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THE BICENTENNIAL IN AMERICAN-TURKISH RELATIONS

Harry N. Howard

MANY Americans, even some who have read a book or two, still seem unaware of the long standing and wide ranging interests of the American people and the United States in the Middle East and of the fact that some 200 years have elapsed since the beginnings of our commercial relationships with the Ottoman Empire. The first formal American-Ottoman treaty of commerce and navigation dates from May 7, 1830, one hundred forty-six years ago.

As late as 1945, knowledge of the peoples of the Middle East was relatively meager among Americans generally, and old prejudices, myths and legends persisted. The Lawrence legend, to say nothing of *The Arabian Nights*, *The Sheikh*, and Rudolf Valentino, cast a long shadow over the Arab portions of the Middle East. Islam was often portrayed as a "false religion," "a religion of the sword," copied in part from Judaism and Christianity, and there were still hints, however vague, of the "terrible Turk." American missionaries and educators had worked in the area for more than a century, and had learned Turkish, Arabic, Persian and other Eastern languages. They had served to bridge the subtle communications gap between East and West, even if, at times, they tended to see people, institutions and the passing scene through their own Western, Christian lenses and, therefore, with some degree of bias and prejudice. The fact that the Ottoman Empire had been brought into World War I on the side of the Central Powers deepened the prejudices. After World War II, other groups emerged to become aware of Middle East complexities and problems—the managers and engineers of oil companies, airlines, and other businesses, financial and industrial institutions, together with especially trained diplomats and members of the armed services.

There were three basic sets of American interests in the Ottoman Empire: 1) the commercial-economic, largely aspirational, but growing materially,

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until 1939; 2) the missionary-educational-philanthropic enterprise; and 3) the politico-strategic. Yet it appears that as early as 1767, American merchantmen plied an uncertain, if somewhat profitable trade with the Ottoman Empire, and Yankee traders visited Middle Eastern ports from time to time. When the Continental Congress designated John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to serve as treaty commissioners in 1774 the Ottoman Empire was listed as a country with which they might negotiate in the interest of recognition. Adams discussed the idea of a mission to the Sublime Porte with the French Foreign Minister Vergennes in 1786. President Adams appointed William Smith, of South Carolina, then Minister to Portugal, to be Minister Resident to the Sublime Porte in 1799, with full power to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce, although the mission was abandoned when news of the French invasion of Egypt arrived. The American flag was displayed officially as early as November 9, 1800, flying from the mast of the *USF George Washington*, under the command of Commodore William Bainbridge, who had been sent to Algeria with the annual tribute to the Bey, who compelled Bainbridge to carry it to the Sultan, together with a number of passengers.

Meanwhile, as already suggested, American commercial vessels ventured into Ottoman waters even in colonial days, İzmir being the principal port of call. William Lee Perkins, a Boston merchant, became established in İzmir during the American Revolution. Smyrna figs were offered for sale in Boston as early as 1785, and the opium trade with Canton was highly profitable during the Napoleonic Wars. MM Woodmas and Offley established an American trading house in İzmir in 1811, and it is worthy of note that no less than 24 American commercial vessels called at İzmir during 1809. Between August 1811 and November 1820, leaving aside the War of 1812, 13 American merchantmen, on the average, arrived annually at İzmir. But the first American vessel to penetrate the Black Sea through the Turkish Straits was the *Calumet*, of Boston, although there was no appreciable trade with Constantinople until after the signature of the treaty of 1830. It is said that some 12,000,000 gallons of "Boston Particular," New England rum, were shipped to Turkey during the first six months of 1830, mainly for transshipment to Russia and Persia *via* the Black Sea.

Official American-Ottoman Relations: The Treaty of May 7, 1830

Official American moves came more slowly. William Stewart was appointed as the first American consul in 1802, and actually reached İzmir in April 1803, but was refused recognition, as was Sloane, of Baltimore, in 1808. Finally David Offley, who had been a resident of İzmir for 14 years, was appointed Consul in 1824, and in 1835 Nicholson L. Ferrich was appointed

Consul in Bursa. Troubles in the Mediterranean had much to do with the establishment of the American Navy, and Thomas Jefferson considered maintenance of a naval squadron in the Mediterranean essential. By 1815 the United States did maintain a Mediterranean squadron—an antecedent of the later Sixth United States Fleet. In 1826 Secretary of State Henry Clay attempted to develop a group of American officials who would be proficient in the use of Eastern languages. He decided to put “a midshipman or some other youth” under each of four American consuls in the Barbary States—Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers and Tangier—for several years to study Turkish, Arabic and other languages. This was, no doubt, a kind of precursor of the Foreign Service Institute in the Department of State.

It took ten years to negotiate a treaty of commerce, which Luther Bradish recommended to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in 1820, and David Offley and Captain William Crane, initially, with an appropriation of \$20,000, were appointed as the American Commissioners in 1828 to complete the task. The Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, which was signed at Constantinople on May 7, 1830, among other things, essentially secured for the United States the rights which had been granted to other states as to commercial passage of the Straits. Capitulatory rights of American nationals in the Ottoman Empire derived from the Treaty of 1830. Article VII provided:

Merchant vessels of the United States, in like manner as vessels of the most favored nations, shall have liberty to pass the Canal of the Imperial Residence, and go and come in the Black Sea, either laden or in ballast; and they may be laden with the produce, manufactures and effects of the Ottoman Empire, excepting such as are prohibited, as well as of their own country.

Nothing was said, of course, as to the passage of American men of war through the Turkish Straits, although this was not a matter of special significance to the United States at the time. Essentially, in any event, this was a commercial treaty, which stressed freedom for American commerce, with most favored nation treatment, the extension of capitulatory rights and freedom of commercial passage through the Turkish Straits. Ratifications were not exchanged until October 3, 1831. A new Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, proclaimed on July 2, 1862, was signed on February 25, 1862, which expressly stipulated

that all rights, privileges, or immunities, which the Sublime Porte now grants, or may hereafter grant to, or suffer to be enjoyed by the subjects, ships, commerce or navigation of any foreign power, shall be equally granted to and exercised and enjoyed by the citizens, vessels, commerce, and navigation of the United States of America.

One development which had led to the signing of the Ottoman-American Treaty of 1830 was the sinking of the Ottoman Fleet at Navarino, off the Greek coast, on October 20, 1827, by the Anglo-Franco-Russian forces

during the Greek war of liberation—in what the Duke of Wellington called “a most untoward incident.” The Sublime Porte was most anxious to rebuild the Imperial Navy, and in discussions shortly after Navarino, Ottoman officials came to believe that if official relations were established with the United States, it would be possible to obtain naval vessels from American shipyards. A secret article which provided for the construction of frigates, corvettes and brigs for the Ottoman Navy was rejected by the United States Senate. Under this agreement the United States government would have undertaken to supervise construction of Ottoman naval vessels in American shipyards and to send timber for building warships in Ottoman shipyards.

What could not be achieved in one way, however, was accomplished in another. The Treaty of May 7, 1830, had not been ratified by Sultan Mahmud II and was not until October 3, 1831. Charles Rhind, one of the negotiators, advised President Jackson and Secretary of State Martin van Buren in April 1831 that Henry Eckford, a well known naval architect, was planning to take his new corvette, *The United States* (1,000 tons, 26 guns), to İstanbul and he proposed that he take a copy of the ratified treaty and accompany Eckford on the trip to facilitate matters. While Rhind did not make the trip, William Brown Hodgson of the Department of State did, and the *United States* was not only put on exhibition at İstanbul, but sold to the Ottoman government for \$150,000. Henry Eckford was soon employed to supervise plans for reconstructing the Ottoman Navy, and prepared a comprehensive report, accepted by the Sultan, dealing with the revival of the Ottoman Navy, the construction of ships and the training of Turkish engineers.

A dockyard was built at Aynalikavak, on the Golden Horn. Fifteen American foremen and workers, including Foster Rhodes, were brought from the United States to build ships, and there were some 600 Turkish, Greek and Italian workers at the dockyard. When Eckford died of cholera on November 12, 1832, Rhodes succeeded him, on recommendation of Commodore David Porter, the newly arrived American *chargé d'affaires*. The first frigate was launched on May 18, 1835, while August 21, 1837, saw the launching of a frigate, a 20-gun brig, and two one-gun cutters. Rhodes, who remained at his work until 1839, became the most important foreign ship builder in the Ottoman Empire. There can be little doubt that, thanks largely to Henry Eckford and Foster Rhodes, the 1830s were the high point in American influence in the Ottoman Empire. The ships built at İstanbul sailed the Mediterranean for years, and most of them played a rôle in the Crimean War. Moreover, during this period, there were hints as to the desirability of employing American naval officers to serve in the Ottoman Navy.

Moreover, a group of former Union and Confederate officers, anxious to refill their sagging bank accounts and to refurbish their questionable

military reputations, supervised the modernization of the Egyptian armed forces, carried out extensive surveys, prepared detailed maps of Egypt, and projected a dam at Aswan during the years 1870–1883. In a way these ill-remembered episodes constitute the first American naval and military advisory and assistance programs in the Middle East—a prelude to the official assistance programs after World War II, when Turkey and the Middle East had moved toward a much more active center of American interest and concern.

But the enduring American concern in the Ottoman Empire remained the American missionary-educational-philanthropic enterprise, which had a property evaluation in 1879 estimated at some \$100,000,000. By 1914 more than 1,000 American missionary-educators and doctors had served in the Middle East, which ranked with India and China as a major center of American missionary philanthropy abroad. Within the Middle East the American effort surpassed that of any other Protestant nation and was rivaled only by that of Catholic France. In quality and reputation American schools and colleges were unsurpassed. The American schools promoted knowledge of vernacular languages and modern science. The central ideas of Western culture were presented in the native tongues and found their way into villages and countryside.

The first American religious mission in the Ottoman Empire was established at İzmir by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1820. The first American missionaries to go to the Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire were the Rev. Levi Parsons and Rev. Pliny Smith, who soon went to Jerusalem, however. Reverend William Goodell, who translated the Bible into Armeno-Turkish, established the first permanent missionary station in İstanbul in 1831, after his original sojourn in Beirut and Tripoli. Within ten years of his arrival, the work of the Goodell mission had expanded—the station at İzmir was reestablished, and new stations were set up at Bursa, Trabzon and Erzurum. Others soon arrived and by 1869 there were 21 stations with 46 missionaries. Robert College (1863 nationalized as Bosphorus University in 1971), the İstanbul Woman's College (1871), and International College (İzmir, 1903; Beirut 1936), to mention only a few institutions, became monuments to the missionary-educational effort.

Commerce grew somewhat substantially, if slowly, during the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire being a good market for kerosene, cotton, firearms and ammunition and, generally, for American manufactured products. In turn, the United States was a good market for Turkish tobacco—the first “Turkish blend” cigarettes appeared about 1902—fruits and nuts, rugs and carpets, hides and skins, and wool. By 1839 the tariff on American imports was based on the Anglo-Ottoman treaty of 1838. By 1850 the annual

value of American-Ottoman commerce totaled \$1,005,420 and \$7,049,573 by 1897. In 1899 the first direct steamship line between New York and Constantinople was opened by the Barber Steamship Company. An American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant was organized in İstanbul in 1911. Probably the most significant single economic enterprise in Ottoman-American relations, however, lay in the so-called Chester Concession (1907), which included a project for the construction of some 900 miles of railways, with mineral and oil rights—rivaling the Baghdad Railway—although, ultimately, the project never materialized.

American Diplomatic Interests

Meanwhile, the character of American diplomatic appointments since the opening of the American legation on March 2, 1831, and the designation of Commodore David Porter as *chargé d'affaires* on April 15, 1831, and Minister Resident on March 3, 1839, reflected something of the growing importance of the post at İstanbul. While the Treaty of 1830 was a commercial agreement and Porter professed to be a "free thinker," uninterested in the missionary enterprise, Secretary of State Daniel Webster instructed him in 1842 to take an interest and report on the work of his fellow Americans in the mission stations. Some years later, in the 1860s, Cyrus Hamlin, the first President of Robert College, complained that the American Minister, Edward Joy Morris, with whom he was not on speaking terms, was more interested in a shipment of rum than in Robert College.

While there was little evident political interest in the area in a period of relative American "isolationism" in the nineteenth century, there was some concern at times as to Russian moves toward the Turkish Straits, increasing agitation concerning the Armenian problem, particularly after 1890, and interest in the national struggles of the Balkan Slavs against the Ottoman Empire, as there had been earlier in the Greek struggle for national liberation. But there was little understanding of the nature of the problems of a polyglot Empire, resting on Islamic foundations, at the international crossroads of Eurasia and Africa. On the other hand, the American contribution to Armenian and Arab nationalism, to say nothing of other ethnic elements in the old Empire, was essentially cultural in character, not political. But it was no less effective in rendering Armenians and Arabs less receptive to Ottomanization. There was little direct impact on the vast Muslim population.

The Sublime Porte had looked with favor upon the Union cause during the American Civil War, and in 1862, Sultan Abdul Aziz forbade the fitting out of vessels in Turkey destined for privateering against the United States. After the War, in September 1866, the *USS Ticonderoga* paid an 11-day visit to the Sublime Porte. Morris observed that no vessel of the

Ticonderoga's dimensions had been admitted "to pass the Straits to Constantinople," and he had no doubt as to the moral impact on the Porte. Morris was also concerned with other aspects of the problem of Constantinople and the Straits, particularly with Russian pretensions which looked toward the control of that highly strategic position, in one way or another. Commenting on February 28, 1868, on the developments in the Rumanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which looked toward the establishment of an independent and unified state of Rumania, he wrote that "the absorption of the principalities by Russia would put that power in possession of all the available routes of access to Constantinople" and "render it almost impossible to defend the capital with any prospect of success." Later, on November 12, 1868, Morris advised the Department of State of the recognition of Prince Karl von Hohenzollern as Hospodar of the Danubian Principalities and of the fact that the project for union did not please St. Petersburg. It would

throw serious obstacles in the way of Russian progress to Constantinople, and it is therefore questionable if Rumania will enjoy, even under Prince Hohenzollern, the tranquillity and repose necessary to its development into an independent national existence.

On the other hand, Cassius Marcellus Clay, the eccentric Kentuckian who served as American Minister in St. Petersburg, who did not doubt that some persons in high place in the Russian capital desired "the possession of Constantinople and the Straits," felt that the "ruling minds" looked upon Constantinople, not as something to be fought for, "or bought at great price of money or blood." It was acceptable, however, "if good fortune should throw it into their power." Russia did not desire war, but it would not permit "any great power to take Constantinople without a great war." On the other hand, Russia might carry on a war, in its own secular interest, for the protection of the Balkan Slavs and the Greeks, and, if a Greek Empire should be established in the Hellespont and the Black Sea, Russia, in Clay's view, would hope to "find in it a permanent and grateful ally and not a jealous enemy." Indeed, that might prove to be "the ultimate and peaceable solution of the Eastern problem." In sum, Russian policy seemed to call for

First, the gradual autonomy of the Slav and Greek provinces, till the Turkish rule ceases, and then the Straits in the hands of a petty power, protected by the great rivals, or ultimately a respectable Greek Empire or kingdom, absorbing all the Greek and Slav subjects now belonging to Turkey.

Views such as these were all duly recorded in the diplomatic despatches of the day, whether on one problem or another, but they called for little or no action on the part of the United States. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, on January 5, 1871, after careful study of the problem, enunciated the principle that the Sublime Porte had no legal right to close the Straits,

even to American warships, as long as the Ottoman Empire was at peace, and refused to recognize the right *de jure*, although he would make no special issue of the matter unless a question of fact arose.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close various problems came to the attention of the United States Legation, elevated to embassy status in 1906, with John G. A. Leishman appointed the first United States Ambassador to the Sublime Porte. Questions involving Christian missions, schools and trade predominated, and, as already noted in passing, the Armenian problem came to the fore in the 1890s. In 1894 the United States Senate requested information concerning massacres in the Ottoman Empire. Much fear was expressed concerning American lives and property and, in 1895, the United States demanded an indemnity for property losses suffered by missions in Harput and Maras.

World War I and After

American interests did not appear to be heavily involved either in the Italo-Ottoman war of 1911–1912 or even in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, although there was little doubt as to American sympathies, despite official American neutrality. Moreover, the United States showed no overriding concern with the Middle East during the earlier part of World War I. Although it did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire, relations were hardly pleasant during the period of American neutrality. On August 8, a bare six days after signature of the secret German-Ottoman alliance of August 2, 1914, the Sublime Porte informed the United States of its intention to remain neutral. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau was instructed on August 26 that, under no circumstances, was he to offer any suggestions to the Sublime Porte concerning the position of the Ottoman Empire in the war. If asked, he was simply to state that the Empire should remain neutral. On September 9 the Sublime Porte informed the Powers, including the United States, that the régime of the capitulations, under which foreigners living in the Ottoman Empire had very special rights, would be abrogated on October 1. Along with other Powers, the United States filed a formal protest against the Ottoman action, fearful as it was as to the impact of the move on the work of the American missionary-educational establishment, especially. The transition, however, was made without incident; the foreign post offices, which the Powers had maintained, were closed, and import duties on foreign merchandise were increased as the first official acts of the Porte under the new freedom.

The Ottoman Empire, nevertheless, was brought into the war on October 28–29, 1914, following the advent of the two German cruisers into the Straits on August 11, 1914, by a German-Ottoman attack on Russia's Black Sea ports, and the United States entered the great conflict on April 6, 1917.

While there was much pressure to bring about a declaration of war, the United States did not declare war, although the Ottoman Empire broke diplomatic relations with the United States on April 20, 1917.

A strong humanitarian sense impelled Americans to help those who suffered during the course of the war in the Middle East. Not unnaturally, the war unloosed passions in which Christian minorities suffered persecution. Some 600,000 Armenians died in the process and another 1,400,000 were said to have suffered privation. In the early 1920s some 1,000,000 Greeks were uprooted, with the rise to power of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the Turkish War of Liberation against the Greeks. To help alleviate the suffering an American Commission for Armenian and Syrian Relief was organized in 1915, which was reorganized under a Congressional Charter as The Near East Relief (\$100,000,000) at the end of the war and ultimately became The Near East Foundation (1930).

The United States and the Peace-Making

The United States, of course, was much interested in the problems of peace in the Middle East. The American government was aware that the Allied Powers had reached secret agreements concerning the partition of the Ottoman Empire, but it was neither a party to them nor bound by them. Although "scooped" by the Lloyd George statement of January 5, 1918, President Wilson presented his own program for peace in the Fourteen Points Address of January 8, Point XII of which dealt with the Ottoman Empire:

The Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

Turkey's participation in the war ended with the Armistice of Mudros on October 30, 1918, and on December 4, Lewis Heck went out to Istanbul to serve as the American Commissioner. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, President Wilson sought to develop a viable program for peace in the Middle East. In that interest, he not only fostered the mandate system, but sent a Commission on Mandates in Turkey, headed by Henry Churchill King, President of Oberlin College, and Charles R. Crane, a Chicago businessman, together with an expert staff, to examine the conditions of peace and make recommendations relative thereto. While the British Delegation named its Commissioners, the French did not, and in the end, the American group went alone to the Middle East, during May–August 1919. The findings were of such a character that the report was suppressed, and it was not until 1947 that it was officially published, although

it was unofficially made public as early as 1922. The King-Crane Commission recommended establishment of a single general American mandate for all Asia Minor, including separate American mandates over Armenia, the International Constantinopolitan State and the Turkish State. It opposed setting off any territory for the Greeks in the İzmir area, which could be given autonomy under the general mandate for Turkey. The Commission found that the people of Syria preferred independence or, failing that, an American mandate, not French. It recommended that the unity of Syria be maintained, including Lebanon, although a large measure of local autonomy was suggested. The Commission advised "serious modification of the extreme Zionist program" of unlimited immigration of Jews, and it warned that about nine-tenths of the people were "emphatically against the entire Zionist program."

In the end, none of this program worked out. Commercial relations with Turkey were officially resumed on February 15, 1919, shortly after the Paris Peace Conference had begun its deliberations. On May 3, Gabriel B. Ravndal was appointed US Commissioner in İstanbul, while Rear Admiral Mark L. Bristol became US High Commissioner on August 12 and remained substantially until Joseph C. Grew became Ambassador on May 19, 1927. In view of the especially tragic situation in Armenia, Col. William Haskell became resident Commissioner for Relief in Armenia for the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy on July 16, 1919. Meanwhile, an American Military Mission, under Maj. Gen. James G. Harbord, was sent to Armenia during August–October 1919. While it made no formal recommendations, its report pointed toward an American mandate (April 13, 1920). On April 20, the Supreme War Council formally asked the United States to assume the mandate for Armenia, but, while the United States recognized the independence of Armenia on April 23, and President Wilson asked the US Senate for authority to accept the mandate, the Senate declined to do so on May 29. The United States took no formal part in the negotiation of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). President Wilson had been asked to determine the boundaries of the newly independent Armenia, and his decision was submitted on November 24, but, by that time, Armenia had become a Soviet Republic.

Although it was consulted, and on October 28, 1922, invited to participate in the Lausanne Conference of November 20, 1922–July 24, 1923, the United States made it clear that it assumed no responsibility in the Middle East and it only sent observers to Lausanne. Partly as an aspect of the dominant isolationism which had infected the country following World War I, the United States Delegation was instructed to sign nothing and to seal nothing, and to speak only when American interests seemed involved or when there was a need to shed the light of American ideals, ethics and morals upon the diplomatic problems. Primarily the United States was concerned

with the rights and properties of American citizens, freedom of opportunity for American business enterprise under the principle of "the open door," the maintenance of the capitulatory régime, the missionary-educational-philanthropic enterprise and archaeological research. While there was an interest in freedom of transit and navigation in the Turkish Straits, the United States refused to participate in the International Commission of the Straits which was to be established under the League of Nations, but it insisted, not unnaturally, on its rights under the Lausanne Straits Convention.

The Turkish Reform

Under the guidance of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey underwent one of the great revolutions of modern history during the interwar period. Even during the Greco-Turkish conflict (May 1919–October 1922), a National Pact was adopted (1920), based on the principles of self determination, the security of Constantinople, the opening of the Straits, the rights of minorities, and the abolition of the capitulations. The Sultanate was abolished on November 1, 1922, virtually on the eve of the Lausanne Conference, and a Republic proclaimed on October 29, 1923, with Mustafa Kemal as President and İsmet İnönü as Prime Minister. The Caliphate was abolished on March 3, 1924, and all members of the House of Osman were banished from Turkey. Polygamy was abolished in 1925, as were religious orders on September 2 and the wearing of the fez in November 1925. During January–February 1926 the new criminal, civil and commercial legal codes, based on the Italian, Swiss and German legal systems, were adopted. On April 9, 1928, the Constitution, originally adopted in 1924, was amended deleting all reference to Islam as the religion of the state. The Latin alphabet was introduced on November 3, 1928, and family names came into being on January 1, 1935. The Turkish ideological principles of Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Etatism, Secularism and Reform, which were formalized in 1931, were embodied in the Constitution in 1937.

American-Turkish Relations

Many of these basic moves brought problems in Turkish-American relations. Although France and the United Kingdom entered into relations with the new Turkish Republic soon after the Lausanne Conference, the establishment of formal relations with the United States took much longer despite the efforts of American business and the American missionary-educational enterprise. There were charges that the United States had sold Armenia down the river for a mess of Middle Eastern oil. A Turco-American treaty had been signed on August 6, 1923, at Lausanne, but it had no chance of Senatorial approval and was rejected on January 18, 1927. While the Turkish

government had tried to influence American policy at Lausanne by approval of the Chester Concession on April 9, 1923, the concession was annulled on December 18, 1923. Despite certain reservations as to its possibilities, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions voted to continue its work in Turkey in September 1923. Formal diplomatic relations were established on the basis of a *modus vivendi* on February 17, 1927. On May 19, 1927, Joseph C. Grew was appointed Ambassador to Turkey and Muhtar Bey Turkish Ambassador to the United States. But it was not until October 1, 1929, (proclaimed April 25, 1930) that a treaty of commerce and navigation was signed, and not until October 28, 1931, (ratified February 15, 1933) that a treaty of establishment and sojourn was signed.

Thanks to Americans like Joseph C. Grew and others, and despite the difficulties in Turkish-American relations following the end of World War I, there was a gradual readjustment, based on mutual respect, within the decade following the Lausanne Conference. Political relations developed along friendly lines and there were some significant developments in commercial relations which placed the United States in second place as a purchaser of Turkish goods, and seventh as an exporter to Turkey, with capital goods constituting 50 per cent of American exports by 1928. American shipping passed the Straits in modest tonnage (275,545 tons in 1938) and a reciprocal trade agreement was signed on April 1, 1939, (effective November 20).

The United States and the Montreux Straits Convention

Meanwhile, with the advent to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany, the Turkish government became much concerned with the problem of the security of the Straits and, as early as 1933, began a campaign for the elaboration of a new régime to govern passage of the ancient waterway. On April 10, 1936, it notified the signatories of the Lausanne Convention of its intentions as to revision, and informed the United States officially the next day. Ambassador MacMurray conferred with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, on April 22. He thought that the United States had "no treaty right, direct or indirect with respect to the Straits Convention," or any concern at all with the military and political aspects of the problem of revision. The sole American interest lay in "the maintenance (or amelioration) of the régime of freedom of commercial navigation through the Straits." There was every reason to believe that the Turkish government intended to maintain that régime, and there was no occasion for anxiety concerning the freedom of American shipping to transit the Straits. Since the interests of the United States were confined to matters in which it could expect the "most favorable treatment of our shipping," MacMurray saw no reason at all to send observers to a conference for revision of the

Lausanne Convention. Both the Department of State and the Navy Department concurred with MacMurray and he was authorized on June 22 to tell the Turkish authorities as much, and that since the United States government was essentially interested only in "safeguarding American rights in the navigation of the Straits," it did not intend to send an observer to the forthcoming conference at Montreux (June 22–July 20, 1936), although it desired to be kept informed as to the proceedings.

This was a position somewhat regretted ten years later—in the years immediately following World War II, when the USSR made very serious demands upon Turkey and insisted that Turkey and "the Black Sea Powers" should elaborate a new convention of the Turkish Straits. The United States opposed this proposition and, at one point, tried to make a legal case for representation at a possible Straits Conference on both the Lausanne and Montreux Conventions! It had a sound case based on the Yalta and Potsdam Protocols (1945), and on the fact that it was a great naval and commercial power with very important and enduring interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, to say nothing of Turkey and Greece, in particular. But it was a reasonable position in 1936, when the American commercial interest was rather small—with only 189,152 tons of shipping transiting the Straits in 1935—and the politico-strategic interest at the time appeared minimal.

The Impact of World War II

The enduring politico-strategic interest of the United States in the Middle East, ultimately involving military commitments, dates from World War II. The period immediately prior to American entry witnessed an increasing concern with the expansion of the war in the Middle East. During January–February 1941, President Roosevelt sent an emissary to this troubled region to stimulate resistance to the Nazis. The Turkish government, although cautious, appeared to share something of the American view concerning the war. President Roosevelt stated the basic principle, in extending lend-lease assistance to Turkey on December 3, 1941, just four days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, when he found the defense of Turkey "vital to the defense of the United States." The principle was extended to Iran on March 10, 1942, and on March 6, 1944, the President declared that the United States had a "vital interest" in the Middle East, the peace and security of which were "of significance to the world as a whole." Nevertheless, and despite the large use of American forces in Iran, it is quite evident that the Middle East was of secondary interest to the United States as a military theater. It was specifically agreed at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 that the British government was to "play the cards" in Turkey and the Middle East.

Turkish Entry into the War

Granted the defense of the Middle East as vital to that of the United States, it is clear from the conferences at Quebec, Moscow, Tehran and Cairo in 1943 that the United States, with its concentration on Operation Overlord against Germany in the West, did not favor the entry of Turkey into the "shooting war," whatever the appearances to the contrary, and even the appearances are few. It is also doubtful that the United Kingdom, with which Turkey had an alliance, signed on October 19, 1939, or the USSR, did so either, whatever the propaganda and the pressures to the contrary at critical moments. When the question of possible Turkish entry was raised in July 1944, the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff indicated their approval in principle, but warned that the United States was not thereby committed to military, naval or air support of any campaign in the Balkans. There were no concerted plans for a consistent campaign in that area, and neither troops nor supplies were to be diverted from Operation Overlord.

President Harry S Truman was confronted with Middle East problems from the very outset of his administration, primarily because of the threat along the "northern tier" of Greece, Turkey and Iran, but also because of the Palestine problem. The Soviet Union had set forth its position during November 12-13, 1940, when Foreign Minister Molotov visited Berlin. As a price for possible entry into the Axis, with which it was then associated, the USSR had demanded a new régime of the Straits, with bases in that area and provision for joint defense, and had declared that the center of gravity of Soviet policy and interest lay in the area south of Baku and Batum, in the general direction of the Persian Gulf. That position did not change with the end of the war. To the contrary, Soviet ambitions were pressed at all points along the northern tier, and there were Soviet demands both for a trusteeship over Libya and for a commercial (naval) base in the Dodecanese Islands. On March 19, 1945, the USSR denounced its non-aggression agreement with Turkey, signed originally on December 17, 1925. On June 7 and 18, 1945, Turkey was informed that a new treaty would have to provide for a new régime of the Straits, with joint defense of that area under arrangements which would have made Turkey a virtual satellite of the USSR. After a very brief discussion at the Yalta Conference on February 11, 1945, it was agreed that the United States, the United Kingdom and the USSR would consider Soviet proposals relative to the Montreux Convention and that the Turkish government would be informed at the appropriate moment. There was much more discussion at Potsdam, July 17-August 2, 1945, in view of the Soviet pressures on Turkey. In the end the three Powers agreed to discuss the problem with Turkey. On November

2, 1945, the United States set forth its basic position calling for freedom of passage of the Straits for commercial vessels at all times, freedom of passage for warships of the Black Sea Powers, and restricted rights for the warships of non-Black Sea Powers—a position which somewhat alarmed the Turkish government. The Soviet position was formally set forth in a note of August 7, 1946, substantially reiterating its position throughout World War II. On August 15, President Truman advised the Turkish government that the United States would support it—as did the United Kingdom—in opposing the Soviet demands.

The Truman Doctrine

As President Truman had declared in his Army Day address on April 6, 1946, the Middle East was “an area of great economic and strategic interest,” the nations of which were “not strong enough individually or collectively to withstand powerful aggression.” It was easy to see, he observed, how the area could “become a region of intense rivalry between outside powers, and how such rivalry might suddenly erupt into conflict.” No country, he thought, had interests in the Middle East which could not be reconciled with those of other nations through the United Nations.

The threat to Greece, which took the form of internal subversion and guerrilla action along the northern frontiers, was met by action within the United Nations and economic and military advisory assistance. The presence of the Sixth United States Fleet in the Mediterranean, no doubt, also exercised a salutary influence in the instance of Greece, as it did in the instance of Turkey. The Greek problem called forth the Truman Doctrine on March 12, 1947, in one of the most far-reaching pronouncements of American foreign policy in the immediate postwar period. President Truman declared that the United States was prepared to assist both Greece and Turkey in defending their independence. If Greece fell under the control of an armed minority, he said, the effect upon Turkey “would be immediate and serious,” and “confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the Middle East.” Moreover, if the United States, the only country capable at the time of rendering assistance, failed to aid Greece and Turkey, “the effect would be far-reaching to the west as to the east.” Truman believed that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” He felt that they must be assisted to “work out their own destinies in their own way,” and that assistance should be primarily through financial and economic aid. Congress was asked to provide authority for initial assistance in the amount of \$400,000,000 for the period ending June 30, 1948.

The Troubled Turco-American Alliance

No political or military commitments were involved in the agreements with Greece and Turkey for administration of American assistance. These came when Greece and Turkey, on their own volition and in defense of their own national interests, entered the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), on February 18, 1952. As applied to Greece and Turkey, which now became the southeastern flank of NATO, the NATO commitment of the United States was extended to cover the territories of these two countries and, therefore, the eastern Mediterranean. Within the NATO framework an attack upon either was to be considered an attack upon all members. It was agreed that, if an attack occurred, each party would come to the assistance of the victim of attack, individually or in concert, by taking such action as it deemed necessary.

Turkey played an active rôle—as did Greece—in the Korean conflict beginning in June 1950. It also supported the United States and the United Kingdom in the abortive attempt to build a Middle East Command—or Middle East Defense Organization during 1951–1953—along with the United States, the United Kingdom and France. When this attempt failed, as it was bound to fail, in view of the Arab-Israel conflict, President Truman concentrated on the Northern Tier. He called attention to the situation in his message to Congress on May 24, 1951, when he declared that no part of the world was “more directly exposed to Soviet pressure,” and that the Kremlin had lost no opportunity to “stir these troubled waters,” with civil war in Greece, pressure on Turkey for concessions in the Straits, sponsorship of the Tudeh Party in Iran, and furthering the “factional strife” between Israel and the Arab states. All these moves reflected “a concerted design for the extension of Soviet domination to this vital area.” While Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, following a brief visit to the Middle East during May 1953, was convinced that the Middle East Command was impossible because of the Arab-Israel conflict, he felt that along the Northern Tier of Greece, Turkey and Iran, to say nothing of Pakistan, where proximity to the USSR induced a greater awareness of the danger, there were distinct possibilities of cooperation.

Ultimately the Dulles policy led to the elaboration of the so-called Baghdad Pact (1955), later the Central Treaty Organization (1959), which also included Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Although the United States did not become a member of the pact, it participated both in committee meetings and in the Ministerial Council. Moreover, on March 5, 1959, the United States entered into bilateral agreements with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, as members of CENTO. The agreements stated that, in the event of aggression, the United States, in accordance with the Constitution, would

take such appropriate action, including the use of armed forces, as might be "mutually agreed upon" and was envisaged in the Eisenhower Doctrine of March 9, 1957. The NATO obligations to Greece and Turkey and these bilateral agreements constituted the only formal arrangements which stipulate specifically the possible commitment of American forces in the Middle East.

This was the halcyon period of the American association with Turkey during the era of the "cold war" with the USSR, when the mutuality of national interest seemed quite obvious. It may be observed that during this general period Turkey received some \$5,632,400,000 of military and economic assistance from the United States—more than half of it (\$2,964,700,000) in military aid. Moreover, throughout the post-war era, the United States, along with the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, remained a major trading partner with Turkey.

But there were serious problems within the framework of the "troubled alliance." Many of these problems developed as the spirit of *détente* seemed to grow in relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers, although they had various and deep-seated roots. For one thing, there were some 15,000 American troops and their dependents on Turkish soil, and American bases and facilities in addition to those which were under the authority and within the framework of NATO, and a certain Turkish sensitiveness developed in relation thereto. There appeared to be an evident weakening in NATO ties during the later years, although there seemed little question of the usefulness of the alliance, whether in Europe or along the southeastern flank of Greece and Turkey.

Granted a certain weakening of the southeastern flank of NATO because of developments in Greece and Turkey, and the inability of the United States, or of any other state, or states, readily to "solve" the complex Greco-Turkish controversy relative to Cyprus, NATO was reaffirmed—as it was to be many times since—following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the proclamation of the Brezhnev doctrine in August 1968. On November 15–16, 1968, the NATO Council observed that "new uncertainties resulting from Soviet actions" extended to the Mediterranean. It was obvious that any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences.

A very irritating problem in Turco-American relations lay in the opium traffic. Opium, cultivated for centuries in Turkey, especially in the area of Afyonkarahissar, was a major cash crop for poor Turkish farmers. But it was a major source of heroin in the United States. A Turco-American agreement in 1971 provided for eliminating opium, with an American payment of \$35,000,000 to compensate Turkish farmers and for production of other crops. There was much sensitiveness concerning the issue in Turkey,

charges of American interference in Turkish internal affairs, and in 1975 the Turkish government rescinded the agreement.

But the major source of Turco-American difficulties in the later years had to do with the problem of Cyprus. The 1960 agreements which had established an independent Republic of Cyprus had not worked at all well. There was continued trouble on the island, only 40 miles off the Turkish coast, with a population of some 600,000, 80 per cent of which was ethnic Greek and 20 per cent Turkish. War threatened between Greece and Turkey as early as 1964, when President Johnson warned the Turkish government against military measures and questioned the applicability of NATO in the event of Soviet intervention against Turkey. A *coup* against Archbishop Makarios, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, in July 1974, initiated by the Greek government of the time, led to the landing of some 40,000 Turkish troops and the occupation of about 40 per cent of the island. In the process, the Greek military government collapsed. On December 10, 1974, the American Congress, under the pressures of "ethnic politics," voted to halt military assistance as of February 5, 1975, unless President Ford at that time could certify that substantial progress had been made toward a settlement. Not until October 1975 was the embargo relaxed, allowing Turkey to obtain \$185,000,000 in military equipment, for which contracts had already been made before February 5.

Meanwhile, there had been little progress toward achieving a settlement of the Cyprus problem, and Turco-American relations deteriorated to the point where American installations were put under severe limitations, as were American military personnel in Turkey. All bases but one were closed in July. The downward trend appeared altogether likely to continue as long as the arms embargo was maintained and it was anticipated that there would be a substantial dismantling of critical installations. Meanwhile, American objectives continued to aim at 1) promotion of an early settlement of the Cyprus problem, 2) strengthening close bilateral ties with both Greece and Turkey, 3) restoring NATO solidarity in the eastern Mediterranean and 4) maintaining important American interests in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Continuation of the statutory embargo on the shipment of military equipment to Turkey, whose armed forces are 90 per cent equipped by the United States, has not served in the achievement of American goals, nor was there any evidence that it would do so. To the contrary, a Soviet-Turkish economic agreement involving some \$700,000,000 was reported signed in July 1975, and in October Turkey was said to be purchasing 60 helicopters from the USSR.

There were few visible signs in early 1976 of any "progress" in the adjustment of the Cyprus issue. Attitudes seemed as intransigent as ever. Despite the resumption of intercommunal negotiations between the Greek

and Turkish elements on the island in February 1976, there appeared little or no prospect of a breakthrough. There were some signs of hope, however, based on a tacit Greek recognition of the Turkish concept of a bizonal federal state of Cyprus, provided that Turkey makes significant territorial concessions and the Greeks renounce *enosis*.

Meanwhile, the United States and Turkey, which had been engaged in quiet diplomatic discussions of American-Turkish relations, reached agreement on March 26, 1976, on a new four year agreement under which Turkey would obtain clear control over the 26 bases on its territory, which would now be reopened. Operation of the bases would be tied to the United States supplying Turkey over a four year period with \$800,000,000 in military loans and credits and \$200,000,000 in American military grants. In addition, Turkey could receive some \$280,000,000 in Export-Import Bank loans to finance purchases of American equipment. The American servicemen, now numbering some 6,000, and their dependents, would be subject to special status-of-forces agreements. The new agreement is to be submitted to the Congress for approval in the form of a concurrent resolution. The Turkish government rejected any linkage between the new agreement and the Cyprus issue, although politically there was a connection, and considerable doubt was expressed that the Congress would give its approval without "progress" concerning the problem of Cyprus. On the other hand, Secretary of State Kissinger warned the International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives on March 29, that for Congress to relate the Cyprus question to Turco-American military relations "would lead to disastrous consequences that would last for decades."

A Summary View

The basically friendly relationship between the Republic of Turkey—and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire—and the United States has been a long and enduring one, although there were bound to be difficult and complex problems and periods of misunderstanding and friction. The national movements in the nineteenth century, especially among the Greeks, the Balkan Slavs and the Rumanians, to say nothing of the Armenians, brought a host of delicate issues, although there was little or no tendency toward American intervention. The long standing Cyprus issue seemed almost insoluble after World War II and especially during 1974–1975.

Yet it is doubtful, despite the grave issues at the moment, provided a mutual sense of interest and realism is maintained, that Turco-American friendship will now be strained to the breaking point and that the Turkish Republic will now move toward the USSR or even toward a more neutralist

position in world politics. The basic interests both of the United States and of the Republic of Turkey require intelligent and realistic readjustments on the part of both countries, along with mutual understanding of the problems to be met. This is not to suggest that changes will not occur in the Turco-American relationship, with moves on the larger stage of world politics toward *détente*, advances in military technology, developments at both ends and throughout the Mediterranean, and the insistence on the part of the Turkish government that subservience and friendship are not necessarily synonymous terms.
