked above, when the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov opened the issue about Turkey's sovereignty and territorial integrity during the meeting of 7 June 1945, Ambassador Selim Sarper refused to speak on this subject and declared that “the possibility of concluding a new treaty (...) was ended.” Despite the Turkish side's decisive attitude, the Soviet Union preferred to present the Turkish position at the Potsdam Conference as if Ankara was insisting on concluding a treaty with Moscow.

The Potsdam Conference was not just the first international meeting at that the Soviet Union voiced its demands over Turkey to the alliance countries, which refused to speak at the Tehran Conference. At this conference the major Cold War differences between the Eastern and Western blocs also started to emerge gradually. According to Henry Kissinger, the practical outcome of Potsdam was the beginning of the process that divided Europe into two spheres of influence.¹⁴⁵

The Potsdam Conference could be regarded as the first international platform where the Soviet Union put its demands vis-à-vis Turkey before its Western partners for the first time. Because of this, the conference's official records also provide official and unquestionable proof of these demands. This proof is important for the history of Turkish foreign policy because there were a mystery surrounding the Soviet demands from Turkey until the end of Cold War. Just like the separating of the world into two blocks, the discussion about the Soviet demands also has two sides, and this may be due to the effects of the Cold War. In this debate some claimed that while there was no official document that could prove that such demands really were made by Soviet officials, the claims were also exaggerated by Turkish officials in order to draw close to the Western camp. Interestingly, although the official documents of Potsdam Conference that include proof of the Soviet demands were declassified and published by the US Government in 1960,¹⁴⁶ this evidence, which could end the debate, was not referred to in main academic studies about Turkish diplomatic history until the 1990's.

¹⁴⁵ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.436

¹⁴⁶ *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945.

The first reference to the Potsdam documents on Turkey is made in Kamuran Gürün's study *“Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920 1953)*, published in 1991.¹⁴⁷ He even analyzed Potsdam Conference in his former study, *“Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)”*, published in 1983,¹⁴⁸ however he writes about the Conference quoting extensively from Churchill's memoirs. This long debate on the subject of Turkish foreign policy was apparently ended when Kamuran Gürün referred to the Potsdam documents in 1991. After Kamuran Gürün's study, a year later, A. Suat Bilge referred to those same documents on his study *“Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)”*. He writes that while there are no common minutes of the meetings of the Conference, he quotes the minutes of the US delegation. His remarks in 1992 about the importance of these documents as below:

“Until this time, there were a discussion as to whether or not the Soviet Union officially and vociferously demanded from Turkey a base in the Bosphorus? In addition, there was discussion as to whether or not the demand to change the borders determined by 1921 treaty really meant that Kars and Ardahan were being demanded back? (...) The Soviet Union did not act openly during the first offer to Ambassador Sarper on 7 June 1945. (...) Following these negotiations, publications in the Soviet press and on the radio coupled to the Soviet military buildup in Bulgaria showed that these demands were not narrow. However, it was claimed (in Turkey) that these were also allegations, not official demands. At the Potsdam Conference, Molotov (...) officially declared their (...) (territory) and base demands. In addition, Stalin mentioned openly the names of Kars and Ardahan, and stated the official view. (...) In a written recommendation that the Soviets submitted to the Conference on 22 July 1945, they offered to establish Soviet military bases in the Bosphorus. After these official voiced and written statements from the most senior Soviet officials, there should be no doubt left on these subjects.”¹⁴⁹

He remarks that these documents undeniably show that the Soviet Union's demands actually did exist. He draws attention to the point that although there were

¹⁴⁷ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, pp.291-298

¹⁴⁸ Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, p.154

¹⁴⁹ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, pp.288-289

discussions back then as to whether or not there were official Soviet demands , there should be no doubt left as to their existence now.

3.5. The Soviet Claims over Turkey in Potsdam Conference

According to the US delegations records from the Potsdam Conference, the Soviet Union's territorial claims on Turkey's eastern regions and a Soviet base in the Straits were voiced at the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Plenary Meetings held on 22, 23, 24, July 1945¹⁵⁰.

During the Sixth Plenary Meeting on 22 July which was attended by President Truman, US Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, Prime Minister Churchill, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Soviet Union General Secretary Stalin and Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov, Prime Minister Churchill expressed his discomfort with the tension between Turkey and the USSR. Churchill said,

“I wish to impress on Marshal Stalin the importance of not alarming Turkey. Undoubtedly Turkey was very much alarmed by a strong concentration of Bulgarian and Soviet troops in Bulgaria; by continuous attacks in the Soviet press and radio; and, of course, by the turn which the conversations between the Turkish Ambassador (Selim Sarper) and Mr. Molotov had taken in which modifications of Turkey's eastern frontier were mentioned, as well as a Soviet base in the Straits.”¹⁵¹

The British Prime Minister also wanted to get first hand information about the Vyacheslav Molotov-Selim Sarper interviews and continued, “I do not know what happened beyond these conversations. What I should like to know is the present Russian position on the subject.”¹⁵² Vyacheslav Molotov replies, “Turkey is applying

¹⁵⁰ *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference)*, 1945 Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp. 244-374

¹⁵¹ “Sixth Plenary Meeting minutes, Sunday, July 22, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference)*, 1945 Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.256

¹⁵² The Soviet Union claimed that request for an alliance came from Turkey. However, when Turkey learned what the Soviets had been saying, it reacted. According to a telegram by the US Ambassador in Ankara (Wilson) on 1 March 1946 to his Department about an interview with the Turkish side, he remarks: “Acting Foreign Minister Sümer told me about a conversation with Soviet Ambassador (Sergei A. Vinogradov) on 25 February: Vinogradov said that if Turkey wanted a treaty of alliance with the USSR Molotov had already stipulated the conditions for such a treaty last June. Sümer stated that Turkey never requested a treaty of alliance, that it does not

to us for an alliance treaty,” and he expresses that they offered Turkey an alliance, and that they had some conditions. According to the minutes of the meeting, Vyacheslav Molotov, who had held three meetings with Ambassador Selim Sarper in 1945 about the Soviet claims, gave first hand information to his country's Western allies about his dealings with the Turkish side as follows:

“Molotov said that he would circulate a letter to the President and Churchill giving the point of view of the Soviet Government on this question. He would like to explain the origin of the matter. The Turkish Government had taken the initiative through the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow and had proposed an alliance. This question had been brought up before their Ambassador in Ankara (Sergei Alexandrovich Vinogradov) and again in Moscow at the end of May by the Turkish Ambassador. Early in June, he had had two conversations with the Turkish Ambassador. In reply to the Turkish proposals, he had stated that the Soviet Government had no objection to a treaty of alliance subject to certain conditions. He pointed out the fact that in doing so they should settle their mutual claims. On the Soviet side, there were two. The conclusion of a treaty of alliance meant that they undertook each to defend the frontiers of both states. He had pointed out that there were several sections of their frontiers which they considered unjust. In 1921, a portion of their territory had been torn from Soviet Armenia and Soviet Georgia. He pointed out that he was bound to settle this question before the conclusion of a treaty of alliance.”¹⁵³

Here, Vyacheslav Molotov confirms the content of his conversation with Turkish Ambassador Selim Sarper. Moreover, he reiterates the Soviet Union's territorial claims against Turkey's eastern regions. Then the Soviet Foreign Minister comes to the question of the Turkish Straits:

“(Molotov said) The second question was that of the Black Sea Straits. The Soviet Union had repeatedly let their allies know that they could not regard the Montreux Convention as a correct arrangement and that they were not satisfied with it. The rights of the Soviet Union under this Convention were equal to those of the Japanese Emperor. It seemed to them that this did not correspond to the present situation. On behalf of the Soviet Government he had presented certain proposals which had been set forth in the Soviet

want such a treaty, but that it does want friendly and trusting relations with the USSR and to that end it would be glad have new treaty of friendship on the lines of that of 1925.” (“The Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, March 1, 1946” *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, p.817) On the other hand, as remarked before, Ambassador Sarper closed the subject when he learned about the Soviet ambitions at the meeting on 7 June 1945 and told Molotov, “There is no longer any chance of concluding such a treaty.”

¹⁵³ “Sixth Plenary Meeting minutes, Sunday, July 22, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.257

paper¹⁵⁴ which he was now circulating.”¹⁵⁵

This Soviet paper, circulated by the Soviet delegation to the Conference, includes a demand for “establishing Soviet military bases in the Straits.” Therefore, this paper was one of the official documents of the Soviet Union’s demand for a base in the Turkish Straits. A. Suat Bilge calls the text a “written document of Soviet demands from Turkey.”¹⁵⁶ The paper, titled “The Black Sea Straits (Soviet Proposal,” is written as below:

“With regard to the regime of the Black Sea Straits, the Conference found necessary that:

1. The International Straits Convention signed in Montreux shall be abrogated in the proper regular procedure as it no longer corresponds to the present time conditions. 2. The determination of the regime of the Straits -the only sea passage from and to the Black Sea- shall fall within the province of Turkey and the Soviet Union as the states chiefly concerned and capable of ensuring the freedom of commercial navigation and the security in the Black Sea Straits. 3. In addition to other measures the new Straits regime should also provide for the following:

In the interests of their own security and maintenance of peace in the area of [the] Black Sea[,] Turkey and the Soviet Union shall prevent by their common facilities in the Straits the use of the Straits by the other countries for the purposes inimical to the Black Sea powers (in addition to Turkish military bases the establishment of Soviet military bases in the Straits).”¹⁵⁷

The last paragraph of the Soviet document circulated to the Conference directly indicates “establishment of Soviet military bases in the Straits.” Another record of the meeting is US diplomat Cohen's notes. In this document, Vyacheslav Molotov's words on territorial demands and base were as follows:

“Molotov: I should like to explain the origin of the question. This was brought up by the Turkish government with our Ambassador, and later by the

¹⁵⁴ “Proposal by the Soviet Delegation (Translation).” *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.1427-1428

¹⁵⁵ “Sixth Plenary Meeting minutes, Sunday, July 22, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.257

¹⁵⁶ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.289

¹⁵⁷ “Proposal by the Soviet Delegation (Translation).” *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.1427-1428

Turkish Ambassador with me. Early in June I had two conversations with the Turkish Ambassador. In reply to the Turkish proposal for an alliance, I stated Russia had no objection, subject to certain conditions. We should first settle mutual claims. I mentioned two questions on our side. The treaty of alliance means we jointly undertake to defend the frontiers of two states. I pointed out that we could not undertake to defend certain sections of the frontier which we considered unjust. In 1921 part of this territory was torn from the Soviet Union-part of Armenia and part of Soviet Georgia. I pointed out that these territories should be restored. We should also have an alteration of our rights in the Straits. And a base.”¹⁵⁸

While Vyacheslav Molotov very clearly stated the base and territory demands from Turkey, at the same time he said he had pointed out to the Turks that if both of these issues were settled then the Russians were ready to conclude an alliance. He had also informed the Turks that the Soviet Union was prepared to settle any questions that the Turks raised on their side.¹⁵⁹ Vyacheslav Molotov also warned that if Turkey refused the Soviet Union's demands, they would settle the question together with other Black Sea countries. According to records, he said, “If the Turkish Government is not prepared to settle these two questions, (base and territory issue) the Soviet Government is prepared to make an agreement on the Straits alone between the Black Sea Powers.”¹⁶⁰

This means that the Soviet Union was ready to make a unilateral attempt with its alliance countries, Bulgaria and Romania. to settle the status of the Straits even though the Montreux Convention was a multilateral international Convention, which also included the United Kingdom and the United States. These words were also a warning to these two countries, causing Churchill to draw attention to this subject. After the Russian Foreign Minister's statement, which clearly posed his country's demands on Turkey, Churchill called the Soviet paper about the Straits “an important document” and recalled his negotiations together with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in Moscow in October and stated that the Soviet demands in this document “went far beyond the conversations between Anthony Eden and himself

¹⁵⁸ “Sixth Plenary Meeting minutes, (Cohen notes), Sunday, July 22, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.267

¹⁵⁹ “Sixth Plenary Meeting minutes, Sunday, July 22, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.257

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

and Stalin and Molotov.” Vyacheslav Molotov replied, “A treaty of alliance with Turkey had not been under consideration at that time.”¹⁶¹

Churchill then turned attention to another point. He said, “When a Russian base in the Straits was asked for; also by the proposal that no one had anything to do with the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles except Russia and Turkey. He was certain that Turkey would never agree to this proposal that was being made.” Vyacheslav Molotov, by way of a reply, reminded him that in the history there were Turkish-Russian agreements that stated the Bosphorus issue would be settled by those two countries alone. Then “he referred to the treaties of 1805 and 1833 (The Treaty of September 23, 1805, and the Treaty of *Hünkâr İskelesi* of 8 July 1833). Churchill's first reaction to the Russian Foreign Minister's remarks about the diplomatic notes submitted to Turkey was that the British side disagreed with the Soviet attitude.¹⁶²

These records may also be regarded as confirmation by Vyacheslav Molotov at another platform of Ambassador Selim Sarper's diplomatic correspondences transmitted to Ankara about the content of Soviet Foreign Minister's verbal note expressed to him in June. The matter was discussed at the Seventh Plenary Meeting a day later on 23 July 1945. At this time, President Truman opened the subject and Soviet leader Stalin voiced the same demands:

“STALIN (said) (...) “as to the rectification of the frontiers, which might have frightened the Turks, he said that perhaps it was the possible restoration of the pre-war frontiers that had existed under the Czar that had frightened the Turks. He said that he had in mind the area of Kars, formerly in Armenia, as well as Ardahan, formerly in Georgia. He pointed out that this question of the restoration of frontiers would not have been brought up if the Turks had not brought up the question of an alliance. An alliance meant that they would defend the frontiers of Turkey, just as Turkey would defend the frontiers of the Soviet Union, but in the Soviet opinion the frontiers in the area mentioned was [were] incorrect and they had told the Turks that if there was to be an alliance the frontiers had to be rectified. If this were not done the question of an alliance would be dropped. What was there to be afraid of?”¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.258

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.258

¹⁶³ “Seventh Plenary Meeting, Monday, July 23, 1945 (Department of State minutes).” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.302-303

After demanding Kars and Ardahan from Turkey the Soviet leader comes to the subject of the Straits. He claims that Soviet Union should defend this waterway by force in case of any complications.

“(Stalin said) The third question was that of the Straits. He drew their attention to the fact that the position of such a great state as the Soviet Union was the following. The Montreux Convention had been decided against Russia. Russia considered it inimical. Turkey had the right under this treaty to block the Straits to any shipping not only if Turkey were at war but also if it seemed to Turkey that there was a threat of war. The Convention also left it to Turkey to decide when this threat appeared. Thus, an impossible situation was created in which Turkey was free to block the Straits when she thought they were threatened. The situation at the moment was that the Russians had the same rights in the Straits as the Japanese Emperor. This was ridiculous, but it was a fact. The result was that a small state supported by Great Britain held a great state by the throat and gave it no outlet. He said that they could imagine what commotion there would be in England if a similar regime existed in Gibraltar or in the Suez Canal, or what a commotion there would be in the United States if such a regime existed with regard to the Panama Canal. Hence, the point at issue was to give Soviet shipping the possibility to pass to and from the Black Sea freely. As Turkey was too weak to guarantee the possibility of free passage in case complications arose, the Soviet Union would like to see them defended by force.”¹⁶⁴

Churchill, who appeared to misunderstand Stalin's expression “by force”, asked, “Not law?” Stalin replied that “If they thought that naval bases in the Straits were unacceptable to the Turks, then let them give the Soviet Union some other base where the Russian fleet could repair and refuel and where in cooperation with its allies the Russian fleet could protect the Straits. For the situation to continue as it was would be ridiculous.”¹⁶⁵ These remarks show that the top leader of the USSR in 1945, Stalin, also voiced at official platforms the Soviet demands for territorial concessions from Turkey's eastern regions and the deployment of Soviet military forces to the Turkish Straits.

3.6. US and British Attitudes towards Turkey

As remarked before, British-Soviet rapprochement was clear during the Tehran Conference in 1943. Moreover, the British side supported the possible Soviet

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.303

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.303

ambitions. However, this position was fundamentally reversed at the Potsdam Conference.

As remarked before, at the Tehran conference, Churchill stated,

“(Turkey) would have very serious political and territorial consequences (...) particularly in regard to the future status of the Straits. (...) He personally favored a change in the regime of the Straits. (...) He felt that such a large land mass as Russia deserved the access to warm water ports. (...) It is important that the nations who would govern the world after the war, and who would be entrusted with the direction of the world after the war, should be satisfied and have no territorial or other ambitions.”¹⁶⁶

And Marshal Stalin responded to the British position at that time, “There was no need to hurry about that question, (...) when the time comes, we will speak.”¹⁶⁷

However, when the Soviet Union thought the time came and expressed its plans over Turkey in detail, the attitude of the UK was not like when it was at Tehran Conference, one and a half years earlier. The changing international situation, the actual power balances and new competition for spheres of influence between the West and Soviet also affected the Britain's position on Turkish issue. This is why Churchill expressed during the Potsdam Conference that the British Government could not consent to the Soviet proposals at the Seventh Plenary Meeting on 23 July as mentioned before.

On the other hand, the United States position at this plenary meeting was different from Britain's, especially with respect to the Soviet Union's territorial demands. President Truman's approach to the Soviets' territorial demands for Kars and Ardahan was to stay impartial.¹⁶⁸ When responding to Stalin's speech US President Truman cited the causes of the last two world wars and cautioned peaceful solutions. He remarked that “in the last two instances the peace of the whole world had been overturned; by Austria in the case of the previous war, and by Germany in the case

¹⁶⁶ The United States Department of State. *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, The Conferences of Cairo and Tehran, 1943*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ “Seventh Plenary Meeting, Monday, July 23, 1945 (Cohen notes).” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945

of this war. He thought it should be the business of this Conference and of the coming peace conference to see that this did not happen again.” The president continued that he did not want to engage in another war twenty-five years from now over the Straits or the Danube. “I do not want to fight another war in twenty years. (...) Most of the wars in the last twenty years have arisen in this area,” he said¹⁶⁹

He stated that the question of the Straits should be negotiated by the major powers. Even though his position on this issue was that “the question of the Black Sea Straits concerned the United States and the whole world”, his attitude regarding the second Soviet demand was different. He said, “The question of territorial concessions was a Turkish and Russian dispute which they would have to settle themselves.” According to Cohen's notes, he said, “The territorial dispute between Russia and Turkey should be settled by themselves, but the waterways are of interest to the whole world.”¹⁷⁰

This means that at the end of the war in Europe, in the middle of 1945, the United States was ready to stay neutral with respect to Soviet territorial claims on Turkey. However, neither Britain nor the United States accepted Stalin's demand on the Straits as an issue to be settled with Turkey or with the Black Sea states. As a counter proposal to the Soviet one Churchill recommended a different regime for the Straits. While the Soviets recommended “joint defense of the Straits by only Turkish and Russian forces,” Churchill declared his proposal as a “Guarantorship of the Great Powers.” According to the minutes,

“Churchill said that he strongly supported Stalin's wish for a revision of the Montreux Convention with the object of securing for Soviet Russia free and unrestricted navigation of the Straits by merchant and war ships alike in peace or war. He entirely agreed with the President when he said that this should be guaranteed by all of us. A guarantee by the Great Powers and the powers interested would certainly be effective. He earnestly hoped that the Marshal (Stalin) would consider this alternative in contrast to that of a base in close proximity to Constantinople.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 313

¹⁷⁰ “Seventh Plenary Meeting, Department of State minutes, Monday, July 23, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.304; “Seventh Plenary Meeting, Monday, July 23, 1945 (Cohen notes).” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.313

¹⁷¹ “Seventh Plenary Meeting, Department of State minutes, Monday, July 23, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam*

According to Cohen's notes, he said, "I earnestly hope that the Marshal will consider that alternative to the establishment of a Russian base in close proximity to Constantinople."¹⁷²

Then President Truman expressed the consensus reached on the session and said, "There is no disagreement on the revision of the Montreux Convention." Churchill also agreed with these words.¹⁷³ However, it is obvious that the Soviet side was disturbed by Britain's counter proposal of "Guarantorship of the Great Powers." The next day, at the Eighth Plenary Meeting on 24 July 1945, Stalin stated, "I'm afraid we will not be able to reach an agreement in regard to the Straits, since our views differ so widely." Then he recommended postponing the question and taking up the next question, and added, "I am not certain whether Turkey will be prepared to agree to international control."¹⁷⁴ According to A. Suat Bilge, during this period

"Turkey tried to draw Britain's and the United States attention to the concessions demanded from Ankara. Britain gave a limited support and recommended (...) Turkey to be calm under Soviet pressure. However, the United States was more interested in the Far East at that time. (...) Britain and the United States tried to maintain their relations with Soviet Union in spite of difficulties. When these difficulties transformed into impossibilities they began to support Turkey."¹⁷⁵

US Admiral W.D. Leahy also refers to Potsdam as the last station and to the meeting of 24 July 1945, the Eighth Plenary Meeting, as the "Start of the Cold War."¹⁷⁶

According to Katherine A. S. Sibley, British support to Turkey originated from British-Soviet rivalry on the Middle East:

Conference), 1945 Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.304

¹⁷² "Seventh Plenary Meeting, Department of State minutes, (Cohen notes) Monday, July 23, 1945." In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.313-314

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.314

¹⁷⁴ "Eight Plenary Meeting minutes, Tuesday, July 24, 1945." In *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Vol.II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.365

¹⁷⁵ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.273

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.292

“Americans and Soviet leaders remained in cooperative relationship through 1945, agreeing on such matters as sharing access to the strategic Dardanelles Straits in Turkey. Instead, it was Britain, (...) and the Soviet Union who were then at loggerheads, particularly in the old British colonial sphere of the Middle East.”¹⁷⁷

Walter La Feber also indicates the changing policy against to the Soviet Union:

“Churchill has assured Stalin that Russia was “justified” in having access to the Mediterranean. (...) And... by 1945 the British and Americans had changed their minds. There were determined to keep the Soviets away from the Mediterranean.”¹⁷⁸

3.7. The Moscow Conference

Subsequently, the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December 1945 was the next international meeting, where the issue was addressed. At this time the Western side's problem with the Soviet claims was stronger. US Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and British counterpart Ernest Bevin met on 17 December. According to the record of this meeting,¹⁷⁹ Minister Ernest Bevin said that the Soviet policy was disturbing. He noted that it looked as if the Russians were attempting to undermine the British position in the Middle East. He then elaborated that “this could be seen in their attitude towards Greece, Turkey and Persia, all three points where the USSR rubbed shoulders with the British Empire.” After this comment, Ernest Bevin came to the Turkish issue and said, “His Majesty's Government cannot be indifferent to a Russian threat to Turkey and will stand by Turkey. We cannot agree to the Soviet request for a base in the Straits and for the return of Kars and Ardahan.”¹⁸⁰ While US president Truman said in Potsdam Conference in July 1945, “The territorial dispute between Russia and Turkey (Kars and Ardahan) should be

¹⁷⁷ Katherine A.S Sibley. *The Cold War*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998, p.7

¹⁷⁸ Walter La Feber. *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2008, p.41.

¹⁷⁹ “Record of Conversation, Prepared by the United Kingdom Delegation at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, December 17, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, diplomatic papers, 1945. General : political and economic matters* Vol.II Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.629-632

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 630

settled by themselves,” the British side seems to be firmly on the side of Turkey during the Moscow Conference in December 1945.

Two days later Stalin repeated the demands during his reception for British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin in the Kremlin Palace on 19 December. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov also attended the meeting. Another copy of the records of the meeting was given to the US delegation.¹⁸¹ During the meeting Ernest Bevin said that he wished to put a question. To quote minutes,

“What was the difficulty in regard to Turkey? He did not want the term to be misunderstood but it seemed that a war of nerves was being conducted. He had the impression that there was a difficulty about the Soviet-Turkish frontier and as His Majesty's Government was allied with Turkey, he was very anxious to understand this question.”¹⁸²

According to the British delegation's records, Stalin gave the following reply:

“Generalissimo Stalin replied that there were two questions. First, the Straits. Under the Montreux Convention it was left to Turkey to decide whether there was a threat of war and whether to close the Straits and to control them. That was a difficult situation for Russia because Turkey thus had a right to hem her in and the Soviet Government wished to safeguard their liberty.

Secondly, there were certain provinces in Turkey inhabited by Georgians and Armenians which had been seized by Turkey and it was necessary to restore, at least to some extent, the old frontier which existed in the time of the Czars because the Georgians and Armenians were putting forward claims against the Turkish Government. All talk of war against Turkey was rubbish.”¹⁸³

In reply to Ernest Bevin's question as to how the matter could be settled, Stalin said it should be settled by negotiation either with Turkey or with the Allies. In reply to Ernest Bevin's question as to what exactly the Soviet Government wanted, Stalin said that the Soviet Government wished to regain the Georgian and Armenian portions of the provinces in question: they claimed, in fact, the old frontier, which

¹⁸¹ *Foreign relations of the United States, diplomatic papers, 1945. General : political and economic matters* Vol.II Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.688-691. (There is a footnote about this record of UK delegation in p.688: “Meeting held at the Kremlin, December 19, 10 p.m. Another copy of this record, included in the files of the Moscow Embassy, is accompanied by the following note from Pierson Dixon of the United Kingdom delegation to Charles E. Bohlen: 'Mr. Bevin thinks that Mr. Byrnes might like to see the record of his conversation with Generalissimo Stalin last night and asks me to send the attached copy.'”)

¹⁸² “Record by the United Kingdom Delegation of a Meeting at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, December 19,1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, diplomatic papers, 1945. General : political and economic matters* Vol. II Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.690

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

existed before the Treaty of 1921. While Ernest Bevin reminded, “Russia had not then been in possession of these provinces for a very long period,” Stalin said, “it was true that this position dated only from 1870 but the population was Georgian and Armenian and had always been so.” Then British Foreign Minister asked him, to state what exactly he wanted in the Straits and added, “There had originally been talk of a Soviet base there.” Stalin replied that this claim was still valid.¹⁸⁴ It meant that he was disregarding the British proposal of control of the security of the Straits by the Great Powers, put on the table by Churchill at the Potsdam Conference five months earlier in July.¹⁸⁵

After the Moscow Conference Soviet pressure on Turkey continued. While the claims were being voiced by radio and newspaper publications the Soviets submitted another note to Turkey “on the common defense of the Straits by two states, Turkey and the USSR” on 7 August 1946. In the Turkish reply, Ankara stated its former position and another exchange of notes took place with another Soviet note on 24 September 1946. Afterwards, the United States and Britain submitted notes to the USSR in October 1946 and the continuous exchanging of notes between Ankara and Moscow ended after these notes by London and Washington to Moscow.¹⁸⁶

The USSR stated in two notes to Ankara in 1945 its demands vis-à-vis the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Turkey: one was a verbal note voiced Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, while the other was submitted in written form on 7 Aug 1946. Because the document includes the expression, “Turkey and the Soviet Union (...) shall organize joint means of defense of the Straits”¹⁸⁷, it may regarded one of the official written Soviet documents submitted to Turkey about this country's demands.

Correspondingly, there is the Soviet note below:

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.690-691

¹⁸⁵ For Moscow Conference and Soviet demands from Turkey, see also, William Taubman. *Stalin's American Policy, From Entente to Detente to Cold War*. New York and London: W.W. Norton&Company, 1982, pp.125-126.

¹⁸⁶ A. Suat Bilge. “Kıbrıs Uyuşmazlığı ve Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (Cyprus Conflict and Turkish-Soviet Relations)” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 338-427. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, pp.390-391

¹⁸⁷ “The Soviet Charge in Washington (Orehov) to the Acting Secretary of State, Washington, August 7, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, p.829

“For its own part, the Soviet Government proposes to establish for the Straits a new regime, proceeding from the following principles:

“(…) Turkey and the Soviet Union, as the powers most interested and capable of guaranteeing freedom to commercial navigation and security in the Straits, shall organize joint means of defense of the Straits for the prevention of the utilization of the Straits by other countries for aims hostile to the Black Sea Powers.”¹⁸⁸

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter argues that the Soviet Union, which had initially put its demands vis-à-vis Turkey before Germany, started to bargain with its new Western alliance countries after it was attacked by Nazi Germany. The USSR, which emerged as the superior force and the winner of the war especially after the Battle for Stalingrad, had also a large say in developments in the world and possibly because of this its allies the United States and the United Kingdom did not raise any opposition to the Soviet plans. British Prime Minister Churchill told Stalin during the 1943 Tehran Conference that Russian territorial claims and the right of the access to blue water ports should be satisfactory. However, the British position at the 1945 Moscow Conference had changed. Ernest Bevin said, “My government cannot be indifferent to the Russian threat to Turkey.” On the other hand, President Truman was impartial at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 4

THE SOVIET DEMANDS FROM TURKEY AND THE ARMENIAN REPATRIATION

4.1. Introduction

While the British position on the Soviet demands was to oppose them, the US policy was the same as at the Potsdam and Moscow conferences in 1945. However, US policy also shifted, especially in the first months of 1946. The next chapter (Chapter Five) examines this transformation in US policy. In addition, this chapter continues to analyze the Soviet demands. Firstly, the chapter summarizes the various arguments regarding the causes of the Soviet demands from Turkey, then it examines another dimension of the question: The Soviet Union not only put the demands on the negotiation table, but also began to carry out preparations to ensure the fulfillment of these claims. The mean of execution is a policy called the Armenian Repatriation.

4.2. The Soviet Demands from Turkey

There are various approaches concerning the causes of the Soviet demands from Turkey, which began to emerge on the international scene during the early period of World War II and which also occupied an important place in international relations during the last period of that war and later, during the start of the Cold War. According to a member of the Russian Military Sciences Academy, professor Lev A. Bezimensky, Stalin followed a deliberate policy that aimed to reach an agreement with Hitler. According to Lev A. Bezimensky, while Stalin managed this on 1939, he thought that the negotiations in 1940-1941 would produce the same result. He thought that they would again manage to come to a compromise with Hitler. Lev A. Bezimensky argues that the “traditional and apologetic” comment about Hitler-Stalin pact, i.e. “Stalin wins the time by signing a pact with Hitler. He was already

expecting a German attack on the USSR” is not correct.¹⁸⁹ In his article written during the 51th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany he states that documents on the archive show that while Stalin tried to reach a second agreement with Hitler in 1940-1941 in order to divide the world into new areas of influence, the Soviet leader thought this policy was “appropriate and useful”. Referring to Stalin's remarks to Georgy Dmitrov of 25 November 1940: “We'll drive out the Turks to Asia”,¹⁹⁰ he argues that this remark by Stalin shows that he had long-term policies to share the world with Hitler and shows that he was not following a short-term, stalling policy to win time against Hitler. According to Lev A. Bezimensky, Stalin also insisted on continuing the negotiations held in Berlin 1940 and accordingly he invited German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop to Moscow.¹⁹¹ As mentioned before, during his conversation with Hitler, Vyacheslav Molotov presented the invitation to Hitler.

According to Russian sources, Stalin and his aides also repeated such expressions about Turkey in subsequent years. A senior diplomat of the Soviet Foreign Ministry says to the Yugoslav Ambassador in Moscow, “Turkey should be driven out of Balkan peninsula.”¹⁹² In an article in a book published by the Russian Sciences

¹⁸⁹ Lev A. Bezimensky. “Kak Stalin Hatil Padelit Mir c Gitlerom (How Stalin Wanted to Share the World with Hitler).” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 8, 1996. And for a detailed study of Lev A. Bezimensky about Hitler-Stalin Alliance see also, Lev A. Bezimensky. *Hitler i Stalin pered Shvatkoi*. Veche: 2000

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Lev A. Bezimensky, “Kak Stalin Hatil Padelit Mir c Gitlerom (How Stalin Wanted to Share the World with Hitler).” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 8, 1996: “Stalin's words on 25 November 1940 during an interview between Dimitrov and Stalin. According to Dimitrov, Stalin said, “We'll drive out the Turks to Asia. What is Turkey? There are 2 million Georgians, 1.5 million Armenians, 1 Million Kurds and others. The Turks number only 6-7 million.” These words of Stalin are referred to in Dimitrov's memoirs. However, it would be wrong to conclude from these remarks that Stalin's only aim was to sweep the Turkish population totally from Anatolia. It could be a politically motivated speech. In official documents there are no indications showing the aim of an Anatolia not populated by Turks. However, there are signs that his aim was limited to establishing a Soviet (or Bulgarian) sphere of interest in the area of the Straits and the annexation of northeastern Turkey.

¹⁹¹ Lev A. Bezimensky. “Kak Stalin Hatil Padelit Mir c Gitlerom (How Stalin Wanted to Share the World with Hitler).” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 8, 1996.

¹⁹² L. Y. Gibianskii. (1999) “Problema Makedoni i Vapros o Federatsii na Balkanah v Otnasheniiah Mejdu Masvkoi i Kommunistami Yugoslavi i Bolgarii v 1941-1945 gg” in Grishina R.P (ed.). *Makedoni Problemi Istorii i Kulturi, Institut Slavyanovedeniya*. Moskva: Rassiskaya Akademiya Nauk. In this article, document referred to Stalin's word: Sofia Central Archive: ЦДА-ЦПА. Ф. 147. Оп.2. А.е. 1025. Л. 1. Document referred for interview between Soviet official and Yugoslavian Ambassador: Belgrad, Josip Broz Tito Archive: AJBT-KMJ, I-3-D/602,1. 3-4.

Academy, L. Y. Gibianskii refers to Stalin's words during another meeting with Dmitrov on 28 January 1945. Gibianskii writes, "According to Kolarov's records, Stalin declared at the meeting that the idea of the inclusion of Turkey into a kind of Balkan federation was absurd. (...) If Turkey (...) tries to intervene by force, then it must be repelled by force." And Soviet leader continued, "Turkey has no place in the Balkans." According to Gibianskii, this was the "idea of removing Turkey from the Balkan Peninsula" and repeated a little later, in early August 1945, by the leaders of Soviet diplomacy to the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow. L. Y. Gibianskii comments that this policy was "a plan for Turkish territories in Thrace to be annexed to Bulgaria" and for Soviet access to Bulgaria and the Straits.¹⁹³

Henry Kissinger also reveals an opinion on this matter saying that Stalin's policies were more expansionist and long-term than defensive. In his book, "Diplomacy," he writes that Stalin's aim, starting in the pre-war years, was to establish a "Soviet sphere of interest". He recalls that when the first stage of sharing Europe was completed by the summer of 1940, "Stalin had regained all the territory Russia had lost at the end of the First World War."¹⁹⁴ The writer recalls that when replying to Hitler, Stalin stated in his conditions for joining the Tripartite Pact that certain territories, (including the Bosphorus and south of Batumi-Eastern Turkey), should be recognized as his country's sphere of interest and adds that Stalin proceeded to establish that sphere of influence in following decade.

"Stalin's reply (on 25 November 1940) to Hitler therefore primarily served to signal what he considered to be the Soviet sphere of interest, and as a warning that he would resist its implement, at least diplomatically. Over the course of the next decade, employing the tactics of the tsars, Stalin proceeded to establish that sphere by agreement whenever possible, by force when necessary. He pursued his objectives outlined in the 25 November memorandum, first in concert with Hitler, next on the side of democracies."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ L. Y. Gibianskii. "Problema Makedoni i Vapros o Federatsii na Balkanah v Otnasheniah Mejdu Masvkoi i Kommunistami Yugoslavi i Bolgarii v 1941-1945 gg". *Makedoni Problemi Istorii i Kulturi, Institut Slavyanovedeniya*. Edited by Grishina R.P., Moscow: Rassiskaya Akademiya Nauk, 1999.

¹⁹⁴ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.355

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.363

According to Henry Kissinger, while his aim was to establish that sphere, on the other hand, he was also aware of preparations for a German attack on his country and by the fall of 1940, “Stalin attempted to gain time in the hope that Hitler might overreach somewhere along the way.”¹⁹⁶ While Henry Kissinger and Lev A. Bezimensky sharing the idea that Stalin's plan aimed to share the world with Hitler and this policy had expansionist motives not defensive ones, Henry Kissinger also supports the idea that at the same time Stalin was trying to gain time because sooner or later German aggression against the USSR would begin. But Lev A. Bezimensky writes that right up until the last minute Stalin never lost his hope of concluding an agreement with Hitler and that while he was conducting this policy he was not trying to gain time but was sincerely trying to reach a second territorial sharing agreement with Germany, which is why he invited Ribbentrop to Moscow.

Nevertheless, there are other arguments stating that a country could try to execute the same policy, seen by Henry Kissinger and Lev A. Bezimensky as “expansionist,” for “defensive reasons.” Baskin Oran argues that the Soviets put the claims on the table as a policy for safeguard themselves. He writes that the comments are “incorrect” and argues, “Russia puts pressure on Bosphorus in order to expand into the Mediterranean Sea.” Baskin Oran writes in his study:

“This comment, which has astonishingly taken up residence in studies in both Turkey and in the West, is incorrect. Namely, Russia was interested in the West for a suitable commercial port, in the East for territory and mines; and in its south for its security. The south of Russia has been always this country's soft underbelly. While it was in conflict with the great powers back then, Russia was always afraid of an aggression through the Bosphorus by France and Britain with the consent of the Ottomans. Thus, during the Crimean War he came face to face with that fear (...). At every opportunity, Russia tried to ensure “de jure” and “de facto” status of the Straits to ensure proximity to the non-Black Sea super powers. The reason for its interest in the Straits along with history is that.”¹⁹⁷

Baskin Oran writes that in the pre-war years, when the threat of war was near, from the re-establishment of Turkish sovereignty over the Straits in 1936 to 1939, Turkish-Soviet relations were good.¹⁹⁸ However, he argues “By 1939, when war

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.356

¹⁹⁷ Baskin Oran. “Türkiye'nin 'Kuzeydeki Büyük Komşu' Sorunu Nedir? Türk Sovyet İlişkileri 1939-1970 (What is Turkey's 'Big Neighbor in the North' Problem? Turkish-Soviet Relations 1939-1970).” *SBF Dergisi* XXVI, No.2 (1970): 41-93, p.46

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.47

preparations had started everywhere, conditions essentially changed. Thereafter, every state began to take measures for the oncoming war. (...) Two countries, forced by developments, had been dragged into foreign policies that were not in parallel with one another.”¹⁹⁹

Erel Tellal indicates, “The main problem for Soviet Union at the end of the war was to ensure its security in the Bosphorus” and argues that the USSR voiced territorial claims on eastern Turkey as a bargaining chip. The writer argues, “The territorial claims were kept alive in public by the USSR in order to pressure Turkey on the Straits.” But he adds, “The territorial claims were a big tactical mistake” and they effectively forced Turkey into siding with the United States.²⁰⁰

In addition, Baskın Oran comments on the reason behind the Soviets' territorial demands, in addition to a base in the Bosphorus, as “not a strategic frontier change attempt”. Baskın Oran writes that this request could hardly be regarded as a Soviet desire for a strategic border change. (...) Any change would bring nothing to the Soviets. The most logical reason for posing this request by the Soviets seems to be to obtain leverage in getting its request fulfilled: the Straits will not be used against the Soviet Union.²⁰¹

However, these approaches argue that the Soviet Union's territorial demands were aimed at “obtaining leverage on the Straits,” but this does not explain why the Soviet Union demanded recognition of the area south of Batumi (including eastern Turkey) through the Persian Gulf as a “Soviet sphere of influence” during negotiations with Nazis five years previously. It appears that these demands were long-term in nature rather than a short-term solution. Initially the Soviet Union put them forward in the first months of the war, during Foreign Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu's visit to Moscow in 1939, and later when the Soviet Union and Germany were negotiating in 1940 to

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.48

²⁰⁰ Erel Tellal. “SSCB'yle İlişkiler, 1945-1960 (Relations with the USSR 1945-1960), In *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar Cilt I* (From Liberation War to Today, Cases, Documents, Comments Vol. I), 499-521. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p.502

²⁰¹ Baskın Oran. “Türkiye'nin 'Kuzeydeki Büyük Komşu' Sorunu Nedir? Türk Sovyet İlişkileri 1939-1970 (What is Turkey's 'Big Neighbor in the North' Problem? Turkish-Soviet Relations 1939-1970).” *SBF Dergisi* XXVI, No.2 (1970): 41-93, pp.56-57

determine new spheres of influence. This is why the claims reemerged at the end of the war. When the Soviet claims were put on the table at the end of the war, steps were already under way in the form of legal preparations and plans for population movements to ensure the fulfillment of these claims. These preparations can also be regarded as an indicator that the Soviet claims against Turkey were not simply part of a diplomatic maneuver by the Soviets at the negotiation table, but also that this country had certain plans in its internal institutions in order to get these demands carried out. As a conclusion, if the Soviet policies against Turkey must be defined as “defensive,” they would have to be defined as “defensive expansionism.”

4.3. The Soviet Policy on Armenian Repatriation

One of the Soviet claims, which this country placed on the agenda during international talks, was that of territorial demands from Turkey's eastern regions. This country's mass media was publishing opinions by way of supporting these demands. In parallel, some steps were already under way in the form of legal preparations and plans for population movements to ensure the fulfillment of these claims. One of those preparations, which can now be clearly exposed and documented, is a practice known as “Armenian repatriation.” According to this plan, the USSR encouraged Armenians all over the world to immigrate to the Soviet Union in order to resettle them to the Turkey's eastern region after the annexation.

It is possible that there were other preparations underway to ensure the fulfillment of these claims by military force, but all of them can only be argued hypothetically. For example, Kamuran Gürün touches on some military preparations. He writes,

“During the autumn of 1946, Russia intensified her military pressure over Turkey and according to estimates deployed 190,000 troops to the Caucasus while the Turkish General Staff mobilized the reserves and deployed forces to counter any possible aggression.”²⁰²

²⁰² Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.306

Armenian academician Karen Khachatrian writes, “Interestingly, on 6 April 1945, the State Committee for the Defense of the USSR (Ministry of Defense) decided to improve the roads in the Trans-Caucasus, which had far-reaching goals.”²⁰³

Meanwhile, the US Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, George Kennan, informed Washington on 8 October 1945 that the Embassy had received more reports from “Soviet and other contacts” to the effect that the Russian people were being told by internal party agitators that the USSR may go to war with Turkey. The US mission warns that both the British and French Embassies had received similar information and says such widely disparate sources cannot be dismissed as idle gossip.²⁰⁴

The US Ambassador in Rome, Kirkin, on his message dated 29 June 1945 to the Under Secretary of State informs that General Oxley - the head of the British delegation, who had returned from Bulgaria recently - said he had the impression that Russian forces were building up to the North of Greece and along the border with Turkey.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, it should be remembered that while the Soviet Union voiced its demands about Turkey in negotiations with Nazi Germany during the meeting between Vyacheslav Molotov and German Ambassador in Moscow in November 1940, this country declared that if Turkey resisted it would apply military measures against Turkey, as remarked before. The offer made by the Soviet Union to Germany, Italy and Japan also shows that this country was ready and willing to apply military force against Turkey if necessary.

Besides the possible military preparations in 1945 and 1946, the attempt to settle Armenians from all over the world to into eastern Turkish is clearer. Although it is a little known subject now, there are enough foreign documents about it. A retired

²⁰³ Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115, p.108

²⁰⁴ “Telegram by the Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, October 8, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1252

²⁰⁵ Quoted from *FRUS diplomatic papers* in A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.276

ambassador, who also gives lectures at universities, Kamuran Gürün also touches on the matter in his study, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953* (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953), by making references to Feridun Cemal Erkin's study dated 1968, "Les Relations Turco-Sovietiques." Kamuran Gürün writes that propaganda on Soviet radio and newspapers about territorial claims on Turkey were followed by an announcement by the Soviet Embassy in Turkey stating that any Armenian who wanted to immigrate to Soviet Armenia should apply to the Soviet Consulate General in Istanbul.²⁰⁶ This last step was not only in Turkey. It was an attempt to invite all Diaspora Armenians to immigrate to Russia. The same announcement was published in a few countries. According to Kamuran Gürün, "It seemed that the aim was to increase Soviet Armenia's population and try to justify territorial claims on Turkey."²⁰⁷ Official documents and some academic studies also support this comment.

Adviser to former Armenian President Levon Ter Petrosian and former chief of the Turkish Desk at the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Murad Bojolyan, a scholar in Turkish-Armenian history, says,

"The aim to encourage Armenians from many countries to immigrate to the USSR in order to create grounds for rectification of the frontier by demanding back the population's former territories in Turkey." He adds, "In that way, the Soviet Union planned to make pressure on newly established United Nations by using the increased population along the border with Turkey."²⁰⁸

He also says this plan was abandoned after the Turkey-West rapprochement and he adds, "This plan of Stalin is well known by present scholars in Armenia but is not frequently talked about."

Some diplomatic documents and academic studies found in the Armenian archives also support these arguments. According to a diplomatic note submitted by the USSR Embassy in Washington to State Department on 21 April 1947 there were requests to "render assistance to those Armenians who desire to return to their motherland." As a

²⁰⁶ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953* (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, pp.301-.302

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.302

²⁰⁸ My face to face interview with Murad Bojolyan in Yerevan in 1998.

footnote, it is noted that these Armenians would be accepted as Soviet Citizens. It says, “On 19 October the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree according to which foreign Armenians returning home in the manner prescribed by the government would be recognized as citizens of the USSR from the moment they arrive in the USSR.”²⁰⁹

The text of the degree is below:

“Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the Order of Acquisition of The USSR Citizenship by Persons of Armenian Origin, Returning From Abroad to Their Homeland Soviet Armenia (October 19, 1946): To establish that a person of Armenian origin, who comes from abroad to their homeland in Armenia, in the manner prescribed by the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of 21 November 1945. On measures for the return of Armenians from abroad in Armenia, recognizes as citizens of the USSR from the moment of their arrival in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. (Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 1946, N39).”²¹⁰

This degree regulates the legal status of immigrants at the end of 1946 but the immigration plan was implemented a year earlier in accordance with a ruling by the Soviet Government in November 1945.

In this context, some British documents also indicate Armenian immigration to the USSR. A telegram on 28 October 1946 from the British Embassy to the Foreign Office states that “...about 1,000 Armenians are known to have left Romania for Soviet Armenia, and their departure was organised by the Soviet Government...”²¹¹ According to a telegram by the Moscow Embassy on 4 September 1946, 1,030 Armenians from Beirut, 2,600 from Greece and thousands from Iran arrived in the Soviet Union.²¹²

²⁰⁹ “The Embassy of the Soviet Union to the Department of State, Washington, April 21, 1947.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1947. Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union* Volume IV. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947, p.724

²¹⁰ “<http://www.scipio.fatal.ru/act.pl?print=arm.html>.” (accessed October 9, 2009)

²¹¹ “Letter 459/2/46 by Office of the British Political Representative, Bucharest, 29th October, 1946 to Northern Department, Foreign Office.” In *FO 286/1184, “Repatriation of Armenians in Greece”*.

²¹² “Message 199/31/46 by British Embassy, Moscow, 4th September, 1946 to Northern Department, Foreign Office. In *FO 286/1184, “Repatriation of Armenians in Greece”*.”

Karen Khachatrian, an Armenian historian who also occupied as the Director of the Armenian National Archive²¹³ writes in his study²¹⁴ that “the issue of the 'Repatriation of Armenians' was raised by the Diaspora in late 1944 and finally, The Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (cabinet chaired by Stalin) decided on 21 November 1945 on the return of foreign Armenians to the Soviet Armenian Republic.”²¹⁵

In those days the immigration also started. The US Ambassador in Turkey, Edwin C. Wilson informed the US State Department on 19 December 1945 that more than 200 Armenians had applied to the Soviet Consulate General in Istanbul and that the Consulate was recruiting them to Soviet Armenia. The US Ambassador comments about the development of a special plan resembles the comments made by historian Murad Bojolyan in 1998, which remarked above. Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson writes, “The Soviet plan presumably is to bring large numbers to the Armenian SSR who would then find insufficient living space and reinforce demands for the annexation of Turkey's eastern provinces.”²¹⁶

The Ambassador adds that the US State Department “should instruct the US missions in countries having large number Armenians such as France, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, etc., to follow this situation.” After this warning by Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson, the State Department sends a circular telegram dated 21 December 1945 to the US diplomatic missions in Ankara, Moscow, London, Paris, Beirut (for Damascus also), Cairo and Baghdad. The message signed by Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson reads “The Soviet Consulates in Turkey, Iran and probably elsewhere are registering persons of Armenian origin who wish to go to Soviet Armenia, which according to reports is unable to support a greatly increased

²¹³ Karen Khachatrian, Institute of General History of Armenia

²¹⁴ Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.111

²¹⁶ “Telegram by the US Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, December 19, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1284

population.” Under Secretary Dean Acheson writes what he sees as the reason for this encouragement: “The artificial population problem thus created may reinforce demands for Turkey's eastern provinces.”²¹⁷

An interesting comment concerning Armenian repatriation comes from the British Embassy in Ankara. An Embassy report refers to the anti-Soviet Armenian Party Dashnak's principal leader in Iraq, Leon Pasha Shagoyan,

“...who seemed very well informed about the departure of Armenians from Syria for Soviet Armenia. He said, 'They are not going to Armenia but they are going to Russia and it will doubtless use them against Turkey.' He said he had good reason to believe that Russia would attack Turkey when the preparations had advanced further and that Russia would put the Armenians in the front line of the battle. (...) Therefore, Leon Pasha decided not to encourage any of his followers to return to Soviet Armenia...”²¹⁸

The article by Karen Khachatrian published in Georgia in 2003 is important for learning the details of the matter because he was also Director of the Armenian National Archive. He also is a member of the “Cold War in the Caucasus” study as part of the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) program. Also in the CWIHP bulletins,²¹⁹ there are some details about his studies on Armenian Repatriation. According to an article by Karen Khachatrian, under the terms of the 16 March 1921 Moscow Treaty between Soviet Russia and Turkey, Kars and Ardahan “had been illegally transferred to Turkey” and Armenians had the right to return to these territories.²²⁰

“The preparations for the return to Soviet Armenia had been started only a month after the first Soviet note to Turkey on 19 March 1945. As Soviet Government had demanded on 19 March 1945 to reject the 17 December

²¹⁷ “The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic Representatives in Europe and the Near East, Washington, December 21, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1285

²¹⁸ “Telegram (120/1/484) by British Embassy, Angora, 6th August 1948 “Iraq Political, Dashnak Opinions.” In *FO 195/259, “Armenian Emigration”*.

²¹⁹ Svetlana Savranskaya and Vladislav.Zubok. “Cold War in the Caucasus: Notes and Documents from a Conference.” In *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin* (Woodrow Wilson Center), Issue 14/15, (Winter 2003-Spring 2004): 399-409

²²⁰ Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115, p.107

1925 Turkish Friendship and Neutrality Treaty, as not conforming to the new international environment,(...) the Armenian National Committee in New York sent a telegram to Marshal Stalin on 7 April 1945. In this message the Committee informed the Soviet Leader that they hoped he would contribute to the just demands of the Armenian people,²²¹

in other words, to take back the Kars and Ardahan regions. The Armenian national organizations in the United States appealed to the (San Fransisco) Conference for “a fair decision on the Armenian issue that would allow the Diaspora Armenians finally to return to their lost homes.”²²² Moreover, Armenian communities around the world applied to the leadership of Soviet Armenia; to the heads of the victorious powers at the Berlin and Potsdam conferences in August 1945; to the session of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in London in September 1945; to the Moscow Meeting of Ministers Foreign Affairs of the three powers in December 1945 and to the First Session of the UN General Assembly in London in January 1946 etc.²²³

According to Karen Khachatrian, These and numerous other documents classified as 'secret' guided the Soviet leadership to the issue of the return of Armenian territory, which was closely linked to the repatriation of Armenians. The Diaspora raised this issue in late 1944. It was supported by Soviet Armenia and discussed by the Government of the USSR. According to the author, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia Grigor Harutyunyan also appealed to Moscow many times on different dates. On 15 May 1945 he appealed to Stalin with a request to allow the return of foreign Armenians to Soviet Armenia. On 6 July 1945, Haroutyunyan once again sent messages to Stalin and Vyacheslav Molotov about the “issue of the return of Armenian territory.” He informed them about his expectation that during the furthcoming Postdam Summit the three great powers would raise the question of the Soviet Armenia's reunification with territory, that had been ceded to Turkey.²²⁴

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp.107-108

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.108

As noted before, on 6 April 1945 the State Committee for the Defense of the USSR decided to improve the roads in the Transcaucas, which had far-reaching goals.²²⁵ Furthermore, as remarked before, the issue of the return of Kars and Ardahan was raised by the Soviet delegation at the Postdam and Moscow Conferences in October 1945 and December 1945.

The Soviet Armenian leadership again raised the the issue of the repatriation of Armenians in the autumn of 1945. In a letter to Stalin dated 27 October 1945 and in a letter to Stalin and Malenkov dated November 1945, Haroutyunyan appealed “on the need for final decision on the issue of repatriation.” Finally, The Council of People's Commissars of the USSR decided on 21 November 1945 on the return of foreign Armenians to Soviet Armenian Republic. And on 22 February 1946 the Soviet government took a decision on the practical arrangements for the resettlement of Armenians from abroad.²²⁶ Stalin, in connection with his plans for Turkey, authorized a global campaign for the repatriation of Armenians emigres to Soviet Armenia.²²⁷

According to the Soviet missions abroad and the Armenian committees on resettlement, about 360,000 Armenians in more than 10 countries asked to return. The first party of immigrants arrived in Armenia in the second half of 1946.²²⁸ The US Ambassador to the Soviet Union Harriman also writes to Washington on 7 July 1945 that the Soviet press carried a one-third column message from the President of Armenian Church Assembly Catholicos Geork Cheorkkchyan that stated “We sincerely hope that the political wisdom of the Soviet Union will find the means and

²²⁵ *Ibid.* p.108

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.111

²²⁷ Svetlana Savranskaya and Vladislav Zubok. “Cold War in the Caucasus: Notes and Documents from a Conference.” In *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin* (Woodrow Wilson Center), Issue 14/15, (Winter 2003-Spring 2004): 399-409, p.400

²²⁸ Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115, p.111

solutions for removing the injustices that the Armenian people have been a victim of since the First World War.”²²⁹

As analyzed in the next chapter, the Soviet demands faced very strong US opposition and the repatriation plan could not be completed. Karen Khachatrian comments, “Thus, (...) the destiny of the Armenian question at this historic period, in the scope of the confrontation between East and West, fell victim to (...) the strategic, political, ideological differences of the Cold War”²³⁰ Research Fellow and Summer Projects Organizer for George Washington University National Security Archive Vladislav Zubok emphasizes that Armenian academicians among the participants in the “Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Cold War” seminar, including Karen Khachatrian, who had brought hundreds of photocopies of archival documents for the Cold War International History Project to a meeting in 2002 as part of the exchange of research results and archival information, “strongly objected to the use of the term 'expansionist plans' in this case (Armenian repatriation); they argued that Stalin simply planned to return to Armenians the lands that had belonged to them.”²³¹

The repatriation policy remained unfinished. The immediately apparent organizational shortcomings, the many social and domestic problems, the lack of housing, food, etc., were problems that had not been able to be solved by the specific regulations of the USSR Council of Ministers, signed by Stalin on 29 January, 24 March and 10 December 1947. From the beginning of 1947, a desire to reemigrate emerged among the returnees, as more than 200 people tried to pass illegally across the border with Turkey and Iran.²³²

²²⁹ “Telegram by the US Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, July 7, 1945.” In United States Department of State (1945) *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. Europe* Volume V, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, pp.1129-1130

²³⁰ Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115, p.114

²³¹ Zubok, Vladislav. “A Summer in Russia and the Caucasus: Scholarly and Strategic Notes.” In *Newsletter for the Study of Force and Diplomacy at Temple University* XIII, no. 2 (September 2002).

²³² Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University,

The repatriation plans for 1947 were not implemented. Only 35,401 people transferred to the USSR that year, out of a planned 63,000. Plans for 1948 could not be actualized either. Given the numerous difficulties, the Central Committee of Communist Party of Armenia took a decision on 24 August 1947, to reduce the number of returnees for 1948 and to stop the repatriation by 1949.²³³ During the 1946-1949 period, about 90,000 Armenians from 12 countries had been “returned” to Armenia, despite plans for around 360,000.²³⁴

As Karen Khachatrian's research shows, by 1948 the problem of Armenian repatriates caught Stalin's attention. Soviet pressure on Turkey had failed to produce any territorial concessions and led Ankara to seek US protection. Many repatriates languished in Soviet Armenia in less-than-comfortable conditions and began to think of returning home.²³⁵ A British document, a telegram from the British Embassy in Tehran dated 24 September 1947 indicates that there were some 500 Armenians about to emigrate to Soviet Union and these persons were deliberately encouraged by the Soviet Embassy to sell up their homes and to come to Tehran.²³⁶ However, another document informs about them being sent them back by Soviet officials. The document refers to allegations that “Armenians are arrested and removed every day to Southern Persia”²³⁷

According to Karen Khachatrian, on 14 September 1948 Stalin, then at his dacha in the Black Sea, sent a cable to Georgy Malenkov, instructing him to look into the case of a fire on board a Soviet ship bringing a group of Armenian repatriates to the Georgian port of Batumi. Stalin's suspicions that British-American agents were

Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115, p.111

²³³ *Ibid.*, p.112

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.112-113

²³⁵ Svetlana Savranskaya and Vladislav Zubok. “Cold War in the Caucasus: Notes and Documents from a Conference.” In *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin* (Woodrow Wilson Center), Issue 14/15, (Winter 2003-Spring 2004): 399-409, p.400

²³⁶ “From Tehran to Foreign Office” No.995, 24th September, 1947.” In *PRO FO 371/62063*, “*Repatriation of Armenians from Persia.*”

²³⁷ “From Moscow to Foreign Office” No.2.198, 5th October, 1947.” In *PRO FO 371/62063*, “*Repatriation of Armenians from Persia.*”

among the repatriates triggered snowballing investigations and repressions that resulted in the halt of Armenian repatriation and the exiling of thousands of repatriates into settlements and camps in Kazakhstan.²³⁸ On the same day, on 14 September, 1948, the USSR Council of Ministers decided on the immediate termination of the repatriation. The last group arrived in the USSR in February 1949 and “the big repatriation” between 1946-1949 was completed.²³⁹ In just one day, on 14 June 1949, according to pre-compiled lists, approximately 12,000 Armenians were deported to remote Altai region.²⁴⁰

The US documents also shows the termination of the repatriation. According to a telegram to Washington on 2 March 1949 by the US Charge d’Affaires in the Soviet Union, it was informed about the arrival of 162 Armenians into the USSR and noted that it had come as a complete surprise to the Embassy, which had had no knowledge of continuing Soviet efforts in the United States in this direction. He added, “The Embassy feels that the government should not allow American-Armenians to leave for Soviet Armenia...”²⁴¹

Karen Khachatrian criticizes the Soviet leadership and comments that the Armenian question had become a victim of the Cold War. However, it could be argued that Stalin's and the Soviet Government's decision on 14 September 1945 to terminate the repatriation was not only connected with the living conditions for the Armenian populations in Soviet Armenia, but also connected with the West's tough stance against the Soviet Union's plans on Turkish territories. Details of these differences between the East and the West are analyzed in the next chapter.

²³⁸ Svetlana Savranskaya and Vladislav Zubok. “Cold War in the Caucasus: Notes and Documents from a Conference.” In *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin* (Woodrow Wilson Center), Issue 14/15, (Winter 2003-Spring 2004): 399-409, p.400.

²³⁹ Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115, p.112

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.113

²⁴¹ “Telegram by the US Charge in the Soviet Union (Kohler) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, March 2, 1949.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1949. Eastern Europe; the Soviet Union* Volume V Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949, pp.580-581

4.4. US Policy towards Turkey

Although the Soviet Union's demands were officially withdrawn in a new note submitted to Turkey in 1953 after the closing of the Stalin era, it seems that the claims were abandoned many years before that. The date for the suspension of repatriation, as remarked above, 14 September 1948, could also be regarded as marking the time when the claims against Turkey were abandoned. It can be claimed that up until that year, even a year earlier in 1947, when the repatriation plans were not implemented, the Soviet Union had already dropped its territorial claims on Turkey.

While Karen Khachatrian comments on the Soviets' 1953 note as “ignoring the aspirations of the Armenian people,”²⁴² some official decisions by Moscow concerning the Armenian show that de facto withdrawal of demands occurred years before, in 1946 or at the latest 1947. Of course, this was not only a unilateral decision taken by the Soviet Union's leadership. It was a result of the reactions of other countries, including Turkey, but it seems particularly of the United States. As mentioned before, on the US side, even at the end of 1945, there was criticism of Armenian repatriation voiced by US diplomats and high level officials within the US State Department. These criticisms were followed by others which criticized the Soviet Union's policy on Turkey not only with respect to the issue of Armenian repatriation, but also in general.

When analyzing changes in the US attitude towards Soviet demands from Turkey, the first signs of a shift in policy are seen at the end of 1945 in the messages sent by US diplomats to their capital. As we recalled, in the middle of 1945, the United States considered the territorial demands as a Turkish-Soviet bilateral problem. Truman's attitude at the Postdam Conference was in that direction. This position also was kept up by the US diplomats for a while; they spoke as if there was no Soviet

²⁴² Karen Khachatrian. “Armianskii Vapros i Repatriatsia Armian v 1945-1949 gg., Pa Materialam Armianskikh Arkhivov (Armenian Question and Repatriation of Armenians between 1945-1949 with Documents of Armenian Archives).” *Vertikali Istorii* (Georgian Technical University, Academy of Political Sciences Publication) V (2003): 106-115, p.114

threat to Turkey. For example, the US Acting Secretary of State Grew says when briefing the British Embassy in Washington on 23 June 1945, “Molotov-Sarper interview was held in a friendly atmosphere and was a good exchange of views, and they thought it was early to deliver any protest to the Soviet Union.”²⁴³

The Turkish Ambassador in Washington H. R. Baydur's meeting with Under Secretary of State Grew on 7 July 1945 could also be seen in this context. While Baydur tried to get the US position vis-à-vis the Soviet demands, Grew says they gave special importance to all events that threatened world peace but that up until that time the Soviet Union had not been a threat to Turkey adding that it was not clear what Soviet Government meant by expressing changes in the border.²⁴⁴

In August 1945 in a conversation between Turkish and the US diplomats it is obvious that the Turkish side was dissatisfied with the US attitude. During the conversation between the Deputy Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs Allen and the Turkish Ambassador in Washington Hüseyin Ragip Baydur on 24 August 1945 the Turkish diplomat “referred to the sad experience that the Western powers had had in appeasing Hitler in his territorial demands prior to the (Second) World War, and expressed strongly the view that the great powers had an obligation to prevent any likelihood of aggression when it first arises.”²⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Turkish Ambassador hoped that the US would consider the Straits plus Kars and Ardahan as a part of the same problem. According to minutes of that conversation, Allen said, “I thought the two questions might be handled separately.”²⁴⁶

Although the US policy appears unchanged, during the last years of war its policy on the USSR policy was changing, especially since Soviet army's Stalingrad victory in

²⁴³ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.275

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.278

²⁴⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Allen), Washington, August 24, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States: diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1240

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.1241

November 1942, and this trend became obvious in 1945. The US side started to show signs of shifting its policies in the last months of 1945. For example, during first meeting of the foreign ministers, which took place in London in September and early October 1945, US Secretary of State James F. Byrnes told his predecessor Edward R. Stettinius, “... we were facing anew Russia totally different than the Russia we dealt with a year ago.”²⁴⁷

Nevertheless, the Soviet policy of President Truman's administration was not obvious in the middle of 1945, or even until 1946. According to Henry Kissinger, during those months President Truman “was still trying to steer a course between Roosevelt's view of how to maintain the peace, in which America had no partners (in Europe), and his growing resentment of Soviet conduct in Eastern Europe, for which he as yet had no policy.”²⁴⁸ According to Martin McCauley, Truman thought he would reach understanding with Stalin.²⁴⁹

4.5. Conclusion

There are various approaches regarding the causes of the Soviet demands from Turkey, which this country raised during the war. This chapter summarizes those views. Moreover, as an example of the seriousness of the Soviet Union to implement its plans for Turkey, the subject, known as the Armenian repatriation is analyzed in details with the help of various documents and academic studies. In this chapter, British and the US's positions on the Soviet demands also are discussed. British position had changed to oppose them in 1945. The next chapter examines the transformation in US policy by early 1946.

²⁴⁷ Quoted in Henry Kissinger, 1994: 437, Gaddis, John Lewis. *The United States, Great Britain and the Cold War, 1944-1947*. Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 1981, p.69

²⁴⁸ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.433

²⁴⁹ Martin McCauley. *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1949*, London: Longman Pub Group, 2003 p. 203

CHAPTER 5

THE WESTERN PRESSURE AND THE SOVIET UNION'S WITHDRAWAL OF ITS DEMANDS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the new US policies concerning the Soviet pressure on Turkey. The decisive opposition of the US to the Soviet Union's demands on Turkey was shaped initially by a warning given by US diplomats to Washington. As a result, a new policy, which President Truman also approved, was formulated. This new attitude of the United States helped Turkey overcome the Soviet pressure. This chapter also examines discussions in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, about how Turkey was "lost." New leader Nikita Khrushchev personally accused Stalin's policies on Turkey; he said they were why the Soviet Union lost a potential ally in Turkey.

5.2. Shift in US Policy on the Soviet Demands

The United States position on the Soviet claims regarding Turkey shifted in time from efforts to reach a solution through negotiation to an attitude of strongly opposing them. A. Suat Bilge comments on change of attitude as "American waking up" and says, "The atmosphere that was created by the Soviet demands woke up the United States."

According to Michael McGwire, US policy shifted in the spring of 1946 when it became aware of the Soviet military threat. According to him:

“...In 1945 the universal concern of the wartime allies was to prevent a resurgence of German and Japanese aggression, and this remained the focus of (their) Soviet policy. By the spring of 1946, however, the argument had prevailed in America (and to a lesser extent, in Britain) that the more urgent

threat lay in Soviet military domination in Europa.”²⁵⁰

Katherine Sibley also draws attention to change in the US policy. To quote Sibley:

“Yet by early 1946, with the Soviet hold on eastern Europe tightening and its push into the Middle East widening –as Britain’s position languished- a more distrustful attitude (against to the USSR) emerged in Washington.”²⁵¹

According to Jan Nijman, “Soviet refusal to give up control of Eastern Europe, and the American assertions in Western Europe and Greece and Turkey, played a key role in the rapid deterioration of US-Soviet relations.”²⁵²

While initially the US position regarding the Soviet demands was different, from early on, as early as last months of 1945, US diplomats began to warn their capital city. One of the early warnings in the US State Department inner circles was from the US Ambassador to Ankara Edwin C. Wilson's telegram dated 25 September 1945. While criticizing the Soviet Union's policy on Turkey, he also begins to indicate his opposition to his country's policy on the Soviet demands. In his message the Ambassador criticizes the his Ministry's policy concerning the Soviet demands. He comments on the State Department's 2 July 1945 statement that said, “The Straits are the crux of the Turkish question,” regarding Turkish-Soviet relations. He says, “I believe this statement (by the United States) is open to doubt.”²⁵³ Then he expresses his views about recent developments in Turkish-Soviet relations. At first, Ambassador Wilson refers to “freedom of passage of the Straits for Russia” and notes that this right of Moscow “cannot be effectively guaranteed by international agreement nor even by actual control of Straits because air power based for example on Crete could deny effective use of the Straits to Russia.” He continues with “real Russian objectives.” According to him, Moscow's real objective is to establish a “friendly regime” in Turkey. He writes:

²⁵⁰ Michael MccGwire. “National Security and Soviet Foreign Policy.” In *Origins of the Cold War, An International History*, edited by Leffler, Melvyn, P, and Painter, David, 53-76: London, New York: Routledge, 1994.

²⁵¹ Katherine A.S Sibley. *The Cold War*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998, p.7

²⁵² Jan Nijman. *The Geopolitics of Power & Conflict, Superpowers in the International System, 1945-1992*. New York, London: Belhaven Press, 1993, p.53

²⁵³ “Telegram by the Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, September 25, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States: diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1248

“Rather it seems to me to me question of Straits as raised by USSR instead of being crux of matter appears merely facade behind which lies real Soviet objective. This objective as regards Turkey is to bring about change in Turkey's internal regime. In chain of countries bordering USSR on west and south from Baltic to Black Sea, Turkey is sole country which is not governed by 'friendly' regime. A 'friendly' regime in Turkey under Soviet domination would mean actual control by USSR of Straits. But more important than this it would mean termination of Turko-British alliance and end of western liberal influence in Turkey and probably ultimately in Middle East. (...) Any agreement among great powers giving Russia privileged position at Straits at expense of Turkish security would so upset conditions in Turkey as conceivably to bring about downfall of present regime with resultant situation playing into Soviet hands.”²⁵⁴

A similar assessment could be read in a message by the US diplomatic mission in Moscow dated 27 September 1945. The US Charge d'Affaires in the USSR, George Kennan tells the Secretary of State that he was in agreement with Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson's assessments. He writes as follows:

“am heartily in agreement with views expressed in Ankara's 1252 (telegram), September 25, to Department (of State). I know of nothing in Soviet ideology or diplomatic practice which would justify us in hoping that Soviet aspirations with respect to Turkey would be satisfied by concessions regarding the Straits. We must expect that any concessions of this nature will be exploited to utmost in Moscow with view to elimination of Western influence in Turkey and establishment of regime "friendly" to Soviet Union.”²⁵⁵

After the Potsdam Conference, Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson expressed his views also to the Soviet Ambassador in Ankara Sergei A. Vinogradov, but it seems in a limited scope. During these conversations the Soviet claims on Turkey's territorial integrity are very clear. In a diplomatic correspondence to Washington on 3 November 1945 about the issue of reviewing the Montreux Convention, Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson details his conversation with the Soviet Ambassador. According to the message, Ambassador Sergei A. Vinogradov repeated the Soviet demand for a Soviet base in Turkey and added, “No other way can Russian security in time of war be safeguarded.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.1248

²⁵⁵ “Telegram by the US Charge in the Soviet Union (George Kennan) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, September 27, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States: diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1251

²⁵⁶ “Telegram by the US Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, November 3, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States: diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1272

While Sergei A. Vinogradov cites Turkey's failure to enter the war following the Cairo Conference (1943) as justification for the Soviet Union's demands, the US Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson seems to defend the Turkish side. He writes about his conversation with the Soviet Ambassador: "Neither his country nor mine entered war until attacked. Looking at record objectively it seems to me that a good case can be made that Turkey's resistance to German demands during a critical period of the war was helpful to the Allies."²⁵⁷ During the conversation with Ambassador Sergei A. Vinogradov, Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson writes that the Soviet diplomat reiterated his country's claims against Turkey. He writes, "In a two-hour conversation with the Soviet Ambassador following points seem of interest:

1. He said he (...) knew that Georgian people felt very strongly on question of recovering territory from Turkey which they regarded as Georgian.

2. (...) He replied that Soviet security required bases; and that Armenian Republic insists upon reincorporation eastern *vilayets* and USSR must advance interests of Armenian Republic. (...) I remarked that frontiers were settled by treaties of Moscow and Kars of 1921. He replied that those treaties were negotiated 'when USSR was weak' and that situation now requires reconsideration in view changed conditions."²⁵⁸

During another conversation with Ambassador Sergei A. Vinogradov on 2 February 1946 Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson recalled a communication made by the USSR and the UK to the Turkish Government on 10 August 1941 "to effect that the Soviet Government was prepared scrupulously to observe the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic." The Soviet Ambassador replied that this declaration had been intended only as assurance that the specific operation in Iran did not endanger Turkish territorial integrity. He insisted that the declaration should be read in the context of events at that time. During this conversation the Soviet Ambassador repeated that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which governed the withdrawal of Russian troops from Eastern Anatolia. and the 1921 treaty which settled the frontier between Turkey and Russia were both signed "when Russia was weak."²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* (In December 1941, shortly after German attack to the USSR, Stalin and Anthony Eden expressed gratitude for Turkey, due to this country remaining outside the war as a buffer against further German penetration eastwards. Because of that Soviet leader offered to reward Turkey with Dodecanese and territories from Northern Syria, as remarked before).

²⁵⁸ "Telegram by the Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, December 28, 1945." In *Foreign relations of the United States: diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1287

²⁵⁹ "Telegram by the Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, February 2, 1946." In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII

As remarked above, Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson's criticism of his Ministry's policy on Soviet demands was supported by the US Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, George Kennan. Henry Kissinger also remarks the importance of George Kennan's warnings.²⁶⁰ According to Henry Kissinger, this diplomat is “an expert on Russia” whose views influenced the change in US policy regarding the USSR.²⁶¹ Henry Kissinger gives high importance to a message by him from Moscow to Washington dated 22 February 1946. He introduces this message as follows:

“As the highest policymaking circles in Washington considered these questions (about Stalin's foreign policy), a document arrived from an expert on Russia, one George Kennan, a relatively junior diplomat at the American Embassy in Moscow, that was to provide the philosophical and conceptual framework for interpreting Stalin's foreign policy. One of the rare embassy reports that would by itself reshape Washington's view of the world, it became known as the “Long Telegram.”²⁶²

In this telegram, which according to Henry Kissinger reshaped Washington's view of the World, there is also a warning about the USSR's policy on Turkey. George Kennan writes that Soviet efforts would be made to advance the official limits of Soviet power. In addition, for that moment, he writes,

“These efforts are restricted to certain neighboring points conceived of here as being of immediate strategic necessity, such as Northern Iran, Turkey, possibly Bornholm (Denmark). However, other points may at any time come into question, if and as concealed Soviet political power is extended to new areas.”²⁶³

Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, p.814

²⁶⁰ Many other US writer regard George Kennan a key figure in the Cold War. His views, especially “The Long Telegram” is accepted foundational texts of the Cold War, which effected reshaping of the US policy on the USSR in late 1940's. For a detailed study on George Kennan, see, Wilson D. Miscamble. *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992; For Long Telegram and Turkey, see, Martin McCauley. *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1949*, London: Longman Pub Group, 2003; William Taubman. *Stalin's American Policy, From Entente to Detente to Cold War*. New York and London: W.W. Norton&Company, 1982, p.130

²⁶¹ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.447

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ “The Long Telegram by the US Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, February 22, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946. Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union* Volume VI Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, pp.701-702

Four months before the “Long Telegram” the US Ambassador in Moscow W. A. Harriman also warned Washington about the Soviet claims against Turkey. Ambassador Harriman gives in his telegraph with the title “Current Trends of Soviet Policy With Respect to the Near and Middle East,” on 23 October 1945 an analysis of Soviet demands in a broad context and places Turkey within a certain strategic framework in terms of US interests. He writes, in general, that the Soviet aims in this area were primarily strategic: security and aggrandizement. He says of Turkey that this country

“...represents the primary westerly gap in the Soviet system of defense in depth along its borders. Until Turkey is under Soviet domination and the Black Sea is a Soviet lake, the USSR will feel itself strategically vulnerable from the southwest. Furthermore, Turkey lies athwart any Soviet ambitions for expansion into the Mediterranean.”²⁶⁴

The message that should be evaluated in the context of oncoming Cold War is that the partnership between West and the USSR is ending. The message continues as below:

“(...) Soviet program for Turkey is a matter of relative urgency. (...) Soviet Union must rely principally on other discontented elements-real and artificially created. (...) If vigorously developed, it may help to detach the eastern provinces from Turkey by various peaceful pressures or to provoke fatal Turkish exasperation.(...) Soviet strategic objectives in Asia Minor logically extend from Turkey and Iraq to Syria and the Lebanon. Oil pipelines, access to the Mediterranean and propinquity to the Suez Canal are obvious long-range objectives in the Levant States. (...) The U.S.S.R. has employed diplomatic negotiation, a war of nerves (including a whispering campaign regarding impending military action) and propaganda by foreign agencies (such as the demand of Armenians in the United States for the ‘return’ of eastern Turkish provinces to the Armenian SSR). Finally, toward Iran the U.S.S.R. has resorted to active and passive military intervention and internal political intrigue.”²⁶⁵

Like Henry Kissinger, who give special importance to the warnings of the US diplomats to their Department, A. Suat Bilge also draws attention to this and adds how important the Turkish Foreign Ministry's suggestions to the US were in getting it to change its attitude about Soviet demands. A. Suat Bilge writes, “Turkey also

²⁶⁴ “Telegram by the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the Secretary of State, Moscow, October 23, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. Europe* Volume V, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.901

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.901-908

gave extensive information to the US Ambassador in Turkey Wilson²⁶⁶ and notes that Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson tried to convey to the US State Department the problems being faced by Turkey in his telegraphs.²⁶⁷

Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson also writes to the State Department on 18 March 1946 that the Soviet objective was to topple the present Turkish Government and install a “friendly” government, resulting in closing the Turkish gap in the Soviet security belt from the Baltic to the Black Sea, giving USSR physical control of Straits and putting end to Western influence in Turkey. Edwin C. Wilson, in another message to the Secretary of State, repeats his view that the “real Soviet objective is not a revision of the regime of the Straits, but actual domination of Turkey”, to topple the present independent Turkish Government and to establish in its place a vassal or “friendly” regime in Turkey, which will “complete the security chain of subservient countries along Russia's western and southern frontiers” and put an end completely to Western influence in Turkey. According to the Ambassador any attempt to force Turkey to grant bases in the Straits would be tantamount to “making Turkey disappear as an independent power and would place Turkey in the same position vis-à-vis the Soviet as Bulgaria, Rumania, Poland, et cetera.”²⁶⁸

Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson offers some recommendations at the end of his message. He says that in the event of any Soviet attack on Turkey, the use of the Soviet veto might effectively block any “legal” intervention by the United Nations. He writes, “If we have an answer ready it is of course Top Secret and therefore not to be mentioned in this document; but without such an answer any statement of our Turkish policy is incomplete.”²⁶⁹ This is a hint of “using military force against to the USSR to defend Turkey,” which will be clearly remarked in future US diplomatic papers that are quoted in the next pages.

²⁶⁶ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.279

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.277

²⁶⁸ “Telegram by the US Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, March 23, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, pp.821-822

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.822

5.3. Hardening of the US Policy towards the Soviet Union

The US State Department policy regarding the Soviet claims against Turkey, which were criticized by the US Ambassador to Ankara Edwin C. Wilson on 25 September 1945 as noted above, was followed by a memorandum on 19 December 1945 but this time with very different content and an approach to the issue of Turkey. At this time the official US documents see a correlation between the Soviet demands and the threat of bringing Turkey into the Soviet security zone.²⁷⁰

The document, bearing the title “The United States position regarding the Soviet Union's demands for the revision of the Turkish Straits Regime and other matters affecting Turkish-Soviet relations,” was prepared for the US delegation at the United Nations General Assembly meeting in London and stated:

“Indeed, the set of issues involved in Turko-Soviet relations might prove to be the first real test of the United Nations Organization. If the Soviet Union persisted to the point of aggressive action against Turkey on some minor pretext, such action would be recognized as aggression, the United Nations would be entirely discredited if it took no action looking toward settlement, and chaos would result.”²⁷¹

At the end of the document, the State Department urges that Soviets “probably more interested in closing off the last beach-head of the Western world in this region through the conclusion of a treaty with Turkey which would bring that country into line with other states in the 'Soviet security zone'.”²⁷²

In 1946 the US position on the issue was very clear. The attitude of the US then changed. The United States adopts this new position with the UK at various international meetings. One symbol of the United States shift in policy was the visit to Istanbul by the battleship USS Missouri on 5 April 1946. According to Gönülbol-Ülman, the declaration of the planned visit of the battleship to Istanbul is “the first

²⁷⁰ “Memorandum Prepared in the US Department of State, Washington, December 19, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, pp.801-804

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.802

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p.804

indication of the changing attitude of the United States” and they elaborate, “Undoubtedly, this visit was a demonstration against the USSR.”²⁷³ After the visit by the US battleship Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson writes a telegram to Washington noting his impressions of the Missouri visit.

“(1) It was probably one of most remarkable demonstrations of friendliness on part of govt and people of a foreign country towards US Naval officers and men that has ever occurred in connection with US Naval visit.

(2) This demonstration can be mainly explained by hope engendered in Turk Govt and people by recent developments US foreign policy, culminating in Missouri visit, that US has now established independent policy in Near and Middle East based on defense of its own interests in this region, these interests being understood as maintenance peace and security through support of principles UNO.

(3) Translated into specific terms applying to Turkey, foregoing means to Turks that US has now decided that its own interests in this area require it to oppose any effort by USSR to destroy Turk independence and integrity. This because if USSR allowed to destroy Turk independence and set up 'friendly' regime here, nothing could then prevent Soviets from ascending to Suez, and once this occurs another world conflict becomes inevitable.

(4) There are already indications that effects Missouri visit are being felt beyond Turk frontiers (...)²⁷⁴

In this message Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson also comments on how the change in US policy was reflected in Turkey.

Henry Kissinger also writes about the shift in US policy. He writes, “The first exposition of the new approach” of the “Long Telegram,” which he says played an essential role in changing American foreign policy, and which was written by George Kennan, the Charge d'Affaires in the American Embassy in Moscow and which also appeared in a State Department memorandum submitted to an inter-agency committee on 1 April 1946.²⁷⁵ According to this memorandum, prepared for State, War and Navy Coordinating Committee, Moscow had to be convinced “in the first instance by diplomatic means and in the last analysis by military force if

²⁷³ Gönlübol, Mehmet, and Ülman, Haluk. “İkinci Dünya Savaşından Sonra Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy after the World War II).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 191-334. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, pp.201-202

²⁷⁴ “Telegram by the US Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, April 12, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, pp.822-823

²⁷⁵ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.449

necessary that the present course of its foreign policy can only lead to disaster for the Soviet Union.”²⁷⁶

In the memorandum, Turkey is regarded as a country that together with Finland, Scandinavia, Eastern, Central and South Eastern Europe and many others faced the threat of armed force by the Soviets in a bid to extend their power and territorial control and adds that “the question of the eventual use of the military forces of the United States would arise” regarding this countries.²⁷⁷ The memorandum identifies the reason of the new policy as there being “no specific US policy in regard to the Soviet Union” as stated below:

“The fundamental principles of U.S. foreign policy find their expression in many international agreements and statements and in particular in the Charter of the United Nations. In this sense, the U.S. has basically no especial policy in regard to the Soviet Union. Such problems, difficulties, and in the last analysis, dangers as are present in Soviet-American relations arise from past and present actions and policies of the Soviet Government. Due to these policies and actions on the part of the Soviet Government, the U.S. is forced to regard its relations with the Soviet Union in a special category.”²⁷⁸

The shift in the US position or the formulation of a Soviet policy was also a relief for Turkey. US Secretary of State James F. Byrnes told Turkish Ambassador Numan R. Menemencioglu in Paris on 2 May 1946 that “in the past US had perhaps not known Turkey and Turkey's problems very well but now US was well posted concerning Turkey, takes great interest in problems affecting Turkey, and has real and sincere friendship for Turkey.” Turkish Foreign Ministry Secretary General Erkin repeats James F. Byrnes' words to Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson; he says, “Turkish Government was deeply touched and grateful for what Secretary Byrnes said.”²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ “Memorandum by the Acting Department of State Member (Matthews) to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (Political Estimate of Soviet Policy for Use in Connection with Military Studies), Washington, April 1, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946. General; the United Nations* Volume I Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946; p.1169

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1168

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.1169

²⁷⁹ “Telegram by the Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, Ankara, May 4, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, p.823

According to Gönlübol-Ülman, “The cause of the shift in the US policy (on Turkey) is not known exactly” and “It could be as a result of the British insistence and warnings by US defense experts.”²⁸⁰ However, when official US documents analyzed it appears that the cause of the Washington administration's new position was related to its strategic interests in a vast area ranging from the Eastern Mediterranean to China while some documents noted below show that the US Government put Turkey in the most strategic place in its plans about this vast area. In this respect, the shift in US policy towards Turkey started after warnings by the Ambassadors in Ankara and Moscow. The US State Department, War Department and Navy Department supported these warnings. In the end, the President himself approved these new policies, as analyzed below. Of course, the new US policy was not unconnected with the new Soviet expansionist policy on Eastern Europe.²⁸¹

In short, it can be claimed that the actual cause of the shift in US policy was a new conflict to determine the borders of the newborn Western and Eastern Bloc's “areas of influence” with Turkey occupying one of the most strategic places in this struggle. For example, during a conversation between acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson and the Turkish Ambassador to Washington on 29 December 1945, The Acting Secretary “expressed the thought that while the Turks are naturally deeply concerned, the general questions involved extend beyond Turkish territory into the sphere of world peace and security, in which this government has the deepest interest.”²⁸²

In this respect, it was best to resist the Soviet demands and one means, of doing that, as remarked above, was as the US Ambassador to Ankara Edwin C. Wilson recommended to the US Government: to find an answer to any Soviet aggression

²⁸⁰ Gönlübol, Mehmet, and Ülman, Haluk. “İkinci Dünya Savaşından Sonra Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy after the World War II).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 191-334. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.197

²⁸¹ “Telegram by the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris (Memorandum agreed upon by State, War, Navy Depts re Turkey and the Soviet Union), Washington, August 15, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, pp.840-842.

²⁸² “Memorandum of Conversation, by Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Jones), Washington, December 29, 1945.” In *Foreign relations of the United States : diplomatic papers, 1945. The Near East and Africa Vol. VIII*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945, p.1288

against Turkey. The evidence of what could be the “top secret” answer he mentioned in his message on 18 March 1946 that is remarked earlier in this thesis, may be found in another US State Department document of, the Acheson Memorandum dated 15 August 1946. In this memorandum, approved by the War, Navy and State Departments and by President Truman regarding the Soviet claims against Turkey, “using force against to the USSR if necessary” was cited.²⁸³ This document includes a view of possible use of force against the USSR in order to pressure it into abandoning its claims against Turkey. This position of the United States in the August memorandum was directly about Turkey and the question of Bosphorus and Turkish Eastern territories, while the earlier memorandum that included using military force, as remarked before, and dated 1 April 1946 was general in context.

The Acheson Memorandum, which was signed by the Acting Secretary of State, was transmitted to the Secretary of State in Paris. The top secret message, dated 15 August 1946, began “For Secretary Byrnes only,” and states: “The time has come when we must decide that we shall resist with all means at our disposal any Soviet aggression and in particular, (...) any Soviet aggression against Turkey.”²⁸⁴ The term of “resist with all means at our disposal” is diplomatic parlance for war. It is somewhat significant that this power policy is pursued by the only nuclear country of that year. And if felt or made known to the Soviet Union, it would undoubtedly bring some changes in that country's attitude towards Turkey.

These remarks hinting at war against the USSR were included in this document, agreed upon by the State, War and Navy Departments of the United States at the highest levels after a series of meetings. Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson (Under Secretary of State) writes that this memorandum was presented to the President in person on the same day, 15 August 1946 by the Secretaries of War, Navy and himself. He remarks, “Also present were top ranking officers of the army

²⁸³ “Telegram by the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris (Memorandum agreed upon by State, War, Navy Depts re Turkey and the Soviet Union), Washington, August 15, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, p.841

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

and navy.” He writes that the President approved the policy recommended in the memorandum and stated he was prepared to pursue it “to the end.”²⁸⁵

In Dean Acheson's message to Secretary James F. Byrnes, this historically important memorandum argues that should territorial and base concessions be giving to the USSR, it could have an adverse impact on US interests across a wide area ranging from Italy to India and comments that in this case, all Near and Middle East including Greece would fall under Soviet control and these areas would be cut off from the Western world. Parts of the Dean Acheson memorandum read as follow:

“In our opinion, the primary objective of the Soviet Union is to obtain control of Turkey. We believe that if the Soviet Union succeeds in introducing into Turkey armed forces with the ostensible purpose of enforcing the joint control of the Straits, the Soviet Union will use these forces in order to obtain control over Turkey. If the Soviet Union succeeds in its objective obtaining control over Turkey it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prevent the Soviet Union from obtaining control over Greece and over the whole Near and Middle East.”²⁸⁶

Here, the new policy of the United States is clear. The document which includes the opinions of the main departments and the President, remarks that the aim of the Soviet demands regarding Turkey is to obtain control of Turkey. Then it emphasizes that the loss of Turkey could open the window for the USSR into a wide area. This means that the US was starting to attach special importance to Turkey's strategic position.

“It is our experience that when the Soviet Union obtains predominance in an area, American and, in fact, all Western influences and contacts are gradually eliminated from that area. In our opinion, therefore, the establishment by the Soviet Union of bases in the Dardanelles or the introduction of Soviet armed forces into Turkey on some other pretext would, in the natural course of events, results in Greece and the whole Near and Middle East, including the Eastern Mediterranean, falling under Soviet control and in those areas being cut off from the Western world. Then it is reminded in the memorandum that when it was referred to “Near and Middle East, they have in mind “territory lying between the Mediterranean and India. After that, it is added, “When the Soviet Union has once obtained full mastery of this territory, which is strategically important from the point of view of resources, including oil, and from the point of view of communications, it will be in a much stronger position to obtain its objectives in India and China.”²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 840

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.840

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.840-841

Hence, the Acheson memorandum draws attention to the fact that as soon as that Soviet Union establishes control in Turkey through bases in the Straits and by possession of territories in eastern Turkey its results would be the establishment of Soviet control and the cutting off from the Western world of a vast area including the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. It further remarks that the repercussions of losing Turkey could reach as far as China. According to the US memorandum, Turkey should be supported in resisting Soviet territorial demands.²⁸⁸ It writes,

“We, therefore, feel that it is in the vital interests of the, United States that the Soviet Union should not by force or through threat of force succeed in its unilateral plans with regard to the Dardanelles and Turkey. If Turkey under pressure should agree to the Soviet proposals, any case which we might later present in opposition to the Soviet plan before the United Nations or to the world public would be materially weakened; but the Turkish Government insists that it has faith in the United Nations system and that it will resist by force Soviet efforts to secure bases in Turkish territory even if Turkey has to fight alone. While this may be the present Turkish position, we are frankly doubtful whether Turkey will continue to adhere to this determination without assurance of support from the United States.”²⁸⁹

The memorandum continues by advising what should be done to deter the Soviet Union and make it take step back from its demand for joint defense of the Straits. These recommendations include: “The United States should be prepared if necessary to meet Soviet aggression with 'force of arms'.” The memorandum continues,

“It is unfortunate that the Soviet Union, ignoring the United Nations and Montreux concept of Straits control, has made a formal proposal to Turkey for a bilateral agreement regarding the joint defense of the Straits because it is always extremely difficult to persuade the Soviet Union, once formally committed on a subject, to retreat. Experience has shown that such a retreat cannot be brought about by skillful argument or the appeal to reason. The only thing that will deter the Russians will be the conviction that the United States is prepared, if necessary, to meet aggression with force of arms. There is a strong possibility that if the Soviet Union is given clearly and unequivocally to understand that the United States will firmly and with determination support Turkey in case Turkey is made the object of Soviet measures threatening the independence, sovereignty or territorial interests of Turkey the Soviet Union will pause and will not push the matter further at this time. In our opinion therefore the time has come when we must decide that we shall resist with all means at our disposal any Soviet aggression and in particular, because the case of Turkey would be so clear, any Soviet aggression against Turkey.”²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ For a analysis of Acheson Memorandum’s approach on Turkey’s strategic importance for a wide area, see also Walter La Feber. *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2008, p. 43

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.841

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.841

This part of the document shows that the US administration was even considering war with the USSR over Turkey. This also shows where Turkey stood when the Cold War started. Then the document continues stating, that the US cannot permit Turkey “to become the object of Soviet aggression.” It writes,

“In carrying out this policy our words and acts will only carry conviction to the Soviet Union if they are formulated against the background of an inner conviction and determination on our part that we cannot permit Turkey to become the object of Soviet aggression. Threats or provocations should have no part in the implementation of this policy which will require in the first instance frank discussions with the principal nations involved and strong support of Turkey in the United Nations, should that become necessary. In our judgment the best hope of preserving peace is that the conviction should be carried to the U.S.S.R., Turkey and all other powers that in case the United Nations is unsuccessful in stopping Soviet aggression, the United States would not hesitate to join other nations in meeting armed aggression by the force of American arms.”²⁹¹

The Secretary of State directed that a copy of this telegram 4122 be sent to Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson because he felt it “highly important” for the Ambassador to have the telegram as background. H. Freeman Matthews, Political Adviser to Secretary Marshall at the Paris Peace Conference, while he was sending the document to Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson in Ankara, noted also, “It seems to us obviously necessary that you should be fully informed of the seriousness with which the question of Turkey's integrity is regarded in the highest quarters.”²⁹²

In the memorandum, it is advised that the Soviet Union should be persuaded to retract its demands against Turkey stating that one of the means to convince the Soviet Union would be to adopt the stance of “Any aggression against Turkey would meet by force of arms.” It also recommends behaving preventatively against the Soviets and remarks, “We shall resist with all means at our disposal any Soviet aggression.” This terms may be interpreted as “to be ready for a declaration of war” by the US to the USSR to defend Turkey. It could be said that this is one of the documents regarding “the start of the Cold War” and indicates how important the Turkish problem was in starting the Cold War.²⁹³

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.841-842

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p.842

²⁹³ For the origins of the Cold War and Turkey, see also, Katherine A.S Sibley. *The Cold War*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998, pp.3-10; David Reynolds (ed.). *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994; Bruce Roberlet

Martin Walker also links the Soviet demands from Turkey and starting of the Cold War. To quote Walker,

“Truman called (Secretary of State James F.) Byrnes into the Oval Office on 5 January 1946, and (...) read aloud the text of a letter he had drafted, a letter which has been seen as the real start of the Cold War. (...) ‘There isn’t a doubt in my mind that Russia intends an invasion of Turkey and the seizure of the Black Sea Straits to the Mediterranean. Unless Russia is faced with an iron first and strong language, another war is in making.’”²⁹⁴

5.4. Results of the Acheson Memorandum

The visit of the USS Missouri to Istanbul, the Soviets' halt to insisting on the claims in 1946 while Stalin still in power in Moscow, Turkey's membership of NATO, “the US decision to strengthen Turkey's defence with Truman Doctrine in 1947”²⁹⁵, defending Turkey against the USSR's claims in the context of the US's global interests plus a few more developments were all in connection with the shift in the attitude of the US administration, which is explained in the Acheson Memorandum, prepared shortly after the ending World War II.

The memorandum quickly found an echo in international indoor diplomatic circles. For example, Britain's Ambassador to Washington Lord Inverchapel called at his request to the State Department and inquired about his information that the “United States was prepared to go to war if necessary.” According to the minutes of the conversation between Britain's Ambassador Lord Inverchapel and Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, the British Ambassador said that during conversations between British and American officers in Paris, about the Straits the US officers “had stated that the United States took a very serious view of the situation and had

Kuniholm. *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East, Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980

²⁹⁴ Martin Walker. *The Cold War and the Making of the Modern World*. London: Fourth Estate, 1993, pp. 36-37; For geopolitical consequences of War and the Soviet demands from Turkey, see also, Richard Saull. *The Cold War and After; Capitalism, Revolution and Superpower Politics*. London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2007, pp. 59-60

²⁹⁵ Gönlübol, Mehmet, and Ülman, Haluk. “İkinci Dünya Savaşından Sonra Türk Dış Politikası (Turkish Foreign Policy after the World War II).” In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 191-334. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.223

used an expression (...) which was something to the effect that the United States was prepared to see this matter through to the end.”²⁹⁶

Then British Ambassador said, “This created quite a bit of excitement in London” and he asked Under Secretary Dean Acheson “whether this was an indication that the United States was prepared to resort to war if necessary to maintain its position.” According to documents about the conversation between Dean Acheson and the British Ambassador, the US Under Secretary of State said,

“The view of the Department, which is shared by the War and Navy Departments and has been presented to the President and approved by him was that this was a most serious matter and that the United States should not get into the matter at all unless it realized fully the seriousness of it and was prepared to conduct itself in a manner appropriate to that realization.”²⁹⁷

He then recalled that “not only constitutionally but as a matter of the actual operation of government in the United States no one could commit the United States to entering military operations and that in the long run the state of public opinion and the state of Congressional opinion were the dominant factors.” Dean Acheson said he thought that “all the officials of the Government who were dealing with the matter understood all the possible consequences and were acting with all the care and thought that this understanding brought to them.”²⁹⁸

The United States persistently pursued this policy. Another inner circular of the US State Department called “The Memorandum on Turkey,” dated 21 October 1946, notes the “vital importance of Turkey” and writes that all other nations, large and small, are watching the current diplomatic struggle (with the Soviets) with the most intense concern. Any weakening, which resulted in even partial attainment of the Soviet objectives in Turkey, would have a disastrous effect upon these nations. According to the document, a Russian dominated Turkey “would open the

²⁹⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State, Washington, August 20, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, pp.849

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 849-850

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.850

floodgates for a Soviet advance into Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.”²⁹⁹

It could be claimed that this decisive attitude of the United States was not kept a secret but made known to the USSR and that it played a role in the Soviets' deciding to freeze its demands against Turkey. A. Suat Bilge notes that the successful US General W. B. Smith was sent to Moscow as Ambassador and that his mission was “to clarify how far Soviet Union could expand” and adds, “The US had already decided that it would no longer stand by and watch the Soviet Union continue to expand. This determination would be stated by the general clearly to the Soviet leadership.”³⁰⁰

According to Henry Kissinger, “threatening Russia with war” was an old policy because of this country's historical attitude toward its neighbor countries. He writes,

“In insisting on a free hand vis-à-vis his neighbors, Stalin was following traditional Russian practice. From the time Russia had emerged on the international scene two centuries earlier, its leaders had been attempting to settle disputes with their neighbors bilaterally rather than at international conferences. Neither Alexander I in the 1820s, Nicolas I thirty years later, nor Alexander II in 1878 understood why Great Britain insisted on interposing itself between Russia and Turkey. In these and subsequent instances, Russian leaders took the position that they were entitled to a free hand in dealing with their neighbors. If thwarted, they tended to resort to force. And once having resorted to force, they never withdrew unless they were threatened with war.”³⁰¹

Henry Heller also indicates the US military preparations against the Soviet Union to support Turkey:

“The new US strategic role was demonstrated in the Turkish crisis. (...) The US State, War and Navy Departments advised Truman to resist the Soviets by force of arms if necessary. On August 16, 1946, Truman ordered all of the destroyers of the US Twelfth Fleet into the Mediterranean. (...) The strong U.S. reaction caused the Soviets to back down.”³⁰²

²⁹⁹ “Memorandum on Turkey Prepared in the US State Department Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Washington, October 21, 1946.” In *Foreign relations of the United States, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Volume VII Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946, pp.894-895

³⁰⁰ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.332

³⁰¹ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon&Schuster, 1994, p.432

Walter La Feber also draw the attention to imminent new War threat between the US and the Soviet Union. To quote La Feber, “During 1946 War became more imminent. (...) In Manchuria, Iran, Turkey and Europe, the American and Russian military forces confronted each other.”³⁰³

The determination of the United States in 1946 convinced the Soviet Union to cease demanding concessions from Turkey. This determination of Washington's was followed by the Truman Doctrine. In his statement to Congress on 12 March 1947 President Truman asked for assistance to be given to Turkey and Greece. This statement was regarded as a cornerstone of US foreign policy. Henceforth, every aggression that threatened peace directly or indirectly, would be a matter of the United States of America's security.³⁰⁴ In this context, Turkey concluded a mutual assistance agreement with the United States on 12 July 1947 and thus, an interesting situation emerged. While Turkey had been trying to conclude a mutual assistance agreement in an alliance pact with the Soviet Union, it had been pushed into the position of concluding a mutual assistance agreement with America.³⁰⁵

5.5. The Soviet Union’s Withdrawal of its Demands From Turkey

The USSR could not convince Turkey to accept its demands. Throughout the remainder of the Stalin era the USSR shelved the question until after 1946. The Russian Ambassador to Ankara was called back to Moscow at the beginning of July 1946. He was not sent back to Turkey and the Soviet diplomatic mission in Ankara continued for two years as the level of charge d'affaires.³⁰⁶ After Stalin died the

³⁰² Henry Heller. *The Cold War and the New Imperialism, A Global History, 1945-2005*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2006, p.51

³⁰³ Walter La Feber. *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-2006*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2008, p35.

³⁰⁴ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.333

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.334

³⁰⁶ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.305

Soviet Union declared by submitting a diplomatic note that it had no claims against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Turkey.³⁰⁷

Relations between both countries were relatively stagnant from 1948 to the end of 1951 when Turkey's membership of NATO came to the agenda.³⁰⁸ After the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953, during the Khrushchev period the USSR government declared that it had abandoned its demands against Turkey in a diplomatic note submitted on 30 May 1953.³⁰⁹ After this date, the USSR never again raised the issue of a base or territorial demands. However, Turkish-Russian relations never got back to the level of the 1930's either.³¹⁰

According to A. Suat Bilge, the Soviet Union, which had pursued a policy of demanding a base and territory from Turkey, which is not compatible with friendship, understood that it could not vie with the Western countries and returned to a policy of peaceful coexistence with Turkey.³¹¹ According to Kamuran Gürün, while the Soviet Union witnessed Turkey's approach to the West and its engagement with Western countries in mutual assistance agreements, initially slowed down its policy of leaning on Turkey then later scrapped it entirely and returned to the position of looking for friendship with Turkey.³¹²

³⁰⁷ For an analysis on withdrawal of the Soviet demands and the US factor on the Turkish foreign policy since 1950's, see, R. Melih Aktaş. *1950-1960 Demokrat Parti Dönemi Türk-Sovyet İlişkilerinde Amerikan Faktörü (The American Factor on the Turkish-Soviet Relations of the 1950-1960 Democrat Party Ruling)*, Doctoral Thesis, Gazi University Social Sciences Institute, Department of International Relations, Ankara, 1998

³⁰⁸ A. Suat Bilge. "Kıbrıs Uyuşmazlığı ve Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (Cyprus Conflict and Turkish-Soviet Relations)" In *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası 1919-1995 (Turkish Foreign Policy in Action 1919-1995)*, 338-427. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996, p.391

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 397

³¹⁰ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.311

³¹¹ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.351

³¹² Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, p.206

The breakdown of the close friendship between Turkey and the Soviet Union, which continued until World War II, was also the the reason for some purges within the Soviet government. After the Stalin period, during the Khrushchev administration era, the Soviet leader faulted the Stalinists over Turkish policy. During the Plenum meeting of Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 28 June 1957, Nikita Khrushchev says that Turkish-Soviet relations had been very friendly but, due to the wrong policy adopted towards this country, Turkey now “supported the American imperialism.” Khrushchev says,

“Remember what sad results this policy led to, to the disruption of friendly relations with Turkey and Iran, our neighbors. It was literally a stupidity [glupost]. In our incorrect policy in relation to Turkey we helped American imperialism. The Turks used to receive Voroshilov like a brother; they named a square after Voroshilov. But when the Second World War ended, we wrote a note to Turkey [saying] that we were tearing up the friendship treaty. Why? Because you are not giving up the Dardanelles. Listen, only a drunkard could write such a thing. After all, no country would give up the Dardanelles voluntarily.”³¹³

After these words, he leveled criticism at Vyacheslav Molotov, who was also in the session and said, “I do not remember who was the minister of foreign affairs then, but in any case, Molotov was one of Stalin's main advisers on issues of international politics.” While Andrei Gromyko recalled, “Molotov was minister then,” Vyacheslav Molotov did not want to claim responsibility for these policies and answered “But the proposal (territorial and base claims of Soviets) was not mine.” Khrushchev responses:

“But you fully agreed with it. With our short-sighted policies we drove Turkey and Iran into the embraces of the USA and England, into the Baghdad pact.” And continues to accuse Molotov, he says, “Essentially, the international policies of Stalin were Molotov's policies. (...) It must be said that Stalin was much wiser and more flexible in his conduct of basic foreign policy than Molotov was. (...) Molotov's policy could not but lead to a worsening of relations between states; it would have helped the imperialists unite their forces against the USSR. It is an adventurist policy...”³¹⁴

Nikita Khrushchev also accuses the Vyacheslav Molotov of belonging to Beria's team. Beria was was the widely hated secret (and Georgian like Stalin) police chief.

³¹³ “Transcript of a CC CPSU Plenum, Evening 28 June 1957.” In *The Woodrow Wilson Center Cold War International History Project Archive*.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

He says, “How did Molotov enter the MID?³¹⁵ Beria and Malenkov decided that. What guided them? I think that it was not accidental; everything was thought through. This bears the mark of of that criminal Beria.”³¹⁶

Karen Khachatrian also writes that Khrushchev accused the Beria team but not directly Stalin. He writes “In November of 1956, First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee NS Khrushchev raised the issue of the territorial claims against Turkey, and criminally accused L. Beria.” According to Kamuran Gürün, Khrushchev said in another speech at a banquet in December 1955 that Beria caused the deterioration in relations with Turkey. In another speech at the High Soviet on 29 December 1955 the Soviet leader said, “the responsibility for the abnormality in Turkish-Soviet relations was not only the Turkish Government's; we also set demands that was impossible to accept, later we tried to correct them but failed to get any result.”³¹⁷

A. Suat Bilge expresses skepticism that the responsibility for Soviet Policy was Stalin's alone. He writes,

“Foreigners who had a chance to meet with him draw very different portraits from a horrible dictator to an exemplary leader. (...) After his death, many mistakes made in changes to Soviet foreign policy were attributed to Stalin. And the mistake of demanding a base and territory from Turkey, was also placed on his shoulders.”³¹⁸

According to Kamuran Gürün, the abolition of the 1925 treaty by the Soviet Union and its demands for a base and territory had a significant impact on Turkish foreign policy. Kamuran Gürün writes,

“If Soviets had not abolished the Treaty and had not attempted to demand from Turkey a base and territories, Turkish membership of NATO may very possibly have never been considered. It may well have been impossible

³¹⁵ MID: Ministerstvo Inostrannikh Del (Russian Foreign Ministry)

³¹⁶ “Transcript of a CC CPSU Plenum, Evening 28 June 1957.” In *The Woodrow Wilson Center Cold War International History Project Archive*.

³¹⁷ Kamuran Gürün. *Dış İlişkiler ve Türk Politikası, 1930'dan Günümüze Kadar (Foreign Affairs and Turkey's Policy: From 1930 to Contemporary Era)*. Ankara: AÜ SBF Yayınları, 1983, pp. 200-201

³¹⁸ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, pp.336-337

because it would have needed Russia's approval.”³¹⁹

Stating why it would have been impossible for Turkey to join NATO, Kamuran Gürün writes that after 1925 the treaty was updated by additional protocols on future dates, “according to which them, the USSR ensured that Turkey would not be able to sign any agreement without consultation with the Soviet Union.” He adds that the period continued until 1939 and that throughout this time Turkey gave information about every planned agreement between Turkey and third countries, and those that Russia considered undesirable were removed from the drafts of those agreements.³²⁰ Kamuran Gürün writes that because of this the 1945 Soviet demands provided relief for Turkey in formulating its own foreign policy.³²¹

In addition, A. Suat Bilge specified that Turkey had always tried to get the approval of Moscow after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. It would not be in Turkey's favor to carry out a policy against the Soviet Union. He writes,

“Turkish Governments that understood this, always tried to do their best in order not to deteriorate good neighborly relations. Turkey always on the side of the Soviet Union in its relations with third countries because it did not wish to be drawn into any action against this country.”³²²

Oral Sander also draw the attention that the 1925 Turkish-Soviet Treaty was fundament of Turkish foreign policy between 1925-1945.³²³

5.6. Conclusion

The United States abandoned its policy of non-interference in the territorial problems between Turkey and the Soviet Union and started to give wide support to Turkey

³¹⁹ Kamuran Gürün. *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953 (Turkish-Soviet Relations 1920-1953)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, p.315

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.314

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p.316

³²² A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.351

³²³ Oral Sander. *Siyasi Tarih 1918-1994 (Political History 1918-1994)*, Ankara:İmge Kitabevi, 2001, p.251

against Soviet pressure. As a US document shows, the United States even envisaged a military conflict with the USSR in order to support Turkey. According to US official documents, the cause of this new policy of Washington's was to prevent the Soviet Union from spreading its influence from the Eastern Mediterranean to India and China. Washington thought that as soon as Turkish resistance collapsed a vast area would be disconnected from the Western world. These documents also show the strategic importance of Turkey in starting the Cold War. This chapter also viewed the internal discussions within the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin. According to some documents, the new leader Nikita Khrushchev himself accused former officials of losing Turkey because, they argue, these policies pushed Turkey to the West.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the state of Turkish-Soviet relations between 1939 and 1946 is examined, specifically the Soviet claims against Turkey made during the Stalin era. The main argument of this thesis is to show that the Soviet demands from Turkey during the World War II were expansionist in nature, as opposed to the view that they were defensive. The demands were initially formulated by the Soviet Union during the period of Soviet-German alliance. During this period there was no significant threat to the Soviet Union; on the contrary, the Soviet leadership was in negotiations to divide up Europe and Asia into spheres of interest. Furthermore, the Soviets withdrew these demands not because they had achieved a satisfactory level of security for itself but because of Western pressure.

This thesis analyzes the terms of the Soviet-Nazi alliance when the Soviet Union first formulated the demands. In this period, both countries concluded treaties that established the basis of their bilateral relations. However, during the first period of the war, when the Soviet and Nazi alliance still existed, the Soviet Union put its demands for Turkey before Germany. Many official documents quoted in the second chapter demonstrate that Stalin tried to convince Hitler to approve these demands. After they agreed on the division of Europe the two leaders begin a negotiation process on new sharing agreements in the region from the Balkans to India. The Soviet side's insistence on concluding a new sharing agreement in the region that includes Turkey supports the argument of this thesis that the Soviet demands were not defensive nature. Soviet interest in Turkish territories during World War II started early on in the war and the subject of Turkey occupied an important place the negotiations and later on in the tension between the Soviet Union and Germany.

After of the start of the German-Soviet war, one of the important international events was the visit to Moscow by Britain's Foreign Minister Anthony Eden. Turkey also

occupied an important place during these negotiations in Moscow at the end of 1941. Both countries praised Turkey for staying out of the war because they thought that this policy of Ankara's blocked Germany's reach into the Middle East. According to documents, the Soviet side even offered to reward Turkey by giving it the Dodecanese and northern Syria. However, in the future, the attitude of both countries changed to the position of pressuring Turkey to join the war. As analyzed in the third chapter, the Soviet Union ramped up its pressure over Turkey again as soon as it gained the upper hand in the War. Moreover, it declared its demands on Turkey openly before Turkey and the Western alliance countries after its victory. This position of Moscow supports the argument that the Soviet Union's demands were a part of its expansionist policy.

The fourth chapter cites diplomatic documents and academic studies that demonstrate that the Soviet Union not only put the demands on the negotiation table, but also began to carry out preparations to ensure the fulfillment of them after its victory in the Second World War. One of the examples was to invite Armenians of different countries to immigrate to the Soviet Union. US diplomats remarked in their diplomatic correspondences that this immigration policy was an attempt by the Soviet Union to create an artificial problem in a bid to reinforce its demands for Turkey's eastern provinces. Even some anti-Soviet Armenian leaders also share this view. However, the United States Soviet policy began to change and created one of the main barriers opposing the Soviet demands against Turkey (in addition to other possible factors such as Turkish commitment to armed resistance against any possible Soviet occupation and so on). These developments may support the argument of this thesis that such wide ranging preparations over the Turkish territories could not be a part of the defensive policy of the Soviet Union.

In the last chapter the decisive, hardening US policies are analyzed. According to the US documents,³²⁴ used in this chapter, the Washington administration even envisaged applying military force against the Soviet Union in order to convince it to withdraw its demands and to block its expansion towards Turkey. As these claims, which strongly fueled the lack of confidence that existed between the two countries, also

³²⁴ United States Department of State, *Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers (volumes 1940-1949)*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office

had global affects. It is possible to argue that the claims against Turkey were among those that triggered the polarization of the World after World War II into Eastern and Western Blocs. According to the US documents, the reason for this new tough stance against the Soviet Union was that should the Turkish barrier against the Soviet Union fall this would mean that Soviet influence would spread across a wide area extending from Greece to India and a corresponding reduction in the US influence. As a result of the tough policy against the Soviet Union the Moscow administration stepped back in 1946-1947 as argued in this thesis but only declared it officially after the death of Stalin. During discussions within the Soviet Union, Vyacheslav Molotov in particular was accused of “losing” Turkey. These accusations were personally voiced by the new leader Khrushchev. He also accepted that Soviet policy on Turkey during the war was an aggressive policy. This approach of Khrushchev's also supports the argument of this thesis.

As one result of this study, it could be argued that diplomatic correspondences and talks between leaders show in general that either before or during the war Turkey was not a country that could be easily forced into accepting the policies of the great powers, nor a country whose policy and power could be ignored in the period between the wars up until 1939 when every country gave priority to enhancing its own security, or later on when Germany had been defeated including the times when the Soviet Union was voicing its demands against Turkey. During the negotiations between Soviet and Nazis, which Turkey did not attend, when the war was in its early stages or between the US, USSR and Britain, when the war was in its final stages, this country was seen as a serious power whose preferences could change the outcome of the war. Turkey was a country whose power, position and preferences were taken into consideration. It could even be argued that the issue of Turkey, that is the Soviet demands against Turkey, was one of a key reasons behind the start of the Cold War. Although initially these demands were given secondary importance by the United Kingdom and the United States during international conferences with the Soviet Union. However, after a short while the United States in particular appeared to adopt a tough stance. It could be regarded that these Soviet claims on Turkey were also one of the reasons for Soviet-West tension, or the beginning of the Cold War.

In this study, I also tried to prove that these Soviet demands also helped forge the Western bond with Turkey, a bond that emerged after World War II. If those demands had not been set, Turkey would possibly have continued to adhere to the 1925 treaty, which obligated it to consult with the Soviet Union before every main foreign policy step. Therefore, this would have placed a certain distance between Turkey and the Western world. During the war years, Turkey preferred a policy of staying out of the war. However, after the war, its main policy was to attract US support against the Soviet demands. While US general policy against Soviets transformed in 1945 and 1946 from bargaining with the Soviet Union to the stance of blocking its expansion, this shift was triggered by warning issued by US diplomats in Ankara and Moscow. The US diplomatic documents used in this study show that the US adopted a policy, also approved by President Truman whereby military force could be used if necessary to prevent the Soviet Union from fulfilling its demands.

In this study, the causes of the Soviet demands are not examined in detail. Certain views on the reasons for the demands argue that that “it was a result of Stalin's expansionist ambitions” while others argue that “it was a result of the Soviets' efforts to guarantee their security as a great power.” Nevertheless, the point not rejected by both arguments is that Turkish-Soviet relations were relations between “a country that was carrying out a limited and national policy and a country that was carrying out a general, world policy”³²⁵ and that this was the main source of the problems.

The Soviet demands after the Second World War against Turkey were an important topic in academic studies in Turkey for many years. However, some of these studies could have been influence by the political rivalry of the Cold War period. When studying for this thesis, it was observed that studies written up until the 1990's did not produce enough documentary evidence although some of the documents had been published by that time. For example, the US Government published in 1960 the official records of the Potsdam Conference, where the demands were put on the table by the Soviet Union delegation lead by Stalin. It could be recommended here that extensive use of these official US and UK documents could shed light on this very

³²⁵ A. Suat Bilge. *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964 (Difficult Neighborhood: Turkey-The Soviet Union Relations, 1920-1964)*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992, p.VIII

important period of history of the Republic of Turkey, because it was during this period that Turkey's international preference shifted from a kind of non-alignment policy or Soviet dominant policy to one of alliance with the Western World. For example, the 1946 Acheson memorandum, which is quoted in this thesis, seems to be one of those important documents that show the United States gave great importance to Turkey's resistance to Soviet demands. This is because, according to the document, Turkish resistance influences a wide area from Italy to China. As a result, according to this document, the United States challenged the Soviet Union saying it would defend Turkey if necessary by using military force. It could be said that this is a little known position of the post-war United States, especially the threat of using force against the Soviet Union to aid Turkey, and this subject needs more study using official US documents.

Although this thesis is based on the neo-realist approach to international relations, similar conclusions could be drawn, even it was based on the constructivist approach. In fact, the Soviet demands were one of the factors that triggered the Cold War between West and the Soviet Block. Constructivist theoretical arguments could explain this historical transformation process after the Second World War and the role of the Soviet Union's demands from Turkey in this transformation. Nevertheless, the constructivist approach to this topic could also confirm that the Soviet demands were expansionist but not defensive in nature.

To conclude, based on the findings of this thesis, it could be concluded that the Soviet Union's demands of base and territory from Turkey were expansionist in nature. Moscow Government formulated demands on Turkey before the German invasion of Soviet territories when this country did not have significant security concerns. On the other hand, it reiterated these demands after its victory on the Second World War. Furthermore, the Soviet Union withdrew these demands not because it achieved a satisfactory level of security, but because of the Western pressure. Therefore, it could be concluded that these realities supports the argument of this thesis that Soviet demands was not defensive.

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