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# Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945–1952

Melvyn P. Leffler

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On March 12, 1947, President Harry S. Truman appeared before a joint session of Congress and made one of the most momentous addresses of the postwar era. Requesting \$400 million in aid for Greece and Turkey, he emphasized that a "fateful hour" had arrived and that nations had to "choose between alternative ways of life." The United States, Truman insisted, had to support "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Greece, of course, was then beleaguered by civil war. Turkey, while enjoying remarkable internal stability, supposedly was subject to pressure from the Soviet Union, a constant war of nerves, and the prospect of outright Soviet aggression. Undersecretary of State Dean G. Acheson warned that if the United States did not act, three continents could fall prey to Soviet domination.<sup>1</sup>

The international situation, of course, was far more complex than that described by Truman or Acheson. The president and his closest advisers simplified international realities in order to generate public support for unprecedented peacetime foreign-policy initiatives.<sup>2</sup> Many scholars have demonstrated that the Greek civil war did not fall neatly into the category of Soviet aggression–American response. Developments in Turkey, however, have received far less attention.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1947* (Washington, 1963), 178–79; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, 1969), 219; Joseph M. Jones, *Fifteen Weeks (February 21–June 5, 1947)* (New York, 1955), 39–198.

<sup>2</sup> President Harry S. Truman said that he confronted "the greatest selling job ever facing a President." Dean Acheson admitted: "No time was left for measured appraisal." Matthew J. Connelly, notes on cabinet meeting, March 7, 1947, box 1, Matthew J. Connelly Papers (Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo.); Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 219.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943–1949* (New York, 1982); John R. Oneal, *Foreign Policy Making in Times of Crisis* (Columbus, 1982), 137–215; George Martin Alex-

The purpose of this article is to examine the policy of the United States toward Turkey in the postwar era, to elucidate United States policy makers' assessments of Soviet intentions toward Turkey, and to explain the reasons for and the consequences of Turkey's inclusion in the Truman Doctrine. Rather than expecting an imminent Soviet attack on Turkey, United States officials sought to take advantage of a favorable opportunity to enhance the strategic interests of the United States in the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. Assistance under the Truman Doctrine was designed to improve the military capabilities of both Turkey and the United States to wage war against the Soviet Union should conflict unexpectedly erupt. Although United States officials hoped to capitalize on Turkey's geographic location without assuming specific guarantees to defend Turkey's territorial integrity, they soon found that their investment in Turkey might be wasted and their hopes for strategic gain unrealized if they did not accept more binding commitments in the form of Turkey's admission into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This article, then, underscores the important and often unexplained role of strategic imperatives in the shaping of foreign-policy actions and alliance relationships. More indirectly, it seeks to stimulate a reconsideration of how the relationship between the United States and Turkey might have interacted with other variables to escalate tensions during the formative years of the Cold War.

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, United States policy makers did not believe that Soviet leaders intended to use force to achieve their goals vis-à-vis Turkey. State Department and military officials assumed that the Soviet Union's desire to revise the Montreux Convention, to establish bases in the Dardanelles, and to acquire Kars and Ardahan constituted threats to long-term Anglo-American interests in the Mediterranean. Foreign Service officers such as George F. Kennan and Elbridge Durbrow and strategic planners such as Gen.

ander, *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine: British Policy in Greece, 1944-1947* (New York, 1982); John O. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist "Second Round," 1944-1945* (Princeton, 1972); C. M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* (London, 1976). Turkish-American relations are covered briefly in most of the standard accounts of the origins of the Cold War and of United States policy in the Middle East. See, for example, Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, 1977), 233-35; John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York, 1972), 336-52; Thomas G. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* (Baltimore, 1973), 174-206; Joyce Kolko and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York, 1972), 242-45, 336-46; George Kirk, *The Middle East, 1945-1950* (London, 1954), 21-56; John C. Campbell, *Defense of the Middle East: Problems of American Policy* (New York, 1958), 154-82; and George Lenczowski, *Soviet Advances in the Middle East* (Washington, 1972), 37-49. For a recent account of United States policy in the region prior to the Truman Doctrine, see Bruce Rovellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, 1980). For the controversy over the Dardanelles, see Harry N. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and U.S. Policy* (Baltimore, 1974); Anthony R. De Luca, "Soviet-American Politics and the Turkish Straits," *Political Science Quarterly*, 92 (Fall 1977), 503-24; and David J. Alvarez, *Bureaucracy and Cold War Diplomacy: The United States and Turkey, 1943-1946* (Thessaloniki, 1980). For an analysis of Truman's perceptions of Soviet intentions regarding Turkey, see J. Garry Clifford, "President Truman and Peter the Great's Will," *Diplomatic History*, 4 (Fall 1980), 371-85.

George A. Lincoln, however, maintained that Soviet leaders felt too weak to engage in military aggression and thereby to risk a general war.<sup>4</sup>

Those assessments were based on appraisals of Soviet actions that were, in fact, carefully modulated. In June 1945, for example, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov informed the Turkish ambassador that Soviet acceptance of a new treaty of friendship was contingent on revision of the Montreux Convention, frontier readjustments, and greater security in the straits, including a base. Yet even hard-line United States officials such as Loy W. Henderson, director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, acknowledged that the Soviets had not made formal demands, had acted with restraint, and had invited further discussion. When Josef Stalin discussed these issues with Winston S. Churchill and Truman at Potsdam and when he reviewed them with Ambassador Walter Bedell Smith in Moscow in April 1946, the Soviet leader was neither intransigent nor intemperate. Soviet diplomats made it clear that they were flexible on the territorial issue and that it was of secondary importance. After the spring of 1946, the Soviets stopped raising the matter of frontier readjustments, and the issue faded from the diplomatic scene.<sup>5</sup>

In their relations with Turkey, the Soviets gave priority to enhancing their security in the straits and in the Black Sea. Because that matter has received extensive attention, there is no reason to dwell on it here. In brief, United States officials acknowledged the legitimacy of the Soviet desire to revise the Montreux Convention but opposed Soviet acquisition of bases. Truman and Churchill agreed at Potsdam that the Soviets ought to raise the question of revision at a subsequent time. In their informal and nonacrimonious discussions with Turkish officials in 1945 and early 1946, Soviet diplomats emphasized the need to enhance Soviet security in the Dardanelles and in the Black

<sup>4</sup> Expanded draft of letter from Secretary of War to Secretary of State, "U.S. Position re Soviet Proposals on Kiel Canal and Dardanelles," July 8, 1945, sec. 1-A, ABC 093 Kiel (6 July 1945), Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165 (National Archives); George A. Lincoln to Stanley D. Embick, July 7, 1945, *ibid.*; Lincoln to John E. Hull, April 11, 1945, OPD 336 TS, *ibid.*; Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS] 1418/1, enclosure "B," JCS to Secretary of State, July 30, 1945, CCS 092 (7-10-45), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218 (National Archives); JCS 1641, "U.S. Security Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean," March 10-13, 1946, sec. 6, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), *ibid.*; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946* (11 vols., Washington, 1969-1972), VII, 840-42; George F. Kennan to Secretary of State, March 17, 1946, box 63, George M. Elsey Papers (Harry S. Truman Library); Elbridge Durbrow to Secretary of State, Aug. 5, 1946, file 761.67/8-546, Records of the Department of State, RG 59 (National Archives).

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum regarding Soviet-Turkish Relations, June 29, 1945, FW 761.6711/6-1845, Records of the Department of State; Edwin C. Wilson to Secretary of State, April 19, 1946, file 761.67/4-1946, *ibid.*; James F. Byrnes, memorandum for the President, July 4, 1945, box 175, President's secretary's file, Harry S. Truman Papers (Harry S. Truman Library); Walter Bedell Smith to Secretary of State, April 5, 1946, box 188, *ibid.*; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), 1945* (2 vols., Washington, 1960), I, 1010-54, II, 257-58, 266-67, 301-305, 312-14, 320, 365-67, 372-73, 393, 606, 1427-28, 1439-40; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, VII, 809-810; "Russian-Turkish Frontier," March 11, 1946, box 11, William D. Leahy Papers, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is difficult to find any reference to the Soviets' raising the territorial issue anew after the middle of 1946. In May 1953 the Soviets assured Turkey that they no longer laid claim to Kars and Ardahan. Stephen G. Xydis, "The 1945 Crisis over the Turkish Straits," *Balkan Studies*, 1 (1960), 90.

Sea. They were usually vague about what they wanted, but occasionally they intimated that they might be satisfied with less than permanent bases in the straits.<sup>6</sup>

When the Soviets finally raised the issue of the straits in a formal diplomatic note in August 1946, the furor engendered in Washington was out of proportion to the diplomatic event. Edwin C. Wilson, the United States ambassador to Turkey, interpreted the Soviet proposals, including a request for joint defense of the Dardanelles, as a smoke screen for destroying Turkey's independence. Wilson acknowledged, however, that the Soviet note itself was not threatening in tone. Nor were Turkish officials particularly alarmed. They did not expect a Soviet attack, and they had anticipated a more bellicose Soviet diplomatic initiative. Moreover, they considered the second Soviet note, circulated in September, even milder and more restrained. The Soviet quest for bases in the Dardanelles, in fact, was similar to ongoing United States efforts to negotiate base rights in Iceland, Greenland, Panama, the Azores, and the western Pacific. Several months earlier Henderson had emphasized precisely this point when he had advised against raising a formal objection to Soviet requests of Turkey.<sup>7</sup>

What supposedly distinguished Soviet actions toward Turkey was Soviet bellicosity. Diplomats and historians often have focused on Soviet troop movements to support their contention that the Soviets were preparing or threatening to use force to dominate Turkey. On March 18, 1946, for example, in a frequently cited dispatch, Ambassador Wilson informed Washington of new Soviet troop dispositions and suggested that the Soviets might soon be in a position to strike at Turkey. In the most recent and widely acclaimed analysis of developments in the Near East, Bruce Robellet Kuniholm fully accepts Wilson's appraisal of Soviet actions and intentions.<sup>8</sup>

There is, however, considerable reason to question that view of Soviet behavior and to reassess the motivations behind subsequent actions of the United States. Throughout late 1945 and 1946, for example, United States officials received intelligence that Soviet troops were being withdrawn in substantial numbers from eastern and southeastern Europe. Although troop rotations

<sup>6</sup> Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and U.S. Policy*; Xydis, "1945 Crisis over the Turkish Straits," 65-90; Byrnes, memorandum for the President, July 4, 1945, box 175, President's secretary's file, Truman Papers; Smith to Secretary of State, April 5, 1946, box 188, *ibid.*; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, VII, 812-13, 816, 826. Despite occasional vituperous press and radio announcements by both the Turks and the Soviets, United States officials knew that Turkish-Soviet diplomatic talks took place in a correct, if not a cordial, manner. *Ibid.*, 810-18; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945* (9 vols., Washington, 1967-1969), VIII, 1219.

<sup>7</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, VII, 827-29, 835, 837, 859, 860, 867-68, 869; Thomas T. Handy to Dwight D. Eisenhower, Aug. 15, 1946, P&O 092 TS, Records of the United States Army Staff, RG319 [National Archives]; JCS 1704/1, "Military Implications of the Current Turkish Situation," Aug. 24, 1946, sec. 1, CCS 092 (8-22-46), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Loy W. Henderson to H. Freeman Matthews, Jan. 30, 1946, box 17, Lot 54D394, Records of the Department of State.

<sup>8</sup> Edwin C. Wilson's stress on Soviet troop movements can be found in his frequently cited dispatch to the Secretary of State. Bruce Robellet Kuniholm uses that document as a framework for much of his analysis regarding Turkey. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, VII, 818-19; Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 316-17, 356.

and maneuvers did occur, those actions were considered normal. In October 1945 a report from the joint intelligence subcommittee in London emphasized that there was no appreciable buildup of troops in Bulgaria and no concentration of aircraft, either in Bulgaria or in the Caucasus, capable of sustaining a Soviet attack on Turkey. In late December 1945 United States Army intelligence reported that stories of Soviet troop concentrations in Bulgaria had been alarmist. Some increment of Soviet troops in Bulgaria probably did occur briefly in early 1946, but United States military analysts concurred with Turkish officials that it did not portend a Soviet attack. Indeed, at the very time that Wilson sent his alarming dispatch on March 18, warning of impending Soviet aggression, both the Turkish prime minister and the secretary-general of the Turkish Foreign Office were discounting that possibility. According to United States intelligence, between May and September 1946, Soviet troops in Europe decreased from about 2 million men to about 1.5 million; within the Soviet Union, from about 5 million to 2.7 million. During the crisis of August 1946, Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, director of the Central Intelligence Group, reassured President Truman that there were no unusual Soviet troop concentrations, troop movements, or supply buildups.<sup>9</sup>

Why, then, were United States officials so exercised by Soviet policy toward Turkey? Although they did not expect the Soviets to apply military force, policy makers worried that the Soviet demand for bases in the Dardanelles might be a ruse for the eventual projection of Soviet power into the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. Bases in the straits, United States military experts argued, would not suffice to keep the waterway open in wartime against modern air power; hence, the Soviets were likely to seek additional bases in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean. If Soviet influence expanded in that region, vital British petroleum supplies and communication networks might be jeopardized. And if the British Empire disintegrated, Soviet prospects for gaining control of Eurasia would be greatly enhanced, and the United States might be left vulnerable and exposed. At a meeting with the president on August 15, 1946, Acting Secretary of State Acheson, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, Assistant Secretary of War Kenneth C. Royall, and top military leaders presented those arguments and urged resistance to Soviet demands. Truman fully concurred with their advice.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For weekly calculations of Soviet troop dispositions, see Carl Espe, memoranda, 1946, A8, box 106, series V, Strategic Plans Division (Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard); JIC (45) 289 (0) (FINAL), Report by Joint Intelligence Subcommittee, "The Russian Threat to Turkey," Oct. 6, 1945, ABC 092 USSR (15 November 1944), Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Joint Intelligence Committee, "Russian Troop Movements in South East Europe and Persia," May 15, 1946, *ibid.*; Military Intelligence Division, "Review of Europe, Russia, and the Middle East," Dec. 26, 1945, sec. 2, OPD 350.05 TS, *ibid.*; John Weckerling to Deputy Chief of Staff, March 19, 1946, *ibid.*; SACMED AFHQ, Caserta, Italy, to War Department, March 9, 1946, box 1, Leahy Papers, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; William M. Robertson to War Department, June 13, 1946, *ibid.*; Hoyt S. Vandenberg, memorandum for the President, Aug. 24, 1946, box 249, President's secretary's file, Truman Papers. For Wilson's cables noting the Turkish belief that the Soviets were not planning an attack, see Wilson to Secretary of State, March 19, 1946, file 761.67/3-1946, Records of the Department of State.

<sup>10</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, VII, 840-58.

The decision to encourage Turkish opposition to Soviet overtures constituted part of the overall toughening of United States policy toward the Soviet Union during 1946. Truman began the year determined to stop babying the Soviets; in his "long" telegram in February, Kennan laid out an elaborate rationale for resisting Soviet pressure; during the Iranian crisis in the spring, United States officials learned that if they assumed a determined posture, the Soviets would back down. Rankled by domestic criticism and by division within his administration, beleaguered by a host of domestic and international problems, exasperated by the tedious negotiations over the minor peace treaties, and cognizant of traditional Soviet ambitions in the Near East, Truman was in no mood to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Union over the Dardanelles.<sup>11</sup>

During the summer the president asked Clark M. Clifford, one of his assistants in the White House, to write a paper outlining Soviet violations of international commitments. Clifford and George M. Elsey, another White House aide, took the opportunity to consult with all the leading members of the administration, including top military officers, and to write a comprehensive report calling for the global containment of Soviet influence. The rapid, decisive, and unanimous accord to stiffen Turkish resistance to Soviet demands reflected a consensus that new initiatives had to be taken to shore up United States influence in areas of vital importance.<sup>12</sup>

Top officials suspected, however, that the American public would not understand the strategic importance of Turkey. At their August meeting with the president, Royall and Forrestal emphasized the importance of properly briefing the press. Shortly thereafter, Royall informed Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson that Acheson was ready to discuss means "of conditioning the public mind." Exactly what was done is uncertain, but the news media did begin to explain to the attentive public that the dispute over the straits was assuming central importance in the overall rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States. For example, *Time* noted that the Soviet proposals on the Dardanelles, coupled with Bulgaria's request for part of Thrace, represented the Soviet Union's effort to gain access to the Aegean, to seal off the straits, and to threaten Greece and Turkey. At the same time, the *Saturday Evening Post* reproached left-wingers, isolationists, and appeasers for their indifference to the Soviet Union's ominous attempt to exclude the shipping of other nations from the Black Sea. *United States News*, quoting administration officials, reported that the Soviet goal was to gain control of the eastern Mediterranean, to secure access to oil in the Middle East, and to establish a "flanking position on India and China."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Robert L. Messer, *The End of an Alliance: James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman, and the Origins of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, 1982), 137–94; Oneal, *Foreign Policy Making*, 68–136; Clifford, "President Truman and Peter the Great's Will."

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line* (New York, 1968), 421–82; box 63, Elsey Papers; boxes 14, 15, Clark M. Clifford Papers (Harry S. Truman Library).

<sup>13</sup> Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, 1951), 191–92; Kenneth C. Royall to Robert P. Patterson, n.d. [mid-August 1946], box 9, general decimal file, Robert P. Patterson Papers, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, RG 107 (National Archives); *Time*, Sept. 2,

What top officials did not tell the press and what the media did not explain were the precise strategic calculations that underlay United States determination to contain Soviet influence in the Near East. Indeed, on the very day that Acheson, Forrestal, and Royall met with Truman, military planners on the Joint War Plans Committee were putting the final touches on a strategic study, known as "Griddle," that emphasized the importance of Turkey as a base for Allied operations against the Soviet Union should war unexpectedly erupt. Those civilian and military officials who met with Truman on August 15, including Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Gen. Carl Spaatz, and Gen. Thomas T. Handy, were very aware of Turkey's prospective strategic importance to the West in wartime.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, despite the rhetoric about the Soviet expansionist thrust southward, military analysts and civilian officials acknowledged that Soviet demands on Turkey had a substantial defensive component. "Soviet pressure in the Middle East," concluded the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in March 1946, "has for its primary objective the protection of the vital Ploesti, Kharkov and Baku areas." Three months later, in a comprehensive assessment of Soviet intentions in the Middle East, British intelligence emphasized Soviet efforts to move the center of Soviet industry eastward, to safeguard the Caucasian oil fields, and to protect the development of Soviet resources from prospective attack. In their report to the president, Clifford and Elsey also noted that "the Near East is an area of great strategic interest to the Soviet Union because of the shift of Soviet industry to southeastern Russia, within range of air attack from much of the Near East." And in November 1946, in a still more detailed assessment of the region, United States war planners stressed that the Soviet Union wanted to control the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf areas in order "to deny them as possible enemy air, sea, and ground offensive bases. By this increase in the depth of her southerly territorial border, the Soviets would greatly increase the security of their vital areas from air attack and from seizure by ground forces."<sup>15</sup>

It was this very vulnerability that United States strategic planners hoped to capitalize on. In fact, United States interest in Turkey accelerated as war planners began to develop a strategic concept for the postwar era and as overall United States-Soviet relations deteriorated sharply in early 1946. In September 1945 strategic planners emphasized "the necessity of keeping a prospective enemy at the maximum possible distance, and conversely of pro-

1946, p. 22; "Our Left Wingers Go Isolationist," *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 12, 1946, p. 160; "U.S. Stand on Dardanelles: High Stakes in the Middle East," *United States News*, Aug. 30, 1946, pp. 16-17.

<sup>14</sup> Joint War Plans Committee [JWPC] 467/1, Aug. 15, 1946, sec. 11, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. See also citations in footnote 18.

<sup>15</sup> JCS 1641/1, "U.S. Security Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean," March 10, 1946, sec. 6, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; JWPC 475/1, "Strategic Study of the Area between the Alps and the Himalayas," Nov. 2, 1946, sec. 3, pt. 1, CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), *ibid.*; Joint Intelligence Committee [of the British Staff Mission], Memorandum for Information No. 223, "Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions in the Middle East," June 28, 1946, sec. 1-C, ABC 336 Russia (22 August 1943), Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Krock, *Memoirs*, 434.

jecting our advance bases into areas well removed from the United States, so as to project our operations with new weapons or otherwise nearer the enemy." With regard to a prospective war with the Soviet Union, the aim was "to oppose, as far as possible, Russian advances beyond her own borders and to obtain such strategic positions as are required to destroy her war potential rather than to overrun the USSR." Later in the autumn of 1945, the first efforts were made to define Soviet industrial-urban centers of critical strategic importance. In order of priority, planners focused on oil-producing centers in the Caucasus and in Rumania and, secondarily, on industrial complexes in the Urals, Ukraine, Upper Silesia and Czechoslovakia, Moscow, and Mukden areas. "Destruction by air of the Caucasian and Ploesti oil fields and the Ukraine and Ural industrial centers would prevent Soviet prosecution of war."<sup>16</sup>

Turkey's special role emerged in March 1946 when, during the Iranian crisis, State Department officials pressed military planners to define more clearly the importance of Turkey and when strategic analysts were forced to come to terms with the effects of Western Europe's military weakness and the United States' rapid demobilization. Assuming that Soviet troops would easily overrun all of Western Europe and that United States forces would be evacuated from the continent, the utilization of air power took on more significance than ever before. Turkey was seen as a key to the effective application of air power.<sup>17</sup> During the spring and summer of 1946, prior to the Soviet note on the straits, strategic planners decided that other than Great Britain, the Cairo-Suez area was the most desirable place on the globe from which to launch an air attack against Soviet targets. Should war erupt, Turkey's great importance would be that it provide a cushion, absorbing the initial Soviet blow and deterring Soviet advances, while the United States prepared to undertake the counteroffensive, particularly from the Cairo-Suez area. In April 1946 General Lincoln repeatedly emphasized that strategy to Benjamin V. Cohen, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes's closest aide; in July Adm. Richard L. Conolly, commander of United States naval forces in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, almost certainly discussed the strategy with Byrnes and other State Department officials when he served with them on the United States delegation to the Paris Peace Conference; and later in the month Secretary of War Patterson explained the same strategy to President Truman. By the time

<sup>16</sup> Joint Planning Staff [JPS] 744/3, "Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces," Sept. 14, 1945, sec. 1, CCS 381 (5-13-45), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Joint Intelligence Staff [JIS] 80/8, "Strategic Vulnerability of Russia to a Limited Air Attack," Oct. 25, 1945, sec. 2, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), *ibid.*; JIS 226/2, "Areas Vital to Soviet War Effort," Feb. 12, 1946, sec. 5, *ibid.*; JIS 226/3, "Areas Vital to Soviet War Effort," March 4, 1946, *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Byrnes to JCS, March 6, 1946, sec. 5, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), *ibid.*; memo for the Joint Staff Planners, March 8, 1946, *ibid.*; JCS 1641/1, "U.S. Security Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean," March 10, 1946, sec. 6, *ibid.*; JPS 789, "Concept of Operations for Pincher," enclosure "B," sec. 1, CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), *ibid.*; JWPC 453, "Disposition of Occupation Forces in Europe and the Far East in the Event of Hostilities in Europe, and the Importance of Certain Areas of Eurasia," March 27, 1946, sec. 5, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), *ibid.*; Operations Division, "Adequate Governmental Machinery to Handle Foreign Affairs," March 13, 1946, P&O 092 TS, Records of the United States Army Staff; meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, March 6, 1946, box 3, safe file, Patterson Papers.

of the August 1946 crisis, it was evident to high-level civilian policy makers, not just to military planners, that "Turkey must be preserved for reasons of Middle East strategy" as well as to prevent the falling of other dominoes in Western Europe and in the Far East.<sup>18</sup>

While State Department officials labored over an answer to the Soviet note on the Dardanelles, military planners insisted that "every practicable measure should be undertaken to permit the utilization of Turkey as a base for Allied operations in the event of war with the USSR." If war occurred Turkey could slow down a Soviet advance to Suez and North Africa, attack Soviet oil resources, provide fighter cover for bombers heading toward Moscow, bottle up Soviet submarines in the Black Sea, destroy Soviet shipping, and launch a possible ground offensive into the Soviet heartland. It was indispensable, then, to encourage Turkey to resist Soviet demands in peacetime and to thwart Soviet advances in wartime. Accordingly, military planners began advocating the allocation of military assistance to Turkey, including fighter aircraft, automatic weapons, ammunition, and small arms. They believed that previous studies had exaggerated Soviet logistic capabilities and that Turkey could mount an effective resistance, especially if provided with aid prior to hostilities. With that in mind, initial United States Army Air Force plans for launching a strategic offensive assumed the deployment to the Cairo-Suez area of three heavy bomber groups and the commencement of sustained conventional bombing of Soviet Russia from that location within 120 days after the onset of hostilities. On January 14, 1947, Adm. Forrest Sherman made a detailed presentation of those evolving strategic concepts to President Truman.<sup>19</sup>

By early 1947 almost all civilian and military officials agreed on the need to furnish military assistance to Turkey. Left uncertain were whether this assistance would be provided by the United States or by Great Britain, the precise purposes for which the assistance would be used, and the means of garnering support in the United States. After extensive interagency discussions

<sup>18</sup> JPS 789/1, appendix "B," April 13, 1946, sec. 1, CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Pincher plans and discussions on JWPC 432 series, April-July 1946, sec. 2, *ibid.*; JCS 1704/1, "Military Implications of the Current Turkish Situation," Aug. 24, 1946, sec. 1, CCS 092 (8-22-46), *ibid.*; S.W.D., memorandum for the record, June 12, 1946, P&O 092 TS, Records of the United States Army Staff; Patterson to Truman, July 27, 1946, *ibid.*; Lincoln, memorandum for the record, April 16, 1946, sec. 1-C, ABC 336 Russia (22 August 1943), Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; James McCormack, memorandum for Charles H. Bonesteel, April 20, 1946, sec. 1-A, ABC 093 Kiel (6 July 1945), *ibid.*; H.C.P., memorandum for Patterson, April 22, 1946, box 1, safe file, Patterson Papers; "Possible Program in Connection with Turkey," Aug. 15, 1946, box 9, general decimal file, *ibid.*; Richard L. Conolly interview, 1960, transcript, pp. 293-303, Columbia Oral History Collection (Butler Library, Columbia University, New York City).

<sup>19</sup> JWPC 467/1, "Griddle," Aug. 15, 1946, sec. 11, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Joint Logistic Plans Committee [JLPC] 35/23, "Request for Logistic Information relative to Turkey," Oct. 10, 1946, sec. 12, pt. 1, *ibid.*; JWPC 475/1, "Strategic Study of the Area between the Alps and the Himalayas," Nov. 2, 1946, sec. 3, CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), *ibid.*; JCS 1704/1, "Military Implications of the Current Turkish Situation," Aug. 24, 1946, sec. 1, CCS 092 (8-22-46), *ibid.*; A. R. Pefley to Op-30, Aug. 21, 1946, box 68, series III, Strategic Plans Division; "Air Plan for Makefast," n.d., sec. 3, ABC 381 USSR (2 March 1946), Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Forrest P. Sherman, "Presentation to the President," Jan. 14, 1947, box 2, Forrest P. Sherman Papers (Naval Historical Center).

in the autumn of 1946, Henderson noted the opposition of the Export-Import Bank to large-scale financial assistance to Turkey; yet he encouraged continued consultation between the State, War, and Navy departments so that "we will be prepared to move when conditions are propitious." The British notes in February 1947, announcing their intent to withdraw from Greece and their inability to continue military assistance to Turkey, provided the rationale to mobilize congressional and public support.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, United States policy makers had considerable difficulty making their case for aid to Turkey. Turkey was not experiencing dire economic conditions, nor was it facing financial stringencies. The Soviets had not recently exerted pressure on Turkey, nor did American officials expect an imminent attack. Hence, the most effective argument that could be made in public was that the Turkish military establishment constituted a serious burden on the Turkish economy; that burden had to be eased to ensure that the Turks would not acquiesce to Soviet demands. During executive sessions of the Committee on Foreign Relations, however, senators' skepticism about whether the Turkish crisis constituted an emergency compelled Acheson to acknowledge the strategic motivations behind the United States initiative. Similar questions forced Ambassador Wilson to answer so frankly that his testimony had to be stricken even from the executive hearings. In his classic, personal account of the period, Joseph M. Jones acknowledges that "the strategic importance of Turkey ranked high in discussions within the executive branch and in discussions with congressional leaders. They were, however, consciously played down in the President's message, in the public sessions of the congressional committees, and in the public approach generally." That long-term strategic calculations rather than short-term expectations of Soviet aggression prompted concern with Turkey was evident several months later when United States officials supported a partial demobilization of Turkish forces because "no immediate danger of an armed clash between Turkey and Russia" was foreseen.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> William Clayton to Byrnes, Sept. 12, 1946, P&O 092 TS, Records of the United States Army Staff; Meetings of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, Nov. 5, Nov. 13, box 3, safe file, Patterson Papers; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, VII, 894-97, 916-17; Henderson to R. L. Dennison, Dec. 18, 1946, EF-70, series 1, Records of the Politico-Military Division (Naval Historical Center); Henderson, memorandum, "Aid to Turkey," Nov. 24, 1946, *ibid.*; David LeBreton, memorandum of conversation, Nov. 18, 1946, file 867.20/11-1846, Records of the Department of State; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947* [8 vols., Washington, 1971-1973], V, 35-37. Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson did consistently question the wisdom of military assistance to Turkey. See, for example, Patterson to Acting Secretary of State, Sept. 12, 1946, box 7, safe file, Patterson Papers.

<sup>21</sup> Henderson, memorandum, "Aid to Turkey," Nov. 24, 1946, EF-70, series 1, Records of the Politico-Military Division; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, VII, 921-22; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947*, V, 61-62, 90-91, 95, 364-65; Wilson to Secretary of State, Feb. 26, 1947, file 761.67/2-2647, Records of the Department of State; LeBreton to Henderson, Oct. 8, 1947, file 867.20/10-447, *ibid.*; "Summary of Costs of U.S. Assistance to Greece and Turkey until 30 June 1948," n.d. [early March 1947], box 65, Elsey Papers; Lincoln to Secretary of War, March 12, 1947, box 1, general subject file, Howard C. Petersen Papers, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine: Hearings Held in Executive Session before the Committee on Foreign Relations* (Washington, 1973), 7-10, 48-53, 55-61, 84, 105; Jones, *Fifteen Weeks*, 162.

Although planned Soviet aggression was not anticipated, war could erupt as a result of a miscalculation in a diplomatic crisis. Accordingly, under the auspices of the Truman Doctrine, United States officials designed the aid program to enhance the fighting capabilities of the Turkish army, air force, and navy, to help build strategic roads, and to restock Turkish arsenals and war reserves. American military advisers, however, were most concerned with the Turkish army. They desired to reorganize and modernize the army, to build up its combat effectiveness, to provide it with much greater mobility and firepower, to develop its transportation and communication infrastructure, and to bolster its logistical capabilities.<sup>22</sup> United States military advisers hoped that the Turkish army would play a key role in retarding a Soviet land offensive in the Middle East should war occur, thereby affording time for the United States and Great Britain to activate and utilize bases in the Cairo-Suez region. The Turkish army was given equipment that would enable it initially to resist a three-pronged Soviet attack across the Bosphorus, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus. Recognizing that Turkish forces could not hold those positions, United States military assistance sought to provide the Turkish army with the mobility and logistical capability to fall back gradually, to carry on guerrilla activity behind advancing Soviet forces, and to make a final, large-scale stand in southern Turkey in the Iskenderon pocket. Much of the road construction undertaken in Turkey with United States funds was designed to facilitate that strategy. From the military perspective, a concentrated Turkish defense in the Iskenderon area was a key to maintaining access to Middle Eastern oil as well as to defending vital strategic airports and communication facilities in Egypt.<sup>23</sup>

From air bases in Turkey, fighter bombers and attack planes could not only aid Turkish ground forces inside Turkey but also interdict Soviet troops moving through Iran and Iraq toward Persian Gulf oil or sweeping widely toward Cairo-Suez. Accordingly, next to the army, the Turkish air force was the largest recipient of United States assistance. During 1948, for example, the United States transferred over 180 F-47s, 30 B-26s, and 86 C-47s. Smaller

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee, Turkish General Staff/U.S. Mission, May 27–July 10, 1947, file 867.20/7-1047, Records of the Department of State; Wilson to Secretary of State, Jan. 30, 1948, file 867.20/1-3048, *ibid.*; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947*, V, 233–36; "Call for Estimates, FY 1950, MAP," Sept. 23, 1949, P&O 092 Europe TS, Records of the United States Army Staff; Joint American Military Mission for Aid to Turkey [JAMMAT], "Major Items of Equipment: Aid to Turkey Program," March 1952, box 56, Records of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense, RG 330 [National Archives]. Many monthly progress reports on the arrival of assistance and on the courses of instruction may be found in decimal file series 867.00, Records of the Department of State.

<sup>23</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "The Current Situation in Turkey," Oct. 20, 1947, box 254, President's secretary's file, Truman Papers; Joint Strategic Plans Committee [JSPC] 868/1, "Guidance for the Coordinator, Armed Forces Groups, American Mission for Aid to Turkey [AMAT]," March 26, 1948, P&O 091 Turkey TS, Records of the United States Army Staff; Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, memorandum, "Turkish and Iranian Military Effort in War," Feb. 25, 1950, 381 Middle East TS, *ibid.*; Robert B. Carney, memorandum for Secretary of Defense, Sept. 29, 1948, CD 2-2-5, box 4, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense; Subcommittee for the Near and Middle East, memorandum for the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee, Dec. 15, 1948, box 134, TS file, Records of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee [SWNCC], RG 353 [National Archives].

numbers of jet fighters began arriving in 1950 and 1951. At the same time, the United States placed a great deal of stress on reconstructing and resurfacing Turkish airfields at places such as Bandirma and Diyarbakir. As a result, Turkey began to develop the capability to attack vital Soviet petroleum resources in Rumania and in the Caucasus; Ploesti and Baku, for example, came within range of the F-47s and the B-26s. Even more important, the rehabilitation of Turkish airfields and the construction of new ones at Adana, for example, meant that if war erupted the United States would be able to bring in its own B-29s to bomb the Soviet Union. Secretary of the Air Force W. Stuart Symington and Secretary of Defense Forrestal were contemplating that contingency in early 1948. A more systematic effort to achieve such bombing capability was inaugurated in late 1949; significant progress toward that goal was expected during 1952.<sup>24</sup>

United States assistance to the Turkish navy aimed primarily at enhancing Turkey's ability to close the Dardanelles and to prevent Soviet submarines from entering the Mediterranean. The United States also wanted to help the Turkish navy plan the defense of the Bosphorus and develop the capability of destroying Soviet Black Sea shipping. But the latter mission also was within the purview of the United States Navy. Aircraft from United States carriers would leapfrog to Turkish air bases, refuel, and attack oil cargoes on Soviet ships in the Black Sea. To achieve that capability, Admiral Conolly, with the support of the secretary of defense, sought funds for the storage of aviation gas in Turkey.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout the period 1947–1950, United States military planners were eager to use assistance as a lever to bring Turkish military planning into line with United States desires. United States Army officers feared that Turkey would try to make a full-scale stand at the Bosphorus and would lose much of its army; such a possibility conflicted with the United States emphasis on the

<sup>24</sup> Ambassador's Report on Aid to Turkey, July 15, 1947, Annex D, Part Three, P&O 091 Turkey, Records of the United States Army Staff; Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, memorandum, "Turkish and Iranian Military Effort in War," Feb. 25, 1950, 381 Middle East TS, *ibid.*; "Proposal for Continuing Aid to the Turkish Air Force," appended to Wilds to Robert A. Lovett, Jan. 23, 1948, file 867.20/1-2348, Records of the Department of State; John H. Ohly to Llewellyn E. Thompson, Nov. 22, 1949, box 1, Lot 484, *ibid.*; USTAP Report No. 29, March 12, 1949, file 867.00/5-1249, *ibid.*; Stuart Symington to James V. Forrestal, March 9, 1948, CD 6-2-38, box 35, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense; Lyman L. Lemnitzer to James H. Burns, March 6, 1950, CD 6-2-46, box 23, *ibid.*; National Security Council [NSC] 42, "U.S. Objectives with Respect to Greece and Turkey to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security," March 4, 1949, Records of the National Security Council, RG 273 [National Archives]; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950* (7 vols., Washington, 1976–1980), V, 1234, 1250; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951* (6 vols., Washington, 1977–1983), V, 1124–25.

<sup>25</sup> JCS 1704/8, enclosure "A," memorandum for the Coordinator, Armed Forces Group, AMAT, n.d. [Sept. 1948], P&O 091 Turkey TS, Records of the United States Army Staff; J. R. D., memo for the record, Feb. 18, 1949, *ibid.*; Ray T. Maddocks, memorandum for Horace L. McBride, March 1, 1949, *ibid.*; Louis Denfeld, memorandum for JCS, Aug. 9, 1948, JJ7, box 245, Strategic Plans Division; E. T. Wooldridge, memorandum for Op-03, Jan. 10, 1949, A19, box 251, *ibid.*; Elliott B. Strauss, memorandum for Op-30, June 17, 1949, A14, box 249, *ibid.*; JCS 1887/20, Carney to CNO, Jan. 30, 1951, sec. 4, CCS 381 Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Area [EMMEA] (11-19-47), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Forrestal, memorandum for the NSC, n.d. [early 1949], CD 19-2-21, box 92, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Iskenderon pocket. United States naval officials, despairing of the Turkish navy's elementary strategy, its reliance on a pre-World War I German battleship, and its focus on protecting Turkish coastal shipping in the Black Sea, sought a Turkish commitment to mine the straits and to close the Bosphorus on receiving instructions from the commander of United States naval forces in the Mediterranean. United States Air Force advisers, frustrated by the defensive mentality of Turkish officers, wanted to use Turkey's air assets to attack enemy airfields, refineries, and communication and rail centers in Bulgaria, Rumania, and the Caucasus. United States officers also were uncertain whether Turkey would permit their use of its airfields. In order to clarify matters and to achieve United States goals, Arthur W. Radford, the vice chief of naval operations, Admiral Conolly, and other military officers desired to institutionalize strategic coordination with Turkey.<sup>26</sup>

State Department officials, however, would not permit formal strategic collaboration without prior treaty commitments. During 1948-1949 the formation of the NATO alliance riveted American attention on Western Europe and unexpectedly reoriented United States strategic priorities. In July 1948 Undersecretary of State Robert A. Lovett told the Turkish ambassador that Americans "must be careful not to over-extend ourselves. We lack sufficient financial and economic resources simultaneously to finance the economic recovery of Europe, to furnish arms and equipment to all individual countries or groups of countries which request them, and to build up our own military strength." When Acheson assumed the office of secretary of state, he reiterated those views. The United States, he maintained, was assuming unprecedented obligations in Western Europe; those commitments had to be worked out in all their complexity before the United States could offer additional guarantees elsewhere. Throughout 1949 Acheson repeatedly rebuffed Turkish pleas to be included in the alliance.<sup>27</sup>

Toiling over the problem of meeting expanding commitments with extremely circumscribed resources, stemming from budgetary restrictions, the JCS vigorously supported Acheson's desire to limit the alliance and to give priority to assistance to Western Europe. United States war planners were

<sup>26</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, V, 1249-50; McBride to Director, Plans and Operations Division, May 18, 1948, P&O 091 Turkey TS, Records of the United States Army Staff, J.R.D., memorandum for the Record, Feb. 18, 1949, *ibid.*; JCS 1704/7, McBride, memorandum for the JCS, Feb. 19, 1948, *ibid.*; JSPC 868/1, Guidance for the Coordinator, Armed Forces Groups, AMAT, March 26, 1948, *ibid.*; Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, memorandum, n.d. [Feb. 25, 1950], 381 ME TS, *ibid.*; A. D. Struble, memo for CNO, Oct. 4, 1948, A19, box 244, Strategic Plans Division; Carney, memorandum for Op-03, March 22, 1949, EF, box 252, *ibid.*; Strauss, memorandum for Op-30, March 25, 1949, *ibid.*; C. V. Johnson, memorandum for Op-30, Sept. 16, 1949, A8, box 249, *ibid.*; Carney to Struble, March 31, 1949, A16-1, *ibid.*; CNO, memorandum, March 13, 1950, sec. 1, CCS 337 (2-20-50), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; JCS 2105 series, "Proposed Positions to Be Taken in Conversations with Political and Military Authorities of Near and Middle East Countries," Feb.-April 1950, *ibid.*; Arthur W. Radford to Richard L. Conolly, Jan. 17, 1949, drawer 1, safe A, Arthur W. Radford Papers (Naval Historical Center).

<sup>27</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948* (9 vols., Washington, 1972-1975), III, 197, IV, 84-85, 114-15, 148-49, 172-73, 214; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949* (9 vols., Washington, 1974-1978), IV, 120, 177-78, 234-35, 243-44, 270-71, 359-60, VI, 1647-53, 1656-57; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, V, 1238-40.

overwhelmed by the difficulties of figuring out how to defend Western Europe. They modified emergency war plans and placed a much greater emphasis on defense of the western Mediterranean and the launching of the strategic offensive primarily from Great Britain. Had a war erupted in 1949 or 1950, the United States would not have had the means to aid Turkey directly or even to secure Cairo-Suez. Defense of the Middle East, although recognized as critically important, was assigned to Great Britain despite that nation's limited capabilities. Yet United States war planners never relinquished the hope of capitalizing on Turkey's geopolitical position and on the opportunities emanating from military assistance. During 1949, for example, Forrestal still sought appropriations to help build up bases in the Cairo-Suez region. And during 1951 the JCS made clear its determination to retain control over strategic planning and coordination in Greece, Turkey, and Iran despite Great Britain's overall military responsibility for the rest of the Middle Eastern region.<sup>28</sup>

Turkish officials, however, were offended by rebuffs to their requests for concrete military guarantees and for inclusion in the NATO alliance. Ambassador Wilson feared that the Turkish government might conclude that the United States was downgrading the importance of Turkey and might adopt a more neutral posture. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agreed that Turkey felt exposed and vulnerable. The great imponderable, then, was what Turkey would do if a Soviet attack took place beyond Turkey's borders. The United States air attaché emphasized to naval planners that Turkey would resist if attacked but otherwise would attempt to remain neutral. In March 1950 Admiral Conolly beseeched Sherman, now chief of naval operations, to get the JCS to support an alliance with Turkey. "It is of utmost importance," Conolly wrote,

to engage Turkey's certain participation [in a war]. Although it can be assumed that Turkey would fight if attacked it is almost as certain that Turkey would not fight if not attacked and very probable that USSR would not immediately attack Turkey. It would therefore be greatly to our national interest considering money we have spent on her military establishment to have Turkey bound to us formally by mutual defense treaty, to include an engagement for her to go to war in case of attack upon her own territory or upon or through any neighboring contiguous state.<sup>29</sup>

In the spring of 1950, however, neither State Department officials nor the JCS were ready to make commitments to Turkey. These policy makers feared that the capabilities of the United States to defend vital interests in Europe

<sup>28</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949*, I, 285-87; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, V, 36-37. The views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are best found in the JCS 2105 series cited in footnote 26. See especially JCS 2105/2, Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, March 17, 1950, sec. 1, CCS 337 (2-20-50), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For the evolution of United States war plans from 1948 to 1950, see especially the JCS 1844 series, secs. 10-45, CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), *ibid.*; and documents in secs. 1, 2, CCS 381 EMMEA (11-19-47), *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Joseph C. Satterthwaite to Secretary of State, March 31, 1949, file 711.67/3-3149, Records of the Department of State; Robertson to George McGhee, July 26, 1949, box 1, Lot 484, *ibid.*; Central Intelligence Agency, "Review of the World Situation," April 20, 1949, box 206, President's secretary's file, Truman Papers; Johnson, memorandum to Op-30, Sept. 16, 1949, A8, box 249, Strategic Plans Division; Conolly to CNO, March 9, 1950, box 6, Sherman Papers.

still were not adequate. A memorandum prepared in the State Department's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs emphasized that only after Western Europe's defensive strength was augmented would the United States consider additional security arrangements elsewhere. The outbreak of the Korean War initially intensified those views. Faced with the emergency in the Far East, fearing a full-scale war in Europe, and not foreclosing the possibility of a diversionary trap by a Soviet satellite, policy makers did not wish to incur commitments that might embroil the United States in another localized conflict and sap the nation's strength.<sup>30</sup>

The real dilemma for the United States was to find a means to ensure the availability of Turkey's strategic assets to the West without extending commitments that might be both beyond the capabilities of the United States and disproportionate to the advantages that might accrue from a formal alliance. Both the JCS and the Near East division of the State Department studied the problem throughout the late summer of 1950. Acheson prodded Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson to consider how new arrangements with Turkey might deter or provoke the Soviet Union, might offer military advantages or might pose military liabilities by adding new administrative or command problems to the NATO alliance. The JCS believed, however, that immediate enlargement of NATO might upset the substantial progress then underway within the alliance and might add new distractions just at the time that the United States was committing forces-in-being to Western Europe.<sup>31</sup>

But to rebuff Turkey completely risked the loss of a key prospective ally in wartime. Hence, the JCS concluded that the United States ought to try "to obtain the benefits of Turk and Greek participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and at the same time minimize the disadvantages thereof by according to these two nations an associate status—such a status would permit their representatives to participate in coordinated planning against Soviet aggression." Acheson presented this position to the British and the French in September 1950. Shortly thereafter, the Defense Committee of the North Atlantic Council voted to invite Turkey and Greece to coordinate their military planning with appropriate NATO commanders.<sup>32</sup>

The Turkish government immediately agreed but again expressed disap-

<sup>30</sup> JCS 2105/6, enclosure "B," Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, Department of State, "Regional Security Arrangements in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern Areas," April 18, 1950, sec. 1, CCS 337 (2-20-50), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, I, 353-57, 376-87, III, 975-76, 1218, V, 153-57.

<sup>31</sup> Paul H. Nitze to Philip Jessup, Aug. 14, 1950, box 1, Lot 484, Records of the Department of State; JCS to Secretary of Defense, Sept. 9, 1950, *ibid.*; Johnson to Acheson, Sept. 11, 1950, *ibid.*; Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, "Security Problem in the Near East and Africa," Aug. 29, 1950, CD 092.3 NATO-Council of Ministers, box 184, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, III, 257-61.

<sup>32</sup> JCS to Secretary of Defense, Sept. 9, 1950, box 1, Lot 484, Records of the Department of State; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, III, 1218-20, 1284-85; Matthews to Burns, Oct. 3, 1950, CD 092.3 NATO-Defense Committee, box 184, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. For references to apprehensions over losing a prospective ally in wartime, see citations in footnote 31.

pointment in not securing full membership. When Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGhee visited Turkey in February 1951, President Celal Bayar emphasized that he was affronted by NATO's refusal to offer full membership to Turkey, especially in view of Turkey's direct military contribution in Korea. Speaking bluntly, President Bayar told McGhee that Turkey was unhappy with its status and sought reciprocal guarantees; Turkey would not be content with anything less. McGhee then discussed Turkish sentiments with all the United States chiefs of mission in the Middle East who were gathered in Istanbul for a conference with the assistant secretary of state. They strongly supported a guarantee of Turkey's security. McGhee wired the State Department that "there is reason to believe that Turkey will veer towards a policy of neutralism, which will always have a strong basic appeal; and, until a commitment is extended to Turkey, there is no assurance that Turkey will declare war unless it is attacked. In order to assure Turkey's immediate co-belligerency, utilization in collective security action of the military potential which Turkey is building, and immediate United States and Allied utilization of Turkish bases . . . a commitment on the part of United States is required." At about the same time, Henry S. Villard, of the Policy Planning Staff, urged Paul H. Nitze, the staff's director, to focus attention on meeting Turkey's desire for security guarantees. In general, State Department officials believed that new United States initiatives in the Middle East could and ought to be taken because the military buildup in the United States already had reached significant proportions, organizational progress had been achieved in Western Europe, and "the chances of the Middle East remaining tranquilly on the side of the West without some practical evidence of Western interest have greatly declined."<sup>33</sup>

United States defense officials, however, remained ambivalent. While the JCS still feared any agreement that might imply the commitment of forces to the region in the event of hostilities, Adm. Robert B. Carney, commander in chief of United States forces in the Mediterranean, urged officials to reexamine the question of security commitments to Turkey. Carney agreed with McGhee's assessment of the situation, feared Turkish neutrality, and sought substantial military aid "predicated on the Turkish capacity for great resistance and the possibility of generating some limited Turkish offensive." At NATO headquarters a separate study, conducted under the authority of Vice Adm. Jerauld Wright, also stressed that there was a "real danger" of Turkish neutrality "stemming from the Turks' gnawing feeling of frustration and isolation." And at the end of February 1951, the CIA completed the coordination of a new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of "Turkey's Position in the East-West Struggle." Emphasizing Turkey's strong antipathy to the Soviet Union as well as Turkey's desire to facilitate a Western victory should war erupt elsewhere, the NIE nevertheless noted that "the commitment of Turkish

<sup>33</sup> Memorandum of conversation, Feb. 12, 1951, CD 092.3 NATO-GEN, box 243, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, V, 1321; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, V, 4-11, esp. 8, 21-27, 51-76, esp. 52, 1117-19.

troops or the provision of Turkish bases would . . . be contingent upon a firm assurance of U.S. armed support in event of Soviet attack."<sup>34</sup>

Fear of Turkey's neutrality, then, played a decisive role in compelling another appraisal of Turkey's relationship to NATO. Officials in the State Department, not those in the Defense Department, continued to be the most vigorous proponents of expanding military assistance and commitments throughout the Middle East. In their view, the forces of nationalism and neutralism were making headway, partly because of a pervasive feeling of insecurity. Military assistance would help strengthen United States influence on existing governments; security guarantees to Turkey would bolster confidence in that country, the linchpin of efforts to defend the Middle East. When Secretary Acheson asked the Defense Department to reconsider Turkey's admission into NATO, he emphasized that a security arrangement might induce Turkey to undertake certain measures that would redound to the military advantage of the entire anti-Soviet coalition. He specifically alluded to the peacetime mining of the straits that the Navy Department had been advocating for several months. A security agreement also would facilitate conclusion of an agreement on the use of forward air bases in Turkey. Fearing the loss of those opportunities, McGhee summed up the view of the State Department when he returned from the Middle East and met with the JCS. He emphasized that "there is a real danger that the Turks will choose neutrality if they cannot obtain a security commitment. We cannot be sure that we will have Turkey as an ally unless we extend a security commitment."<sup>35</sup>

In May 1951 the JCS finally decided to accede to an expansion of United States commitments. Military officers recognized the critical role Turkey could play in protecting the West's southern flank in Europe, in diverting large numbers of Soviet troops to the Turkish theater, and in facilitating defense of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. If the Soviets decided to sweep around Turkey through Iran and Iraq and if Turkey opted for neutrality, military planners recognized that the West would have great difficulty closing the straits to Soviet submarines, protecting NATO's lines of communication in the Mediterranean, and destroying Soviet shipping in the Black Sea. Even more disillusioning was the prospect of wasting the millions of dollars that had been spent on the construction of airfields in Turkey. With that in mind, the army chief of staff circulated a memorandum to the other chiefs underscoring the importance of readying Turkish airports for use by heavy bombers and jet fighters and urging the consummation of a commitment by treaty with Turkey. Cognizant that United States capabilities had been expanding rapidly, the JCS now endorsed Turkey's inclusion in NATO. The National Security

<sup>34</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, V, 27-42, 103-104, 113-18, 1118, 1119-26, esp. 1120; JCS 2009/12, "Factors Involving the Inclusion of Greece and Turkey as Full Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," March 16, 1951, sec. 1, CCS 337 (2-20-50), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

<sup>35</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, III, 501-505, V, 4-11, 21-42, 80-83, 113-20, esp. 117; memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Feb. 27, 1951, CD 092 Turkey, box 236, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Council formally adopted that position in May 1951. During the following summer and autumn, United States officials persuaded NATO allies to admit Turkey and Greece into the alliance.<sup>36</sup>

From the time of the Truman Doctrine until Turkey's entry into NATO, strategic considerations exerted an important influence on the course of United States policy toward Turkey. Turkey became first the object of assistance from and then the formal ally of the United States, not because of the expectation of any imminent Soviet attack on Turkey, but because of Turkey's potential utility in waging war, protecting air bases, and safeguarding Middle Eastern oil resources. In March 1951, as had been the case in March 1947, United States officials realized that the Soviet threat to Turkey was "relatively quiescent." Soviet policy seemed ominous in other areas of the world, however, and if hostilities erupted elsewhere, United States war planners wanted to use Turkish facilities and manpower to neutralize the Soviet submarine threat in the Mediterranean, to tie up large numbers of Soviet troops, and to launch air attacks on vital Soviet petroleum resources. Estimates that Soviet air defenses in the south were meager and ineffective were added inducements to establish a strategic air base in the region.<sup>37</sup>

What effect did all of this have on relations between the United States and the Soviet Union? From the middle of 1947, the Soviets bitterly condemned United States military assistance to Turkey. Soviet diplomats insisted that the United States was undertaking aggressive action and establishing bases from which attacks on the Soviet Union could be launched easily and effectively.<sup>38</sup> United States war plans and military-assistance programs demonstrate that Soviet military planners had reason to worry about the ramifications of United States aid to Turkey. A major object of United States policy was to enhance

<sup>36</sup> JCS 1704/49, memorandum by the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, May 1, 1951, sec. 53, CCS 092 (8-22-46), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; "Summary Views and Bases for Joint Chiefs of Staff Position on Security Arrangements for Greece and Turkey," n.d. [April 1951], CD 092.3 NATO, box 243, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1951, V, 1148-62. The negotiations on the inclusion of Turkey and Greece into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were complicated by differences over the command structure in the Middle East. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1951, III, 479-85, 505-506, 551-55, 558, 567, 569-71, 574-613, 621-32, 661-63, 669, 678-81, 744, 1265-67, 1302.

<sup>37</sup> JCS 2009/12, "Factors Involving the Inclusion of Greece and Turkey as Full Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," March 16, 1951, sec. 1, CCS 337 (2-20-50), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For the situation in March 1947, see citation in footnote 21. For weaknesses of Soviet air defenses in the south, see JCS 1952/1, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, memorandum, Dec. 21, 1948, sec. 1, CCS 373 (10-23-48), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In an assessment of Soviet radar nets, the chief of naval intelligence stressed the likelihood that by 1950 the Soviets would have integrated early-warning nets in the west, north, and east. He made no mention of such nets in the south. Op-32 to General Board, May 12, 1948, 425 [serial 315], Records of the General Board [Naval Historical Center].

<sup>38</sup> Wilson to Secretary of State, July 29, 1947, file 861.20267/7-2947, Records of the Department of State; Smith to Secretary of State, Aug. 2, 1947, file 867.00/8-247, *ibid.*; Wilson to Secretary of State, Sept. 11, 1947, file 861.20267/8-2947, *ibid.*; Bursley to Secretary of State, Nov. 18, Nov. 25, 1947, file 861.20267/11-1847, 10-3147, *ibid.*; Wilson to Secretary of State, Dec. 1, 1947, file 761.67/11-2147, *ibid.*; Smith to Secretary of State, April 30, 1948, file 861.20267/4-3048, *ibid.*; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950, IV, 1254-55; [Nikita S. Krushchev], *Krushchev Remembers*, ed. Edward Crankshaw and Strobe Talbott (Boston, 1970), 494, 514.

Turkey's military capabilities and, if military conflict occurred, to integrate those capabilities into the war effort. This is not to say or even to intimate that the United States was planning aggressive war. But if war broke out as a result of a miscalculation in a diplomatic crisis—and that was considered the most probable cause of war—then Turkey would play an important role in American offensive as well as defensive actions.

The Soviets had cause to worry about developments in Turkey; just as the United States feared Soviet inroads in Cuba in 1962. The difference, of course, was that in 1962 the United States had the military wherewithal to stop the emergence of an offensive threat on its southern border. In 1947–1948 the Soviets had no such power. Although they had exerted rather little pressure on Turkey, they now had to contemplate the development of a more modern military infrastructure in Turkey, to grapple with the latent ability of the United States to project power from the Middle East, and to deal with the global geopolitical policy inherent in the Truman Doctrine. That challenge, along with other concurrent developments, may well have served to intensify their suspicions of United States intentions and to magnify their sense of weakness.<sup>39</sup>

A study of American policy toward Turkey in the aftermath of World War II highlights the role of strategic imperatives both in the expansion of United States global interests and in the formation of the nation's alliance system. It also helps to elucidate the matrix of considerations that accelerated distrust between the Soviet Union and the United States and generated the Cold War.

<sup>39</sup> Although this is not the place for a discussion of Soviet foreign policy, two recent studies suggest the defensive and reactive character of Josef Stalin's actions in 1947 and 1948. William O. McCagg, Jr., *Stalin Embattled, 1943–1948* (Detroit, 1978); William Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy: From Entente to Détente to Cold War* (New York, 1982), esp. 128–92.