

BRITISH AMBITIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE ALLIED QUEST FOR
TURKISH BELLIGERENCY IN WWII

A Master's Thesis

by

EGEMEN GÜRGEN

The Department of History

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

Ankara

December 2020

EGEMEN GÜRGEN

BRITISH AMBITIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THEIR
EFFECT ON THE ALLIED QUEST FOR TURKISH BELLIGERENCY

Bilkent University 2020

To my family



BRITISH AMBITIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND
THEIR EFFECT ON THE ALLIED QUEST FOR TURKISH
BELLIGERENCY IN WWII

The Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences

of

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

EGEMEN GÜRGEN

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY

ANKARA

DECEMBER 2020

ABSTRACT

BRITISH AMBITIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE ALLIED QUEST FOR TURKISH BELLIGERENCY IN WWII

Gürgen, Egemen

M.A., Department of History

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Paul Latimer

December 2020

Turkish belligerency which was not quite desired by Britain during the World War II was interwoven with the British ambitions in the Mediterranean including the post-World War II settlement of the region into the British sphere of influence. The importance of the Mediterranean and its effect on Anglo-Turkish relations during the World War II has been narrated through Britain's point of view in the literature considering that the region was one of the life-lines of British Empire. However, the Eastern Mediterranean was also a primary concern for Turkey. Since the 1930s as the recent literature confirms, Italy was perceived as the biggest possible threat to Turkey as all the military preparations were made accordingly by the Turkish state. The total 4.400 km of Turkish Mediterranean and Aegean coastline combined with the young Republic's obsolete and impotent navy, and the close proximity of numerous foreign islands, made Turkey equally apprehensive for the situation in the region since the opening rounds of the war. Thanks to the opening of the Soviet

archives, and published British intelligence records alongside the important secondary sources, we now have a better understanding of Turkey's relations with the major belligerents. With this motivation and along this line of research this thesis aims to show the relation between Britain's Mediterranean strategy and Turkey's belligerency.

Key words: The Second World War, Britain, Turkey, Mediterranean, Belligerency



ÖZET

BRİTANYA’NIN AKDENİZ ÜZERİNDEKİ EMELLERİNİN MÜTTEFİKLER’İN TÜRKİYE’Yİ İKİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI’NA SOKMA ÇABALARI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Gürgen, Egemen

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Paul Latimer

Aralık 2020

İkinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında İngiltere'nin sürekli olarak arzu ettiği Türkiye'nin savaşa girişi, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası Akdeniz Bölgesi'nin İngiliz etki alanına yerleşmesi de dâhil olmak üzere Akdeniz'deki İngiliz emelleri ile iç içe geçmiştir. Dünya Savaşı sırasında Akdeniz'in önemi ve Akdeniz'in Türk-İngiliz ilişkileri üzerindeki etkisi, genellikle literatürde bir İngiliz bakış açısıyla anlatılmıştır. Ancak, Doğu Akdeniz Türkiye için de çok büyük bir öneme sahiptir.

Güncel literatürün de onayladığı gibi, 1930'lardan İtalya'nın teslim oluşuna kadar, İtalya, Türkiye tarafından en büyük tehdit olarak algılandı ve Türkiye'nin askeri hazırlıkları olası bir İtalyan tehdidine göre yapıldı.

Türkiye'nin Akdeniz ve Ege'deki toplam 4.400 km'yi geçen kıyı uzunluğu, eski ve zayıf donanması ve Türkiye'nin çok yakınında bulunan yabancı adalar Türkiye'nin savaşın başından itibaren Akdeniz Bölgesi'ndeki güvenlik kaygılarını tetikleyen etmenler arasında olarak gösterilebilir. Sovyet arşivlerinin açılması ve önemli ikincil

kaynakların yanı sıra İngiliz istihbarat kayıtlarının yayınlanması sayesinde, artık Türkiye'nin savaşın büyük güçleriyle olan ilişkilerini daha iyi anlıyoruz. Bu araştırma doğrultusunda, bu tez, İngiltere'nin Akdeniz stratejisi ile Türkiye'nin savaşa girmesi durumu arasındaki ilişkiyi göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İkinci Dünya Savaşı, Britanya, Türkiye, Akdeniz, Savaşa Girme



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZET	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and Objectives	1
1.2 Historiography and Methodology	7
1.3 The Importance of the Mediterranean to Britain.....	13
1.3.2 British Strategy for the Oncoming War in the Mediterranean	22
1.4 British Grand Strategy: the Necessities of Empire.....	31
CHAPTER II	38
TURKEY IN WWII AND ANGLO-TURKISH ALLIANCE	38
2.1 Turkey's Condition before the War.....	38
2.2 Turkey and the Mediterranean	46
2.3 The Anglo-Turkish Alliance at the Outbreak of the War	57
2.3.1 Britain Desires a Neutral Turkey Rather Than an Active Belligerent	61
CHAPTER III.....	68
BRITISH GRAND STRATEGY AND INTER-ALLIED DIVERGENCES	68
3.1 Differences between American and British Strategies	68
3.2 The Importance of the Soviet Union for the Anglo-American Strategy	75
3.3 Second Front: When and Where?.....	80
CHAPTER IV	99
BRITAIN AND TURKISH BELLIGERENCY	99
4.1 Churchill's role in the relations with Turkey	102
4.2 Turning Tables: Stalingrad and the 2nd Battle of El Alamein.....	106
4.2.1 Adana Conference.....	109
4.2.2 Dodecanese Campaign	114
4.2.3 Second Cairo Conference	118
4.3 Churchill's last ditch effort to actualize the Balkan front.....	120

CHAPTER V	124
CONCLUSION	124
BIBLIOGRAPHY	128
APPENDIX	138
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS	138



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Objectives

Britain's imperial connection to the Mediterranean impacted her grand strategy. The opening of the Suez Canal significantly increased the Mediterranean's importance for Britain. The sea was Britain's main line of connection to her Far Eastern colonies. After the Great War, the growing importance of oil and Britain's own protectorates in North Africa and in Middle East added to the Mediterranean's importance. In the WWII, Italy was threatening Anglo-French authority in the Mediterranean region; therefore Britain followed an appeasement policy towards Italy hoping to isolate Germany. However the appeasement policy failed with the Italian invasion of Albania and with the fall of France in the summer 1940, Britain was left alone in the sea. Britain's past experiences and her imperialist approach to matters were the two main components which shaped the British grand strategy. The grand strategy is defined as the "highest level of national statecraft that establishes how states, or other political units, prioritize and mobilize which military, diplomatic, political, economic, and other sources of power to ensure what they perceive as their interests."¹ It was the British Empire's dire situation on the eve of WWII that had been affecting Britain's interests when it seemed as the Britain's ties

¹ Paul van Hooft, *Grand Strategy*, Oxford Online Bibliographies, (2017).

to Canada, West Indies and Australia were reduced to a “sentimental” connection under the growing US influence over the aforementioned countries.²

Turkey on the other hand, concerned with the upcoming war, was trying to secure alliances with the western democracies. However Turkey’s enthusiasm could not instantly produce an alliance between Britain and Turkey. The aforementioned British policy of appeasement prevented Britain from establishing deep bilateral relations with Turkey. Therefore Turkey took initiative and launched series of diplomatic operations to materialize the Balkan Pact with Romania, Yugoslavia and Greece. Although Turkey’s efforts were productive she failed to create a strong bond between the Balkan countries. The invasion of Albania which was the turning point for the British policy in the Mediterranean urged Britain to push for Turkish alliance. Consequently an alliance treaty between Britain, France and Turkey was signed.

After Germany’s quick victories, Britain was left in a grave situation and she was partially denied from the Mediterranean Sea. The British Mediterranean fleet by itself was no match for the Italian fleet, Gibraltar was narrow and risky and the Mediterranean route to Britain’s colonies became too dangerous. The dizzying speed of the German war machine not only deterred Turkey from declaring war on Germany, but also hindered the British aims of bringing Turkey to the war. Britain was afraid that if Turkey entered the war she might have been overrun by Germany instantly and this would further jeopardize Britain’s position in the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless at the same time, it was essential for Britain to bring the Mediterranean under control in order for the home islands and their population to survive. Therefore after the US entered the war the British planners used their

² Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance and U.S. Strategy in World War II*, (The University of North Carolina Press; London, 2000), 133.

influence to persuade the Americans to the operations in the Mediterranean region. This would cause a series of inter-Allied divergences in the strategic planning.

After the Anglo-American forces inflicted major defeats on the Axis in North Africa and the Soviets has stopped the Wehrmacht in Stalingrad, the initiative has passed to the Allies. While Germany was on her back foot, Britain changed her attitude towards Turkey and started to make an effort to bring Turkey into the war. However while the initial British effort to bring Turkey into the war aimed to create a coalition of states to deter Germany, after December 1942, Britain's desire for Turkey's belligerency aimed to shorten the war whilst reinstituting the British authority in the Mediterranean region.

After the Axis elements were cleared from North Africa, allies decided to jump on Italy which again caused problems between the British and the Americans who wanted to carry out the cross-Channel operation without losing time. Under these circumstances Churchill couldn't get the support from the US to carry out operations in the Aegean Islands after Italy was capitulated in September 1943. Churchill's main aim was to win the Turkey's support in the war by clearing the Axis elements from Turkey's region and proving Britain's strength and capabilities to the Turks. Afraid of retaliations from the Luftwaffe, Turkey abstained from helping Britain by denying the use her airfields. Having been deprived of American and Turkish cooperation, Britain's venture in the Aegean failed. Although this incident undermined Anglo-Turkish relations, Churchill did not give up and tried to win Turkey in the Cairo conference via changing his tone. In order to convince Turkey, Churchill pointed out to the post-war problems that Turkey would face especially with the Soviet Union. Churchill's reminder was perceived by Turkey as a threat and

postponed Turkey's entry into the war until the very end of it. Not to mention Turkey's entry was only of a symbolic value.

My thesis is going to illustrate the British ambitions in the Mediterranean region as the driving force behind Britain's endeavors for Turkey's belligerency which as well reflected on the common Allied strategy. The most common standpoint concerning this issue is generally stated as the Allied desire for shortening the war by realizing the Turkish belligerency which eventually leads to opening of the new fronts in Southeast Europe and bombing of the Romanian oil fields etc.

Contrary to the common understanding it does not appear that the zeal for shortening the war was simply enough to change the British reluctance to see Turkey as a belligerent after 1942³. I rather claim that the aforementioned importance of Mediterranean to British was the essential reason. Therefore my research will try to analyze the connection between the British ambitions in those regions as well as their post war status and the British insistence on Turkish belligerency.

Firstly my research will trace the effects of the British insistence regarding its influence on the Allied grand strategy which eventually led to a common quest of the Allies for the Turkish belligerency. The strategy of piercing Germany through her "soft underbelly" and its effects on Allied grand strategy for instance, convinced Americans to commit themselves to North African Assault rather than the cross-Channel operation. Although US policy of *Germany first* prioritized the defeat of Germany before Japan, something that did not convince all Americans, Britain could convince the US to divert her forces. The general American military judgment which suggested that a grand campaign in North Africa would be excessively expensive and

³ Onur İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union: Diplomacy, Discord and International Relations*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 119.

dangerous since this strategy would necessitate the diversion of the forces.⁴ The British on the other hand were aiming for slowly closing the ring around the *Festung Europa* depriving Germany from the sources which Germany had been feeding her war machine. In order to march into a smooth victory in Europe, Britain wanted to face a Germany whose strength would be vastly reduced, otherwise according to British; a stalemate resembling the one in the trenches of the First World War would be inevitable.⁵

Even though the combined Allied forces operated first in Africa with the Operation Torch, it did not necessarily mean that the divergences between the US and Britain over Mediterranean came to an end. In order to accurately analyze the situation in the region, one must consider the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean as different theatres of war. While Britain was more engaged with the concerns of the Eastern Mediterranean, mostly because of the Suez and other British protectorates, the US was more focused on the Western Mediterranean for the region was, in a sense, a starting point of the ultimate goal. While Britain was concerned with the connection to her colonies and safe Mediterranean shipping, the US had already Italy in its sight.

I will further analyze the relation between British aims and Turkish belligerency by explaining to what extent the British Mediterranean policy rested on the basis of Anglo-Turkish alliance.⁶ This explanation is going to be strengthened by revealing the Turkey's significance in the Middle East from Britain's point of view. In order to fulfill this aim the research will vastly benefit from Foreign Office

⁴ Maurice Matloff, and Edward Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, vol. 1 (Center Of Military History United States Army, Washington, D.C, 1999), 117.

⁵ Feis, Herbert. *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*. Princeton University Press, 1957.

⁶ FO. 371/R6873/661/67, quoted in Selim.Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War: an active neutrality*, (Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1988), 81.

statements comparing Turkey to the other countries in the region such as: “Turkey is the keystone of our policy in the Middle East and is of far greater importance than Greece. Greece can be lost, and the war in the Middle East still won. To lose Turkey would gravely imperil the whole of our position in the Middle East.”⁷ Later the thesis is going to explain the British perception of Mediterranean & Middle East as the life lines of Britain’s connection with her Empire i.e. Egypt and Suez. In this context a “keystone” is the stone at the apex of a stone arch if the “keystone” is taken out the arch will collapse. The arch here is “the whole of our position in the Middle East” and Turkey is the “keystone”. The importance of Turkey is not Turkey itself but the role it plays in keeping the arch structurally sound. If Turkey falls the arch falls because it would give the Axis powers access to Syria, Iraq and Egypt’s back door.

Another important point is the difference between Turkey’s neutrality and belligerency and the benefits of these conditions to Britain. Turkey’s neutrality no matter how it did not directly contributed to the Allied war effort, was indirectly aiding the Allies since she was blocking Germany’s land connection to Middle East and North Africa. At the outset of the war Britain instinctively pursued an inclusive foreign policy in which she tried to stiffen up her faction with all the possible allies aiming to daunt Germany with the numbers. Soon when the German way of war proved the success of German war machine against the isolated non-majors Britain was convinced that Turkey’s belligerency would be more of a liability than an asset. Furthermore, the strong Italian Mediterranean fleet, Vichy’s status and future prospect of Spain’s entry to war on the side of Germany might deny British entry into Mediterranean for good. When the threat of Soviet expansion down to Balkans is considered “A ‘benevolent non-belligerency’ was the best Britain could expect

⁷ FO. 371/R8586/316/44, quoted in Deringil . *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War*, 115.

from Ankara.”⁸ Of course this was when the Soviets were seen as a threat and as a quasi-ally of the Germans. This situation would change when the Allies started to have the initiative. When the Allies started to out produce and outman the Germans, Britain was eager to distribute Allied forces around Germany fearing that the capacity of idle troops would go to waste. Only then the advantages of having Turkey as an ally started to outweigh the benefits of the neutral Turkey. To put it more simply, as long that there was a threat that Turkey might be overwhelmed by enemies of Britain, Turkish neutrality was the best solution if it could avoid that. Once that threat disappeared, Turkey as an extra active ally was advantageous. By employing textual analysis, my prospective research seeks to explore the design and dynamics of Anglo-Turkish relations and their mutual dependency in the Eastern Mediterranean region with the particular focus devoted to the inter-Allied divergences between Britain and the US along with the Allied Aegean Campaign.

1.2 Historiography and Methodology

As it is going to be argued in the thesis, Britain’s relations to Turkey during WWII cannot be understood without comprehending Churchill’s desires and actions. His reasons for his decision making are an inseparable part of the Anglo-Turkish alliance. Therefore I used Churchill’s own six volumes of *The Second World War*, which is important in terms of containing valuable primary documents such as telegrams, letters, and memos. Not only do these books contain such valuable primary sources they also reflect the Prime Minister’s sincere opinions and views which he abstained from putting on paper. These sources were especially helpful for my research on Adana Conference and 1st Cairo Conference in terms of illustrating

⁸ Michael Simpson, “Superhighway to the World Wide Web: The Mediterranean in British Imperial Strategy, 1900–1945”, in *Naval Strategy and Policy in the Mediterranean: Past, Present and Future* ed. John Hattendorf (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 47.

Churchill's mind set and the source of his decision making during these important meetings. Again for Churchill's primary documents especially to deal with the time before his prime ministry there is *The Churchill War Papers: At the Admiralty*.

Churchill's war cabinet and the military staff were effective in Britain's strategy and decision making. For the purpose of reflecting the different ideas and opinions for the British actions, the accounts of high ranking politicians and soldiers are valuable. The Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's memoirs of the WWII in *The Eden memoirs: the reckoning* along with His Majesty's ambassador to Turkey Knatchbull-Hugessen's memoirs in *A Diplomat in Peace and War* contain valuable insight for the inner dynamics of Britain's decision making. Also the British Historian Sir Arthur Bryant's work titled *Triumph in the West* which was based on Field Marshall Alan Brooke's diaries and autobiographical notes are significant for this research especially since Brooke's focus was on the Mediterranean theatre. This work allows the researcher to see the difference between Churchill's and Brooke's methods to reach the same goal. Along the same line I benefited from Michael Simpson's detailed work about the British Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Navy Andrew Cunningham: *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham: A Twentieth Century Naval Leader*. The book contains letters and telegrams related to Admiral Cunningham. His opinions and firsthand experience are really important for this research for him being the commander of the Mediterranean Fleet. Furthermore, it provides the reader with the essential information about the technical side of the naval warfare and the capabilities of the different belligerents fighting in the Mediterranean.

My research includes the arguments concerning the importance of Mediterranean to Britain before the WWII. In order to highlight the changes and the

continuities of the British imperial Mediterranean policy along with the alliance with the US and the differing strategies of the both nations, I benefited from *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power: Britain and America in the Twentieth Century* edited by Professor of Maritime History John D. Hattendorf and the political scientist Robert S. Jordan. The book contains different chapters written by different authors focusing on different time periods. Following this line, Hattendorf's other work titled *Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean: Past, Present and Future* was also important in terms of understanding the Britain's approach to the Mediterranean. I extensively used the valuable information provided by Michael Simpson's chapter titled *Superhighway to the World Wide Web: The Mediterranean in British Imperial Strategy, 1900–45*. Simpson illustrates the continuity in the British Mediterranean strategy by describing how the sea had been the centerpiece of the main European rivalries through the ages. Simpson elaborates the strategic and operational advantages of a British controlled Mediterranean for the Empire as he points out to the increased operational efficiency of troop deployment and of developing air warfare in the interwar era.

Since my research deals with the Allied planning and divergences between the British and the American camps my thesis benefits thoroughly from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* documents which have been made available. Although the correspondence of Churchill and Roosevelt is frequently displayed in Churchill's volumes, the complete correspondence between the two is published and available in *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*. It is known that the President Roosevelt did not leave any substantial autobiographic notes, yet he was observed by Robert Sherwood and he managed to come up with a very important biographical material: *Roosevelt and Hopkins: an intimate history*. For the grand strategy of

Britain and the Allies, the distinguished *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942* by Matloff & Snell, *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* by Herbert Feis and many other important secondary sources are used in this research which have broadened and deepened my analysis.

As reading Churchill's own accounts of the war helped me greatly in terms of assessing his ideas and reasoning, Trumbull Higgins' *Winston Churchill and the Second Front* was equally important. Higgins was a critic of Churchill and his unapologetic imperialist character. Throughout his book the author champions the US proposal for an earlier frontal attack on the Atlantic shores of the France by explaining the failures of Churchill's closing the ring strategy. According to Higgins, the war could have ended much earlier if the US plans were implemented, and he accuses Churchill of being a stubborn politician who approaches every matter from a political aspect.

More specifically on the Mediterranean strategy of the US, the recently published work of Andrew Buchanan gives a detailed account on the American policy towards the Mediterranean. Apart from the military aspect which has been much talked about, Buchanan presents his narrative from a political perspective. The post-war American aims in accordance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the North African colonies were analyzed in depth.

No matter how this research predominantly focuses on Britain and Turkey, a research on the Mediterranean theatre of the WWII necessities a certain level of knowledge about Italy. Therefore the article of Richard Hammond titled *An Enduring Influence on Imperial Defence and Grand Strategy: British perceptions of the Italian Navy, 1935–1943*, is quite helpful. It allows the reader to correctly assess

the naval balance of power between Britain and Italy in the Mediterranean throughout the war. Understanding the Italian capabilities and the threat it posed against Turkey was also another significant aspect that I had to include into my research considering that Italy had been Turkey's primary concern until her collapse. The significance of the military and the operational aspect of the navy are important in terms of accurately interpreting the decision making and strategic planning. Considering that Britain's Mediterranean strategy was affecting the US plans for the Pacific war and the US naval strategy in general, I will benefit from the expertise of Samuel E. Morison in terms of analyzing the naval situation in Pacific and Atlantic for the coherence of this research. His fifteen volumes of *The History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* are essential for understanding the US aspect. Morison stayed in navy vessels, witnessed naval battles and participated in planning sessions. His firsthand experience and opportunity to interview commanders are other factors reinforcing this research.

The existing literature on the Anglo-Turkish alliance heavily relies on the British sources due to lack of access to the Turkish official archives. Even the Turkish scholars remained limited to the British sources while only managing to make use of available non-state documents such as Turkish newspaper articles. Türkkaya Ataöv's *Turkish Foreign Policy 1939-1945* published in 1965 is the first detailed account on Turkey's diplomacy during the WWII. It is true that the work of Ataöv was biased in the terms of favoring Turkey and her decisions.

Later the historian Frank Weber's *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War* was published. Different from Ataöv's work, Weber's book predominantly dealt with British and German sources while failing to incorporate Turkish sources. The lack of Turkish

sources also caused Weber to reflect Turkey as a selfish, stubborn gambler who had his boot in both camps because the author failed to grasp the real reasons behind Turkey's insistence on neutrality. Even though the lack of Turkish sources constitute an academic insufficiency, Weber's particular focus on the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East along with his detailed accounts on the foreign diplomats working in Turkey brought a new perspective to the subject.

After Frank Weber, Turkish academic Selim Deringil published his work on the subject titled, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War: Active Neutrality*. Along with the non-governmental Turkish sources he benefited from his book, Deringil also extensively used the British Foreign Office documents combining the two aspects comprehensively. However his narrative mainly revolves around the Anglo-Turkish alliance, therefore the parts about Turkey's relations with the US and especially the Soviet Union were inadequate.

Later came Nicholas Tamkin's book entitled *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union, 1940–45 Strategy, Diplomacy and Intelligence in the Eastern Mediterranean*. Tamkin's book narrows its focus compared to the previous works in the literature. He brings the US and the Soviet Union into the discussion while effectively putting the intelligence data on use. However he did not use the Soviet Union's primary documents in his book. Tamkin's work was especially important for this thesis firstly because the book specifically deals with Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean, and secondly because it successfully illustrates the divergences between Churchill, his war cabinet and the British military staff.

After Tamkin, the most recent work on the subject was published by Onur İşçi. İşçi's book is named *Turkey and the Soviet Union During WWII: Diplomacy,*

Discord and International Relations. The work is important in terms of extensively dealing with the Soviet archives and focusing on aspect of the subject which had not been covered. İşçi claims in his work that Turkey and the Soviet Union were on good terms prior to the WWII. Despite the contrary belief in the literature, he claims that the two countries continued their commitment to mutual partnership and good relations even after the Montreux Convention. He also deals with the significant events that took place in the war such as the Massigli affair and the Anglo-Russian invasion of Iran which are both considered as two major setbacks in Turkey's relations to the Allies.

Along with the recent studies which conducted extensive research on recently disclosed Soviet archives, the raw intelligence data including the intercepted diplomatic correspondence of non-belligerent states of the World War II crucially impacted the field of study. These records were made public in 1994 by Britain and they were used in Robin Denniston's *Churchill's Secret War*. This is especially important since the last significant work of a Turkish scholar dedicated to the Anglo-Turkish relations of the WWII, predates the aforementioned disclosed intelligence intercepts. Moreover Denniston's book specifically deals with Britain's efforts on bringing Turkey into war, therefore the intelligence data that was used in the book predominantly is about Turkey.

1.3 The Importance of the Mediterranean to Britain

The Mediterranean Sea has always been the key in Britain's Imperial dynamics. Even before the opening of the Suez Canal it was a highly competitive region among the European states bordering the sea. During the wars with France including the Spanish Succession Wars in the beginning of the 19th century the

importance of the Mediterranean region proved its significance.⁹ Considering the importance of the Mediterranean to Britain, it is claimed that the Mediterranean states have had strong influence over the Britain's imperial strategy. Such that, Britain support for the Italian unification was also explained in terms of creating a counterweight to balance France in the Mediterranean balance of power along with other reasons.¹⁰

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 immensely increased the importance of the Mediterranean for the British. Britain "viewed the Mediterranean as a single geo-strategic unit."¹¹ The Sea was linking the home islands to the Far East. The protection as well as maintenance of these far imperial stations could only be sustained via the free flow of goods, men, and military forces. Though it was not seen as the center of the world, the Mediterranean maintained its role and importance until the opening of the twentieth century and beyond.

Through the 18th century the French concept of *Jeune Ecole* and the subsequent naval concentration in the region constituted a threat for "Britain's vital strategic corridor." The increasing French naval power in the region alongside the Russian threat down to the Balkans and the straits led to the 1887 Mediterranean Agreements. The Agreements was made between Britain, Italy and Austria-Hungary through the mediation of Germany and they aimed to preserve the status-quo in the Mediterranean.¹²

⁹ Michael Simpson. "Force H and British Strategy in the Western Mediterranean 1939–42," *The Mariner's Mirror*, 83, no. 1, (1997): 62, doi: 10.1080/00253359.1997.10656629.

¹⁰ Richard Hammond. "An Enduring Influence on Imperial Defence and Grand Strategy: British perceptions of the Italian Navy, 1935–1943," *The International History Review*, 5 no. 4, (2017): 1, doi: 10.1080/01402398208437133.

¹¹ Paul M. Kennedy "The Relevance of the Prewar British and American Maritime Strategies to the First World War and its Aftermath, 1898-1920" in *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power Britain and America in the Twentieth Century*, ed. John B. Hattendorf and Robert S. Jordan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 172.

¹² W. N. Medlicott, "The Mediterranean Agreements 1887," *The Slavonic Review*, 5, no. 13, (1926), 66.

In 1902 the Committee of Imperial Defense was established as a conscious effort in order to ensure the coordination of the army and navy, but more importantly to perceive Britain's imperial position as a whole identifying the requirements for imperial defense which again put emphasis on the Mediterranean.¹³

Despite the emergence of new factors such as oil, Britain from the beginning of the century followed a naval policy that would limit the power and the presence of the Royal Navy. One of the most prominent pursuers of this policy was none other than First Lord of Admiralty Churchill as he continued to reduce the naval strength to the east of Gibraltar until the Great War broke out. In order to counterbalance German aggression and the power and speed of the new dreadnoughts, Britain was more concerned with the North Sea than she was with the Mediterranean. This move was criticized and condemned in 1912 for causing the Empire to lose its hold upon the "carotid artery of the Empire."¹⁴

The growing importance of oil reserves in the Middle East revolutionized the role of Mediterranean and it turned into a "superhighway to the world wide web."¹⁵ Although no significant oil was being drilled in Middle East -except Persia- Europeans were suspecting that there were remarkable oil reserves in the region. It was crucial for Britain to maintain her connection with the oil resources which had been realized to be the blood in the veins of the large Royal Navy ever since 1910. It granted navy vessels with better operating distance and speed, but at the same time it increased Britain's dependence on her colonies. This dependence was further realized when Britain was maintaining her belligerency primarily through naval engagements and blockades, and air warfare. Also Britain was to face Axis troops in

¹³ Keith Jeffery, "The Eastern Arc of Empire: A Strategic View 1850–1950," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 5 no. 4 (1982), 532, doi: 10.1080/01402398208437133

¹⁴ Simpson, "Superhighway to the World Wide Web, 52-3

¹⁵ Simpson, "Superhighway to the World Wide Web", 51.

the peripheral regions in North Africa and in Far East where the supply was among the biggest concerns. During war, Britain had to fully utilize her merchant and combatant fleet in order to meet the requirements of her troops in those regions while assuring the free flow of men and material between the home island and the colonies. This created an immense oil demand.

There were only two narrow entrances to the Mediterranean, yet the sea was surrounded by European powers making it a very competitive region. Considering the protection of the British oversea colonies, Britain was in need of allies to undertake the duty of protecting the Mediterranean. Thus the Anglo French Naval Convention of 6 August 1914 made the French Navy accountable to protect the British and French interests on Mediterranean.¹⁶ The distribution of tasks between Britain and France allowed Britain to focus on the Eastern Mediterranean. Between the years 1914 and 1918, no significant British force was stationed west of Alexandria. Gibraltar only hosted small British escort forces and patrol vessels which were enabling British West African trade as well as preventing German and Italian U-boats from sailing out into the Atlantic. It was mainly the French navy which took up the position against Italy at the western part of the Mediterranean region.¹⁷

In 1911 Ottomans had ordered two modern dreadnoughts named *Reşadiye* and *Fatih Sultan Mehmet* to be built by Britain. Also, in 1913, Ottomans bought another dreadnought from Brazil, which had been again built by Britain and then sold to Brazil. The Ottomans named the dreadnought as *Sultan Osman I* and it was going to be received from Britain where she was being held for her sea trials. However, soon, the Ottoman Empire drew near to the Central Powers, and Britain

¹⁶Paul G. Halpern, "The Anglo-French-Italian Naval Convention of 1915" *The Historical Journal*, 13, no. 1, (1970), 106-7.

¹⁷ Simpson, "Force H and British Strategy," 63-64.

was anxious that these ships were going to be used by the enemy in Eastern Mediterranean.

By the time British First Lord of Admiralty Churchill took the daring decision to confiscate the Ottoman ships on August 3, 1914, only *Reşadiye* and *Sultan Osman I* were operational. The construction of the second dreadnought *Fatih Sultan Mehmed* had merely been started therefore Britain confiscated the two. He said, with reference to the non-great powers who owned dreadnoughts: “It is sport for them, it is death for us.”¹⁸ Churchill, like many others, was expecting the war to be short in duration and instead of ordering new ships which could take years to launch, he chose to keep the ships. This move in Churchill’s mind would consolidate Britain’s naval superiority against Germany, at the same time eliminating the possibility of ships being used against Britain.

The transfer of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* from Germany to the Ottoman Navy did not necessarily mean that the ships were to be used solely in Black Sea. The *Goeben* being located in İstanbul caused a great deal of apprehension which Britain maintained throughout the war. Certainly a single ship could not break the Anglo-French blockade of the Aegean and single handedly end the Allied superiority in Mediterranean. However, the *Goeben*’s speed allowed her to sally out from İstanbul and continuously cause trouble to Allied naval operations. This leverage on Germany’s side was most felt during the Dardanelles campaign.¹⁹

Although Britain was enjoying good relations with Greece, the Greek navy was not considered as an Allied element and thus was not figured in the

¹⁸ Paul, Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I*, (Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1994) Chapter: The Naval Balance in 1914. Epub.

¹⁹ Marcus Faulkner, *The Great War at Sea: A Naval Atlas 1914-1919*, (Barnsley: Sea Publishing, 2015), The Dardanelles, 1917–18. Epub.

Mediterranean calculations of the Entente powers.²⁰ Before their transfer to the Ottoman navy, the *Goeben* and her sister ship, the *Breslau*, were roaming in the Mediterranean and they were depriving Britain of absolute naval superiority in the region. This situation was vital for Britain since the British home islands were connected to the overseas colonies via the lifelines passing through the Mediterranean.²¹ Therefore it caused Britain to be more sensitive towards the developments in the Ottoman Empire.²² This example shows that Britain was approaching the strategy and planning from an imperial framework. Britain was looking after a huge empire while fighting the war. This surely helped Britain to develop central coordination and imperial defense policy making.²³

The Entente could not maintain an absolute authority in the Mediterranean until the end of war. The vulnerability of British power in the Mediterranean during the Great War surely impacted British minds and further strengthened their perception of the need for allies to defend their interests in the Mediterranean. It was even stated that, after the disaster at the Dardanelles “the Mediterranean, together with the Middle East, fast became a strategic end in itself”: After the war it was understood that Britain will almost always require the assistance of allies to keep the aggressive Mediterranean powers in check.²⁴

In May 1918 Admiral Gerald Charles Dickens of the Royal Navy pointed out that it was necessary for Britain to exercise her authority after the war over the seas around Malta, Gibraltar and Egypt. The French had a noticeable interest in the Mediterranean, thus the British again started to increase the presence of the Royal

²⁰ Richard Hough, *The Great War at Sea: 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 58.

²¹ David Fromkin, *Peace to end All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the modern Middle East*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), 28.

²² Lawrence Sondhaus, *The Great War at Sea: A Naval History of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.) Chapter 4: European Waters, 1914.

²³ Jeffrey, “The Eastern Arc of Empire,” 532.

²⁴ Simpson, “Superhighway to the World Wide Web”, 53-4.

Navy in the region.²⁵ On top of the naval presence, Britain also diplomatically aimed at fulfilling the goal to re-establish her dominance. The British government set to work firstly by successfully excluding the French from armistice negotiations with the Turks. This diplomatic success allowed Britain not only to keep a substantial force in the Sea of Marmara, but it also allowed her to establish protectorates in the oil rich Middle Eastern territories. Michael Simpson says: “the flag of empire had not been furled”, indicating the successful British Imperial policy in the Mediterranean region.²⁶

Free from having troubling concerns of strong naval forces near the home islands, Britain could then enjoy the advantages of having a formidable fleet in the Mediterranean again. There were some reasons why Britain was keeping a costly, substantial fleet in the Mediterranean during the age of disarmament. The Mediterranean provided the navy with an environment perfectly suited for naval training, while allowing them to keep an eye on the empire east of Suez. The protectorates in Egypt and Palestine required close oversight and it was being provided with what is called “an exceedingly efficient emergency imperial gendarmerie.”²⁷ Lastly, in the event that the Far East was threatened, the navy could move through Suez with ease.

Clayton gives examples from the upheavals in the Middle East, specifically the anti-Jewish unrest and atrocities including the 1929 Palestine riots. He shows how quickly the Royal Navy could transport troops and planes to intervene.²⁸ British

²⁵ Paul, Halpern *A Naval History of World War I*. (Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1994) chapter: The Naval Balance in 1914. Epub.

²⁶ Michael Simpson, “Superhighway to the World Wide Web,” 56.

²⁷ Anthony Clayton, *The British Empire as a Superpower*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1986), 142

²⁸ British navy could transfer over 700 infantry along with some material from Malta to Haifa in only 48 hours in August 1929. Anthony Clayton, “The British Empire as a Superpower,” 142

naval presence proved itself to be a formidable asset even in the absence of war, especially when British imperial and political aims around the region are considered.

Mussolini's posturing in the Mediterranean and the regions in close proximity created apprehensions in the British High command. The concerns reached a climax with the Italian invasion of a League of Nations member, Abyssinia. Despite the Italian aggression and Mussolini's open claims towards the Mediterranean since 1935,²⁹ British navy admirals were confident of their readiness and strength to engage in naval conflict with the Italians. - Both the Rear-Admiral Cunningham and Admiral of the Fleet Ernle Chatfield were battle-ready.³⁰ Even though British naval strength in the Mediterranean was unrivaled, they were seeking French aid in case hostilities with Italy were to break out. France's overwhelming anxiety towards Germany was, however, considered a factor that might prevent a bilateral action against Italy. Nevertheless, if war was inevitable, the French were eager to accept the plan to knock out Italy first, as the weakest link, and François Darlan offered their full support to the British safeguarding of the Mediterranean.

Chatfield, however, viewed the threat to the empire in the Far East as the most important strategic zone, due to the Japanese, and this prevented full cooperation and further joint planning with the French.³¹ Furthermore, Britain was convinced that Italy would side with Germany in any future conflict. Chatfield argued that "so long as we cannot come to terms with either of our chief opponents, it will be better in the long run to get an agreement with Italy."³² His attempts to prioritize the Far East over the Mediterranean created an opposition among the Royal

²⁹ İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 23.

³⁰ Michael Simpson *A Life of Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham: A Twentieth-Century Naval Leader*, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004), 25; Michael Simpson "Superhighway to the World Wide Web," 57.

³¹ Simpson, "Super Highway to the World Wide Web," 58.

³² Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 29.

Navy's ranks, consisting of a group of naval officers who were called “the Mediterraneanists”. The notion of the vital strategic importance of the Far East faded, however, with Chatfield’s retirement from the Royal Navy.³³

Britain was in a constant struggle to make a clear-cut decision towards Italy. The vacillation occurred mainly because Britain had to consider the threats in the Atlantic and the North Sea coming from Germany, the threats in the Mediterranean coming from Italy and the threats in the Far East coming from Japan simultaneously. If the Far East was to be prioritized then the British had to be prepared to abandon Mediterranean shipping and direct the routes round the Cape of Good Hope. On the other hand, if the Mediterranean was to be prioritized, then the navy would have been forced to abandon naval operations in the Far Eastern theatre due to the intimidating Japanese air and sea power. The naval officers were also aware of the improving aviation technologies and of the increasing distances that aircraft could cover. These developments, according to the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, Dudley Pond, made the Mediterranean a “very small place”. He voiced his concerns in November 1938 by saying that the route between Malta and Alexandria had become a major operation even for a single vessel. Under these circumstances Italy would be able to exploit her geographical advantages and could manage to make Sicily the “epicenter of the maritime war”.³⁴ Because of this exact reason, the Royal Navy had growing concerns of sending warships and other capital vessels to the Mediterranean fearing that they were going to be vulnerable against attacks coming from air. The anxious voices had also claimed that the enclosed

³³ Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 33.

³⁴ Simpson, “Super Highway to the World Wide Web,” 59.

nature, island and mainland bases in the region were perfectly capable of destroying British merchant shipping forcing it to use the Cape route.³⁵

It was also argued that the Abyssinian affair had caused the “minors” in the Mediterranean, including Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey, to abstain from establishing close ties with Britain and France.³⁶ There were voices in the admiralty that championed the idea of withdrawing from Mediterranean entirely. Admiral Cunningham pointed out that: “the effect of evacuation on Greece, Turkey, and on the Arab and Moslem world are political factors which make it essential that no precipitate action should be taken in that direction”.³⁷ After the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed, Britain started to include Soviet Union in the calculations, and also Spain, by then ruled by Franco. This made the situation even direr for Britain.

1.3.2 British Strategy for the Oncoming War in the Mediterranean

Britain’s main aim in the Mediterranean in case the hostilities were to break out was to preserve the existing communication and trade with her allies, most importantly, with France. Moreover as it will be discussed in the following chapters, Allies were aiming to have Italy embrace benevolent neutrality if they couldn’t earn Mussolini’s friendship. Therefore the Allied plans did not include a detailed naval strategy in the region nor were the Allies after disrupting Italy’s ties between her North African possessions.³⁸ The pursuit of Italian friendship necessitated a policy of appeasement towards Italy which was later named as “fruitless endeavor” by Chamberlain after Mussolini attacked Albania.³⁹ However before Italy irrecoverably

³⁵ Hammond, “An Enduring Influence,” 6.

³⁶ Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 28.

³⁷ Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 31.

³⁸ Simpson, “Force H and British Strategy,” 62.

³⁹ Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 32

positioned herself against Britain after the invasion of Albania, the Chiefs of Staff declared:

...it is of paramount importance to British strategical interests that we should be free from commitments in the Mediterranean if our defence arrangements are to prove adequate to deal with a threat of hostilities in the Far East or at Home and to give us breathing space in which to recondition the services. It is evident that to achieve this we must return as soon as possible to a state of friendly relations with Italy.⁴⁰

Britain managed to materialize agreements with Italy in 1937 and in 1938. No matter how Chamberlain perceived these as a fruitless endeavor, British position and policy of appeasement should be correctly analyzed. As it has been mentioned many times in this paper, Britain was keeping eye on Italy, German, and Japan simultaneously. Although, the Royal Navy admirals were confident that they possessed the power to crush Italy despite Italy's growing navy, it would not make sense to answer the threat with a threat. According to Chatfield, pursuing a long term peace with Italy was one of the best options for them if Britain could not come to terms with either Germany or Japan, because unlike these two countries, claims Chatfield, Britain did not have any "basic cause of enmity" with Italy.⁴¹

The Italian invasion of Albania was a major turn of events for British strategy in the Mediterranean. Although it was correctly predicted by the British admiralty and Chamberlain that Italy would follow German after a quarrel between

⁴⁰ Hammond, "An Enduring Influence," 9.

⁴¹ Hammond, "An Enduring Influence," 9.

Germany and Britain, the consequences of Italian belligerency was too much for Britain to handle.

Admiral Cunningham claims that Britain was in a “strategic mess”, indicating the large and diverse responsibilities of Britain for survival. He mentions three main tasks for Britain’s survival: the protection of the home islands, the Atlantic routes, and the over sea Empire. It was in accordance with Britain’s strategy which saw the Empire as a cohesive entity which required a centralized organization.⁴² Cunningham also mentions Britain’s historical duty to prevent a single power from dominating continental Europe among Britain’s responsibilities. As the Chief of the General Staff frankly stated, these circumstances indicated that Britain was in no position to “safeguard the territory, trade and vital interests against Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously.”⁴³ Because of this mess, Britain was forced to carry on with her appeasement policy towards Italy even after the invasion of Albania. However this did not mean that Britain was not aware of the situation she would find herself in after Italian belligerency. This was a crucial point because after Italy declared war, it would become extremely difficult for Britain to defend her interests in the region with the necessary air and sea forces. Therefore it was agreed to make the necessary adjustments in the region as early as March 30 via reinforcing the Mediterranean fleet against Italy.⁴⁴

The naval chiefs were aware that the existing fleet docked in Malta was not sufficient to deter Italians, but at the same time they were not prepared to detach large task forces from the British home fleet fearing that it might provoke Italians. Therefore Britain agreed to send a medium sized task force to Gibraltar in order to

⁴² Hammond, “An Enduring Influence,” 3.

⁴³ Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 33

⁴⁴ Simpson, “Force H and British Strategy,” 63

deter Italy and safeguard the Mediterranean.⁴⁵ As was mentioned the British naval officials were prepared for the case of a naval war against Italy, yet at the same time they were perfectly aware of their numerical disadvantage in the Mediterranean region not to mention the newer and faster Italian vessels.

Even though it was agreed upon to be prepared for a naval war with Italy, there were different opinions concerning the method. The first school of opinion suggested maintaining the war through blockades and subsequent economic strangulation. The second school which was known as the “knockout school” patronized the idea of finishing off Italy with a rapid and concentrated effort. Winston Churchill, who was the First Lord of Admiralty, belonged to the latter.⁴⁶ Churchill knew that the Italian naval industry was working constantly to bring out new ships. Also, having knocked out Italian fleet fast would open the Mediterranean for British shipping and allowed the Mediterranean navy to help Far Eastern theatre.⁴⁷

After France fell in 1940, the British plans and strategy for the Mediterranean changed, since Mussolini, who once was considered as a possible ally, seized the opportunity and declared war on France, throwing the balance dynamics into disorder. The Italian peninsula, dividing the Mediterranean into two parts, was giving a significant advantage to Italy. Italian planes were able to effectively fly missions over the Mediterranean where RAF was limited with the airfields in Malta. Considering this was the early stages of war, naval bombers and fighters were not developed enough to cover long distances thus making the naval situation in the

⁴⁵ Hammond, “An Enduring Influence,” 5.

⁴⁶ Hammond, “An Enduring Influence,” 11.

⁴⁷ Hammond, “An Enduring Influence,” 12.

Mediterranean for Britain even direr. Even worse, the British government deemed Malta as indefensible against Italian invasion, therefore it was agreed to withdraw the Royal Fleet from the island to Alexandria.

Churchill's grand strategy involved the closing and the tightening of a ring around the territory under German control. This ring was defined roughly as running on a line from North Sea to the Black Sea, through Anatolia, along the northern seaboard of the Mediterranean and the western seaboard of the European continent. The main object was "to strengthen this ring, and close the gaps in it, by sustaining the Russian Front, by arming and supporting Turkey, by increasing their strength in the Middle East, and by gaining possession of the whole North African Coast, for the prevention of "German eruptions" toward the Persian Gulf, or the West Coast of Africa, or elsewhere."⁴⁸

After Britain was left alone against Germany, Churchill decided to drag the war to the periphery. Britain was in no position in late 1940 to consider an operation in Continental Europe though surely the prime focus was on the defense of Britain. Germany had proven herself a formidable opponent whose power was superb on land and in the skies. However, the German navy, despite Admiral Raeder's proposed plan Z, was still no match for the Royal Navy. Britain was still in a position to utilize this asset even under the constant threat of the Kriegsmarine's wolf packs. In order to seize the opportunity, Britain first tried to harm Germany by not allowing her continental power to provide her with the needs of the war industry. No matter how Germany was the unchallenged ruler of Europe, she was still in grave need of raw materials such as oil. Germany was aware of this deficiency; thus she opened up

⁴⁸ Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An intimate History* (New York: Harper & Brothers) Chapter 11: No. 10 Downing Street. Epub

synthetic oil refineries. However, the synthetic oil, combined with burdensome imports of Soviet oil, was still not sufficient for the Reich. After Operation Barbarossa, the need for oil turned into the Achilles heel of the Reich, considering the need for speedy, continuous supply for the hungry motorized and panzer units along with the needs of the Luftwaffe, which had to remain operational throughout the continent. In order to deprive Germany of these sorts of invaluable material, Britain had to maintain her supremacy on the seas and create acute shortage of oil for her enemy.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Britain herself was heavily dependent on the Atlantic commerce and American lend-leased material which was essential for Britain's defense. Also, by trying to divert Germany's focus from the British home islands by spreading the war, Churchill was to buy time to weather the storm. It is true that Britain had to defend Egypt especially when the situation of French North Africa and Syria was ambiguous after the fall of France. But also, the only open track for Britain was Mediterranean at that time for it was practically impossible for Britain to make an amphibious assault at the heart of Germany where she was strongest. Considering Churchill's views on Mediterranean and how he always had been so ambitious to be active in the region makes one suggest that he was purposefully dragging war to the periphery as well as being forced to fight there.

Although Churchill, in the last attempt before the war broke out with Italy, ensured Mussolini that they would "redden the Mediterranean" with their blood in case of hostilities, Mussolini expected the British to disappear from the Mediterranean as soon as a conflict broke out there.⁵⁰ On the contrary, Churchill had already been advocating the idea that Britain's first battlefield must be the

⁴⁹ Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, 1: 23.

⁵⁰ Trumbull Higgins, *Winston Churchill and the Second Front*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 5.

Mediterranean in an event of hostilities with Italy.⁵¹ The Prime Minister knew that, in order to survive, he had to protect the life-line that connected the home islands to the colonies. After Italy had declared war on France, Churchill was trying to pin down the Italian navy by an attack launched by the combined fleets of Britain and an almost collapsed France. In fact in his statement Churchill said, “If France is still our ally...”⁵². Swift German victory on the western front only further cemented this strategy. “The Prime Minister...” says Higgins, “contemplated on aggressive colonial policy to compensate for the collapse of his continental allies”,⁵³ which eventually caused Britain to prioritize the Mediterranean. We can see Churchill’s ambition over Mediterranean from day one where he vetoed the decision of evacuating the sea at the risk of losing his ships in 1940.⁵⁴ As it was stated by Higgins, Churchill could not stand that his favorite sea was being closed to him.⁵⁵

It was defined by Simpson that combined Vichy and Italian naval power in the Mediterranean presents a formidable challenge for Britain. Mediterranean geography and how it was benefiting Italy has been mentioned several times in this work. Now, France had been pushed aside, and the Axis could further utilize the air and naval bases in the Western Mediterranean. In such a situation, Britain’s position worsened immediately. Even worse; the French Navy in the Mediterranean was the second to the strongest navy, in the sea only second to Italian navy and it could at any moment fall into the hands of Axis.⁵⁶ It was a risk Britain could not take and therefore, the Royal Navy took the daring decision and bombed the French Fleet in

⁵¹ Letter from Churchill to Halifax, April 1939, Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 1 (New York: Rosetta Books LLC, 20020), 415.

⁵² Higgins, the *Second Front*, 33.

⁵³ Higgins, the *Second Front*, 35.

⁵⁴ Letter from Churchill to Ismay, 19 September 1940. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949), 440.

⁵⁵ Higgins, the *Second Front*, 35.

⁵⁶ Simpson, “Force H and British Strategy,” 64.

Mers-el-Kebir in June 1940 after the French officers refused to abide with British proposals.⁵⁷ This move certainly, caused problems between Britain and France which would outlast WWII, but it was essential for the British *Mediterranean* fleet to neutralize the powerful prospective enemy ships. Elimination of the French fleet's possibility to be used against Britain only merely relieved the Whitehall.

Britain and France had formerly divided their preferred regions of operation. According to their consensus, Britain was going to be more active in Eastern Mediterranean whilst France would be more active in the western region while helping British naval elements for gate keeping at Gibraltar.⁵⁸ The loss of France as an ally in the Mediterranean also raised new questions for the future of the Mediterranean fleet in the sense of safeguarding the western sector. Some suggested that the sea should be abandoned altogether in order to strengthen Gibraltar. This suggestion intended to keep Italian navy out of the Atlantic since it would gravely peril the security of the home islands. The combined Italian and German navy roaming freely in Atlantic also would endanger the transatlantic trade with the US. However, the suggestion was ruled out and the Mediterranean navy was ordered to stay.⁵⁹ After the incident at Mers-el-Kebir British Mediterranean Navy was practically alone against the Italians. No matter how Axis had the momentum since the beginning of the war, Royal Navy's admirals preserved their confidence against the Italians despite the loss of French navy. The first real engagement between Britain and Italy occurred on 9 July which was later to be called as the Battle of Calabria. Admiral Cunningham noted that the Italian cruiser *Neptune* was the first

⁵⁷ Hammond, "An Enduring Influence," 13.

⁵⁸ Simpson, "Force H and British Strategy," 62

⁵⁹ Hammond, "An Enduring Influence," 13.

enemy battle ship that was sighted since the Napoleonic wars.⁶⁰ The engagement lasted roughly 2 hours and Britain won the skirmish. This boosted Royal Navy's morale in Mediterranean for the upcoming naval engagements with the Italian fleet. Cunningham said that Italian fleet would not present any threat that Britain could not foresee, yet he acknowledged Italian control of the air. Although the Italian air force made its presence felt through the initial engagement, it failed to inflict any substantial damage to British ships.⁶¹

British officials started to comprehend the real capabilities of the bloated Italian air and naval forces as time went by. It turned out that a substantial number of Italian warplanes were not operational and the ships, despite being new, lacked some essential armament and equipment.⁶² There was also a vast experience difference between the Italian navy admirals, servicemen and their British counterparts. Italy's numerical advantage on paper failed to project itself on the battlefield. In addition to that, there was a difference in the mentality. Despite dissent over in the methods, British decision makers, both civil and military were determined to preserve their presence in the Mediterranean and in most cases acted zealously in naval engagements. The Italians on the other hand, tended to disengage first even when they had the numerical advantage.⁶³ This difference in the mentality also became apparent when Italy failed to launch an attack or at least to establish a blockade on Malta where Britain seemed weakest in the Mediterranean. Although Mussolini made it clear that they were indeed aiming to inflict some damage on the island, the attack never came. When the Royal Navy masterfully pulled off the carrier raid on the

⁶⁰ Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 51.

⁶¹ Simpson, *A Life of Admiral of The Fleet Andrew Cunningham*, 51.

⁶² Hammond, "An Enduring Influence," 6.

⁶³ Some navy admirals opted for an early overwhelming attack to neutralize the Italian navy and thus they were called as the members of knockout school. The knockout school included Churchill. Hammond, "An Enduring Influence," 10.

Italian navy docked in Taranto, Britain further cemented its presence and confidence in the Mediterranean forcing Italy to embrace a defensive position in the sea until the end of her belligerency. Italy may have abandoned the doctrine of fleet in being after the Taranto raid; but her navy still possessed a remarkable submarine fleet.

Especially when German U-boats were causing big trouble in the Atlantic in 1940-41, it was expected that Italian submarines would generate similar effect in the Mediterranean. However, as it was observed by Admiral Cunningham, the Italian submarine fleet was far from being effective against the Royal Navy. Admiral said in December 1941 "...we have had an easy time with the Iti U-boats, but these Huns (Germans) are a different proposition."⁶⁴

Through the successful Allied campaign in Africa, the Axis continued to lose important bases and Italian naval threat rapidly faded. Consequently the Allied navy faced little to no resistance during the naval landing on Sicily.

1.4 British Grand Strategy: the Necessities of Empire

American involvement in the Great War was a groundbreaking event in international politics as well as in the US domestic politics. The staggering Wilsonian u-turn which resulted in the desolation of the much-debated quasi isolationist or at least neutral stance of the US on the world affairs had led to the speedy defeat of the German Empire. American involvement in the First World War seemed the only necessary move for putting a strong Germany which was no longer dealing with a war in two fronts on her knees. The quick shift which was enough to turn the tables for the big European colonial empires enabled Americans to build up a confidence. This confident and optimistic mindset among many other important considerations played a factor on the US strategy of *Germany first*. Not surprisingly

⁶⁴ Hammond, "An Enduring Influence," 14.

these sorts of past experiences are among the contributing factors in nations' strategic decision-making process. Like the French who could stop German advance in the trenches of Verdun obtained the tactics that were mostly favoring fixed defenses and immobile forts such as the Maginot Line aiming to stop the Blitzkrieg in the same fashion, and Germans who knocked out Poland first before attempting to the western offensive to avoid a second war in two fronts,⁶⁵ Americans also had memories of the Great War which has influenced their strategic decisions.⁶⁶

The influence of the past was maybe most felt when the Allies were trying to make a decision between committing to a cross-Channel invasion to open up a second front to directly help the Soviets by forcing Germans to divert their forces on a great scale, or pursuing a military goal in North Africa to help existing British forces squeeze Rommel. The US, which was confident in terms of its past experiences, desired a cross-Channel invasion whereas the British were quite the contrary and had experienced the most catastrophic side of the trench warfare where the "gains and losses were measured in yards, casualties in millions". They insisted on operating in North Africa.⁶⁷

It is without doubt that the fundamental decisions of a world war cannot simply be assigned to the past experiences of the countries or the leaders. There are more realist reasons why the respected states favored different strategies. For instance, the memo submitted by General Eisenhower in February 1942 discussing the rationality of a cross-Channel invasion, which contained ideas such as the unified US forces operating on the shortest route ensuring the survival of the Russians for,

⁶⁵ A.J.P. Taylor, *The Second World War: An Illustrated History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), 24.

⁶⁶ Gaddis Smith, *American Diplomacy During the Second World War, 1941-1945*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 24.

⁶⁷ Smith, *American Diplomacy*, 25.

one more year, while gaining the air superiority relatively more easy over the battle area of Britain, illustrates the substantial side of the support behind the cross-Channel invasion.⁶⁸ More importantly, attempting an African invasion for fulfilling the goal of closing the ring was in no way a defensive matter, nor an end in itself. It was rather the opening gambit of a series of operations that would crack Germany. Over this issue Churchill said to his Chiefs of Staff: “If French North Africa is going to be made an excuse for locking up great forces on the defensive and calling it a “commitment,” it would be better not to have gone there at all.”⁶⁹

Also, one must not forget the unchanged British desire of blockading Germany since the beginning of the War. Blockading was believed to be the most effective method of war in order to weather the German storm. This might come as a strange strategy since the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was just had been signed and Germans could very well have used Soviet raw material to feed their armament production. Yet the British, probably because of the experiences of the Great War and other earth-shattering wars in mankind's history, chose to stay on the defensive lines. Chamberlain increased the number of the anti-air guns and improved the conditions of the beach defenses instead of planning a major offensive that would nip the German threat in the bud. In fact, it was rational to let the aggressor play the aggressor, especially when the aggressor was outnumbered and surrounded by its prospective enemies. The defensive warfare has proven itself extremely useful in the previous war. It had been determined as the most efficient style of combat in the Great War as Norman Stone suggested, and can easily be considered as the source of Britain's heavy reliance on a defensive war with the emphasis on blockading

⁶⁸ Matloff and Snell *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, 1:159.

⁶⁹ Churchill to Chiefs of Staff, November 9 1942. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 4 (New York, RosettaBooks LLC, 2002), 793.

Germans. At the end of the day, what caused German capitulation in the Great War were the long term calculations which illustrated to the German decision makers the impossibility of maintaining a long war of attrition against the industrial giants with fresh reserves of manpower. Churchill's "soft underbelly" and "closing the ring around the *Festung Europe*" can also be considered as a continuation of this preference of defensive warfare.

Lastly, in accordance with the aforementioned British Imperial needs against growing German threat, Churchill knew that they were in need of allies to withstand German menace. Therefore he stated the following when the war has just started: "Neutrality so formidable as to be unmolested is a great deal; but hostile action is what is needed to prevent the whole strain being thrown upon the Western front. It therefore seems most important to make a Turkish treaty."⁷⁰ As it is shown here, Churchill considered Turkey's position as crucial from day one. Even though he desired an immediate belligerency which would bring additional hostile action, after the impressive German success, Churchill abandoned his view of acquiring as many allies as possible and sought maintenance of Turkey's neutral status.

It also should not be forgotten that Britain was trying to keep her empire intact by keeping her forces dispersed all over the world from Suez to Burma rather than letting go of the Empire and solely concentrating on the Western Europe. In the interwar era, Malaya supplied 80% of the world's total refined tin while Ceylon supplied the 50% of world's rubber.⁷¹ Britain's chance for surviving a long war of attrition was to a considerable extent dependent on the durability of trade. Britain's connection with the Far East thus was crucial and therefore she put emphasis on the

⁷⁰ Winston Churchill, *The Churchill War Papers: at the Admiralty*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 148.

⁷¹ Jeffrey, "The Eastern Arc of Empire," 536.

imperial belongings and commerce. McNeill dubiously goes further and states:

“Great Britain was not solely concerned with the European scene.... Had the British goal been simply to beat Germany, extensive parts of the Empire might have been sacrificed (e.g. the Middle East) in order to attack the center of the German power.”⁷²

It is hard to take McNeill’s daring statement as gospel truth, yet there is merit in his argument since, for instance, when the unabated air war in the skies of Britain was still going on, Churchill refused to give up the Mediterranean theatre. The Prime Minister wanted to keep soldiers deployed in the region instead of using those frontline soldiers to man the bases on the home islands.⁷³ Of course bringing them back through the Mediterranean would have been very risky, perhaps disastrous, and bringing them back via Suez and the Cape would have taken a long time⁷⁴, as well as still being somewhat risky. Nor, arguably, were they numerous enough to change the equation in the home islands, if the air and sea defenses failed. Furthermore, the differing perceptions of Allies in terms of defining the political and ideological agenda of the war, which is prominent in the Atlantic Charter (1941), also contributes to the claim of Britain’s ambition on her imperial holdings. The third article of the Atlantic Charter which states: “They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.” This was interpreted by Churchill as highlighting the need for freedom for the peoples and regions under Nazi rule, specifically making a distinction between those and the ones “which owe allegiance to the British Crown.”⁷⁵ Moreover, the lack of

⁷² William Hardy McNeill, *America, Britain, & Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-1946*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 35.

⁷³ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 3:379.

⁷⁴ The distance between Britain and Egypt via the Cape Route was travelled approximately in six weeks.

⁷⁵ McNeill, *America, Britain, & Russia*, 41.

British manpower, which was underscored in Plan Dog Memo as insufficient and requiring troops from other nations, is another factor in terms of defining the British imperial agenda.⁷⁶ Britain's population in 1939 was around 41 million whereas the German population had increased to 90 million with recent expansions. Arguably, it was critical for Britain to keep her empire intact and to stand against the German military might by using every drop of the strength and capital of her empire whose population was an intimidating half a billion.

The British desire to protect the life-lines of the Empire was even more problematic if the American strategic dilemma is considered. The US had two growing threats on two oceans. As was inked in to Plan Dog Memo, the US plan was to implement the *Germany First* strategy. However the situation in the Pacific was favoring Japan. In terms of numbers, Japan had a stronger navy in the Pacific than the US and her potential allies – the UK and Dutch East Indies – in May 1941.⁷⁷ Due to their relatively recent naval construction program Japanese ships had better technology, allowing them to be faster and more dangerous. Certainly, there had been some restrictions in tonnage. However, the Japanese had also been secretly producing capital ships to break those restrictions.⁷⁸ Also Japan held the upper hand in conscription, which allowed them to man the guns more intensely than the US navy, increasing Japanese naval operational efficiency. Besides, the Japanese methods of training their sailors were harshly effective compared to the US and British. Public opinion as well played a huge factor, not only in the minds of people

⁷⁶The Plan Dog Memo of Admiral Harold Stark was one of the most important documents of the World War II. It outlined the variety of grand strategy options and paths for U.S. Harold R. Stark, "Memorandum for the Secretary" FdrLibrary, last revised in December 2020, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box4/a48b01.html>

⁷⁷ Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States naval operations in World War II*, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), 58.

⁷⁸ Morison, *History of United States naval operations in World War II*, 3:31.

but also of the navy admirals. Focusing on the Atlantic even after the Pearl Harbor incident was not a popular agenda, since “Japan was a more psychologically satisfying enemy to many Americans.”⁷⁹ With all these features described, Morison defines Japan as the “worthy antagonist” saying that the Japanese navy was the strongest that the US navy was up against ever since 1814.⁸⁰ For these reasons it was anticipated by the American navy that the next war would be against Japan. Nevertheless when the events started to boil up in Europe, the US shifted their interest to the Atlantic, later intensifying the relations with Britain via lend-lease. German success in 1940 in France and the Low Countries showcased the reality and the immensity of the German threat for America. Not only the balance of power and security but also the economy was in peril since trade with Europe, which constituted the greatest part of US trade, was almost shut down by the war in Europe.

By committing the US navy mainly to the Atlantic, the Americans also aimed at relieving the British in their struggle with the Germans, which would eventually make it possible for Britain to be more active in the Pacific. This idea was further cemented when Britain assured the US that they would send a fleet to Singapore in February 1941 in return for the US assurance to send a detachment from the Pacific navy to the Atlantic when the Americans were also preparing for a war against the Germans.⁸¹ The tensions were high between Germany and US. Lend lease convoys and unrestricted submarine warfare embraced by the US navy was indicating that the hostilities could break out at any moment between the US and Germany.

⁷⁹ Smith, *American Diplomacy during the Second World War*, 24.

⁸⁰ Morison, *History of United States naval operations in World War II*, 3:24.

⁸¹ Morison, *History of United States naval operations in World War II*, 3:57.

CHAPTER II

TURKEY IN WWII AND ANGLO-TURKISH ALLIANCE

2.1 Turkey's Condition before the War

National security was the biggest concern of the young republic following the disastrous Great War. In order to secure this goal Turkey was desperately trying to industrialize and complete the idea of building a progressive industrialized nation state with a powerful army. The Great depression between the years 1929-34 caused total world trade to decrease by %66.210 Along with its disastrous effects on many countries, especially the industrialized ones, the Great Depression was also claimed to have been effective in terms of allowing minor states to develop more independent economic policies.⁸² Subsequently those countries started to lean more onto manufactured products known as the import-substitution goods rather than regional agricultural products.⁸³ It is also claimed that the effects of great depression barred great powers from finding solutions to the economic problems in some parts of the world which opened room for diplomatic maneuvers in Balkans for Turkey.

Therefore, starting from 1929 Turkey could pursue independent foreign trade and protectionist economic policies. The quasi independence from the great powers

⁸² Dilek Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Opportunities and Limits for Middle-power Activism in the 1930s" *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 no. 3, (2005), 4. doi: 10.1177/0022009405054565.

⁸³ Carol E. Heim 1998. "Uneven Impacts of the Great Depression." in *The Economics of the Great Depression*, Mark Wheeler, ed. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 31.

in this era allowed Turkey and other fellow Balkan states to shape Balkan diplomacy between the years 1930-33.⁸⁴ For sure Mussolini's aggressive discourse further expedited small states to cooperate. In order to overcome the effects of depression on foreign trade, Turkey as well as many other countries had begun to use what is known as the clearing agreements. Through these deals the use of foreign currency could be omitted and the international trade was progressing in a quasi-barter method. First of these agreements was signed with France in 1933 and with Germany later that year.

The President of the Reichbank Hjalmar Schacht, constructed the clearing agreements in a way that would help Germany to find trading partners in south-east Europe while at the same time constantly creating new markets for the country. German plan also intended the agreements to work against Germany thus after each transaction, Germany was going to be in export debt to the countries she was importing goods from.⁸⁵ This was actually a common feature of German trade treaties struck by other Balkan and southeast European states. The aim was to create a dependence on German industry in the region subsequently creating a political spill over which would include the nations in the region to the German sphere of influence.

In Nazi ideology Germany was held responsible for protecting and reorganizing the continental Europe. Accordingly Germany was responsible for the freedom, order and prosperity of Europe before the war.⁸⁶ The Nazi Ideologues

⁸⁴ Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean," 4.

⁸⁵ İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 214.

⁸⁶ Johannes Koll, "From Greater German Reich to Greater Germanic Reich: Arthur Seyss-Inquart and the racial reshaping of Europe" in *A New Nationalist Europe Under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945*, ed. Johannes Dalfinger, Dieter Pohl, (New York: Routledge, 2019), 60.

worked with the assumption that the German victory was to be followed by a “post-liberal-order” which would unite Europe against what was labeled as Anglo-Saxon consumerism and the Asiatic barbarism of the steppe.⁸⁷

The German officials even presented a “European Charter” which emphasizes the obligation of all European nations to defend and build a common living space, and “freedom for each people to live according to its own mode”.⁸⁸ In accordance with their criticisms on the ideological enemies of National Socialism; Bolshevism and Americanism, Nazi economic ideology supported the idea of a European continental self-sufficient block which would endure the destructive free-trade of the Anglo-American economic structure. Defending these ideals, Nazi ideologues indicated the insufficiency of British economic policies towards the agrarian societies which were destroyed by the oversea trade. As a response Germans proposed the “renaissance of the peasant class”.⁸⁹ This ideal attracted the attention of from British scholars too; Guillebaud admits in his views concerning post war European order, that the reconstruction and reorganization in Europe shall be handled by the Germans as they were blessed with the industrial resources and the organizing ability which the other peoples of Europe to the east and south-east lack.⁹⁰ Certainly there was a role for Turkey in the new order. However, it was not specified in detail.

Churchill states in his accounts that this plan was boldly and vividly laid down by Papen in 1936 who later would be German Ambassador to Turkey.

⁸⁷ Tim Kirk, “Nazi plans for a new European order and European responses” in *A New Nationalist Europe Under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945*, ed. Johannes Dalfinger, Dieter Pohl, (New York: Rutledge, 2019), 73.

⁸⁸ Koll, “From Greater German Reich to Greater Germanic Reich,” 63.

⁸⁹ Kirk, “Nazi plans for a new European order,” 77.

⁹⁰ C. W. Guillebaud, “Hitler's New Economic Order for Europe,” *The Economic Journal*, 50, no. 200, (1940), 459, doi: 10.2307/2226204.

According to Papen: “Southeastern Europe to the borders of Turkey was Germany’s natural hinterland, and that he had been charged with the mission of effecting German economic and political control over the whole of this region.”⁹¹ Although Turkey was not mentioned within Germany’s natural “hinterland” we see the political and economic actions were taken in accordance with Germany’s overall intentions over the region. This detail makes us understand that the Turkey’s position in an upcoming war for the Germans was not indispensable, yet was welcomed.

However Turkey soon realized that the agreements were working against her advantage, thereby she had several attempts to renegotiate the treaties. Turkish Prime Minister İnönü ferociously argued against these disadvantageous terms of Turco-German trade. According to him as he stated in November 1936 “Turkey had become caught in the webs of a trade system that placed her in the hands of Germany”.⁹² It was not only the economic data and the clearing agreements that were showing results favoring Germany. The heavy industry of Turkey was dependent on German imports, for the very foundation of the young republic’s industry was founded with German methods and machinery. For instance, Turkey’s railways had been built according to German standards and were compatible with German rolling stock. The personnel were trained in Germany.⁹³ This was not only the case in railway construction, the very core of the armed forces: guns and ammunition, were also of German origin. Various industrial plants, schools and agricultural projects were of German origin. Turkish government was constantly sending students to Germany.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 1:132

⁹² İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 32.

⁹³ İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 32.

⁹⁴ Yücel Güçlü, *The Question of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001), 267-68.

The most important aspect of these bilateral trade agreements between Turkey and Germany was Turkey's chromium exports to Germany. In August 1939 the amount of chromium Germany was importing from Turkey reached to 115.000 tons which were 60% of Germany's chromium consumption. This valuable resource was used for casting tank engines.⁹⁵ Moreover, Germany did not have any alternative to the Turkish reserves therefore the German economic and political pressure on Turkey never ceased.⁹⁶

Meanwhile, Britain was terrified of the German invasion of Czechoslovakia and Italian invasion of Albania in the spring of 1939. Observing the German attempts to make Turkey dependent on the German industry, Britain launched a program of her own which intended to break Turkey's dependence on German products. As a countermeasure, Britain started to give Turkey credits after a treaty between the two was signed in 1938 in order to allow Turkey to purchase armaments. Certainly these credits could only be used while buying British products. This treaty was followed with another that was signed in June 1939. The latter had also political repercussions as it was interpreted by the British as the failure of Germany's attempts to include Turkey into her own sphere of influence. Germany of course did not leave the matter unanswered and sent Schacht's successor, Dr. Funk to southeast European states including Turkey. Funk worked ambitiously and could manage to draft a massive trade treaty with Turkey. According to the treaty, Turkey was to be given 150 million Reichsmark worth of credit to be used purchasing German industrial products and armaments. Even better, Turkey was allowed to use 20% of that money within her own borders. This treaty was massive because the amount of credit was almost

⁹⁵ Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, 2:215.

⁹⁶ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 266.

doubling the amount of total credit that Britain had agreed to give Turkey so far with two consecutive trade agreements.

Nevertheless, Turkey signed a common declaration with Britain and France in April 1939. The declaration was in a sense a forerunner of a future, more inclusive and long-term agreement between these two states. Full military and political cooperation in an event of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean region was agreed upon by the both sides. Although the following article accentuates that the declaration was not made against a specific nation it was clear that this was an open move against Germany and Italy. Immediately after the declaration The Pathe Records proudly announced that Germany was “left the loneliest nation in the world.” openly indicating the very intention of this declaration. The seventh article of the joint declaration was very important for Turkey. It suggested that neither of the countries mentioned in the declaration were to be prevented from signing treaties with other nations in order to strengthen the peace; the article was obviously indicating the Soviet Union. Turkey had signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union in 1925, and the pact was later extended in 1929.⁹⁷ Hence, Turkey drafted an alliance treaty with the Soviet Union and sent then Foreign Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu to Moscow on invitation to discuss the prospective Turco-Soviet alliance. However, the talks were interrupted when German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop came to Moscow and both countries declared the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, causing a major break in Turkish Soviet relations.⁹⁸

The common declaration with Britain and France is important in terms of highlighting Turkey’s position vis a vis Britain in the Mediterranean. Turkey was the

⁹⁷ İsmail Soysal, *Türkiye’nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, vol. 1, 1920-1945, (Türk Tarih Kurumu Basım Evi: Ankara, 1983), 599.

⁹⁸ Soysal, *Türkiye’nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 599. ; İşçi , *Turkey and the Soviet Union*.

de facto ally of Britain and France. However, the declaration did not specify what the 'Mediterranean' actually meant, as was asked by opposition parliamentary Mr. Cocks, there were questions about the extent of the declaration and the region was only mentioned tacitly. Prime Minister Chamberlain chose not to make any specifications.

Mainly through Turkey's efforts, the declaration turned into a contract which was referred to also as the pre-treaty signed in May 1939. France was going to sign the contract with Turkey in August immediately after the Hatay problem was solved. The contract was a major event causing a U-turn in Turco-German relations. Angered by the news Germany stated that there was no need to implement the newly signed contract treaty since Turkey was de jure in an alliance with Britain and France. Along the same line of action, Germany did not extend the period of the already existing Turco-German trade treaty which ended on 1 September. On 19th October 1939 Turkey France and Britain signed a treaty of Mutual Assistance. The treaty solidified the diplomatic bond between the three states while broadening and deepening the content of the previously signed contract. According to the treaty if a European aggressor initiates war which will involve Britain and France, Turkey would side with them. Likewise if Turkey was to be victimized by such aggression, Britain and France would side with her. Furthermore the treaty also includes conditions related to Greece and Romania. Both nations' independence was being guaranteed by Britain, and if Britain honored the guarantees of either nation and entered the war, Turkey was obliged to side with her. However, if either Britain or France were attacked by a European aggressor in a case where the war does not pervade to the Mediterranean, then Turkey is not obliged to enter the war on the side

of Britain and France, yet she is expected to maintain a “benevolent neutrality”.⁹⁹ The terms of the treaty defines the Anglo-French-Turkish alliance on the basis of defense against Italy. Turkey’s obligations would be triggered only if the war spreads to Mediterranean. The treaty signed on the eve of the war again proves that Turkey’s main concern was Italian aggression and expansionism. Additionally, the treaty includes measures for the aforementioned Balkan states and the secret articles (Convention Militarie) of the treaty which mapped out detailed strategic and tactical plans for the defense of Greece and Romania also illustrates Turkey’s success at assuming diplomatic leadership in the Balkan region. It was important because the articles explicitly stated that Greece and Romania first and foremost were responsible for their own defense¹⁰⁰, affirming the Foreign Office documents suggesting that Turkey’s alliance was essential and losing Turkey would have much worse consequences than losing Greece.¹⁰¹ Also according to the French Foreign Minister, the guarantees given to Greece could only be effective if Turkey agreed to support Greece.¹⁰² Despite her bad economy, primitive industry, and many other vital deficiencies, Turkey was labeled as a “Small Great Power” by the Foreign Office. Turkey was deemed worth of this title firstly because of her geopolitical advantages. Also Turkey’s continuous attempts at assuming leadership in the Balkans was effective in making Britain believe that Turkey would benevolently influence other countries to solidify the coalition of states against the German Italian axis. Finally, Turkey was a Muslim country and it was important for Britain’s image to be in an alliance with such a partner considering the numerous British colonies.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Soysal, *Türkiye’nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 609.

¹⁰⁰ Soysal, *Türkiye’nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 613-14.

¹⁰¹ FO. 371/R8586/316/44, quoted in Selim Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War*, 115.

¹⁰² Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 250.

¹⁰³ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 253.

The mutual assistance treaty materialized Turkey's intention to be on the side of the Western Democracies. This intention has been apparent since the Treaty of Lausanne and Turkey continuously illustrated eagerness to achieve that goal in a way that would serve Turkey's needs and interest best.

2.2 Turkey and the Mediterranean

Turkey's attempts to exist in any post war peace settlement in the Mediterranean after the Great War was most vivid when Turkey offered France in 1930 to consider developing a Mediterranean project resembling the Locarno Treaties.¹⁰⁴ However, Turkey's Mediterranean foreign policy in the pre-war period was not defined strictly, as it lacked a committed plan. This was not caused by Turkey's lack of ambition in the region. The reason why Turkey couldn't assume a strong political leadership in the region unlike in the Balkans was the strong states Turkey had to deal with in order to undertake such course. Dealing with rather minor states in the Balkans allowed Turkey to be diplomatically active in the region. Turkey partly owed this success to its promises of a peaceful region. Rejecting the former irredentist claims and cessation of the claims of lordship over the region encouraged other Balkan states to trust and accept Turkey's initiatives. Furthermore the region is important in terms of analyzing the Mediterranean. Turkey's active role in Balkans attracted Mussolini to sign a neutrality treaty with Turkey in 1928. The treaty was also important in terms of being a naval cooperation treaty. Nevertheless the Turco-Italian treaty lost its importance when the London Naval Treaty of 1930 was signed. On top of that, Mussolini's Four Power Pact which aimed to increase the influence of the great powers in the international affairs constituted a direct contrast with Turkey's aims to make middle powers more vocal and influential. First Italy by

¹⁰⁴ Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean," 452.

trying to include herself to the prospective Balkan Entente, and later France by the way of using Albania as a Trojan horse in the Balkan Entente, attempted to reinstall the great power hegemony over the diplomacy of the Balkan states. Turkey on the other hand tried and succeeded to prevent Italy and France from interfering by, ably managing to sign bilateral treaties of friendship and non-aggression with the Balkan states. The Turkish motto for the prospective Balkan Entente, “The Balkans for the Balkan People” lived up to its name.

Italian attitude towards Turkey became clearer after 1934 when the Balkan Entente was officially established and it was apparent that Turkey along with other Balkan states¹⁰⁵ started to take up an anti-Italian stance.¹⁰⁶ On paper, the Entente’s aim was to sustain a military cooperation exclusively in the Balkan region, because Greece, being a Mediterranean country, had reservations about openly alienating Italy. However the deliberate attempts of Turkey to break Bulgaria’s ties with Italy and fending off Italian involvement in the region shows that protection from Italy was one of the main aims of the Entente. Furthermore, the Soviet Union and Turkey had good relations during this period and the Soviet Union did not show any uneasiness on Turkey’s attempts to solidify the Entente.

The importance of Turkey for the Mediterranean should be interpreted beyond Turkey’s mobilization and overall production capabilities which are generally considered as the defining factors of the war of attrition. This is where the geopolitics should be considered as the deciding factor in terms of defining Turkey’s importance with respect to Eastern Mediterranean. Firstly, Balkans should be considered as a part of the Mediterranean region. Therefore Turkey’s diplomatic

¹⁰⁵ Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania. İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 22.

¹⁰⁶ Barlas, “Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean,” 7.

endeavors in the Balkans should also be considered as attempts to secure Mediterranean peace. Although Turkey's army was in, no way, a match for the Allies or the Axis, it was still a formidable force which had a certain level of deterrence. Furthermore, in May 1941 Asım Gündüz; even though he exaggerates the number of Turkish divisions, bragged about Turkey's overall superiority over Britain and Germany in terms of deploying a decisive force in the Eastern Mediterranean.¹⁰⁷ British government shared this opinion since it is stated in their documents that "Turkey is the most powerful ally of Britain in the region and of the both Saadabad and Balkan pacts. Turkey's alliance had a potential for considerably strengthening the Allies' position in the Eastern Mediterranean."¹⁰⁸ On the other hand as I mentioned, Mediterranean was different from the Balkans for Turkey to carry out active diplomacy towards the goal of military and political alliance. Firstly, the vast area stretching from Morocco to Syria prevented Turkey to have geographical proximity compared to Turkey's relatively close distance to the Balkans. Secondly and more importantly, great powers, their colonies, and their large navies were part of the any prospective Mediterranean diplomatic effort.

Turkey's ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean are in accordance with the overall Turkish foreign policy which "adopted a highly revisionist spin" in the second half of the 1930s.¹⁰⁹ In March 1934, Mussolini openly announced his future political aims in the Mediterranean region. In his speech he emphasized that Italy's future lay in Africa and Asia and Italy's duty was related to the country's position in the Mediterranean.¹¹⁰ This was an open threat to Turkey and naturally caused great

¹⁰⁷ Frank Weber, *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain, and the quest for a Turkish alliance in the Second World War*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1979), 96.

¹⁰⁸ Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War*, 75.

¹⁰⁹ İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 13.

¹¹⁰ Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean," 10.

apprehensions among the Turkish officials even though Italy tried to soothe Turkey, subsequently causing her to follow a more active Foreign policy in 1934.¹¹¹ Turkey's apprehensions grew still when Italy started to fortify Aegean islands and a possible Franco-Italian naval conflict in the Mediterranean seemed imminent. Therefore Turkey perceived Italy as the sole European power which had claims on her own soil. Despite a short lived détente between the two states, Turkey's perception of the Italian threat was gradually nourished until 1939.¹¹² Turkey's naval impotency surely played a huge factor in Turkey's changing attitude towards Italy.

Britain too was aware of Italian posturing in the Mediterranean. Therefore in April 1934, it was offered by his Majesty's ambassador to Turkey Knatchbull-Hugessen that it was vital for Britain to collaborate with Turkey in any common defense project, for Turkey was "the most important country" for Britain in southeast Europe. The ambassador also said that Britain "should do nothing to queer to pitch with her (Turkey)."¹¹³ A month later after this proposal from the British ambassador, the French approached Turkey through the Foreign Minister Barthou and proposed to include the Balkan pact in a Mediterranean pact. The proposal revived the thoughts of the aforementioned Mediterranean pact which Turkey had sought in 1930. Turkey's aim was to form a coalition of Mediterranean states including Britain and France in order to guarantee naval frontiers in case of any hostilities in the Mediterranean involving air warfare. Turkish *Cumhuriyet* even reported that Turkey, Britain, and France were negotiating for the formation of a defensive Mediterranean pact.¹¹⁴ Turkey genuinely desired to include Greece, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia and most importantly Italy into the pact, however Britain and Italy abstained from

¹¹¹ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 142.

¹¹² Figen Atabey, *1939 Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2016), 37.

¹¹³ İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 53.

¹¹⁴ Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean," 452.

commitment to the pact. It was essential for minors like Greece to have major powers in a Mediterranean pact; therefore the development caused reluctance among the minors. Ultimately the unfortunate death of French Foreign Minister Barthou in 1934 caused a U-turn in the French foreign policy in respect to Mediterranean. The new foreign minister Laval abandoned the idea of a pact but rather he pursued bilateral agreements with the Mediterranean states. This incident dropped the third major power from a prospective Mediterranean pact yet Turkey ambitiously tried to find ways to achieve her goal through bilateral agreements with France.

The French Foreign Minister visiting Rome to talk about the Mediterranean in January 1935 produced a Franco-Italian treaty and it was the major turn of events for the region. According to the treaty Italy was to give up her interventionist intentions towards Yugoslavia and she would side with France if Germany was to march down on Austria. In return, France accepted to give up her demands in Abyssinia and ceded some territories to Italy in North Africa.¹¹⁵ Not only did the treaty damage the image of the post war diplomacy as it seemed as if the major powers were still after their colonial ambitions, but also it threw the balance dynamics in the Mediterranean into disorder. The Franco-Italian treaty caused these nations to be named as “half allies” by Turkish Foreign Minister. According to him, France lost her interest towards any alliance regarding Mediterranean since she was in a quasi-alliance with Italy and there was no other nation in those waters to constitute danger to France.¹¹⁶

Italy was presented with a great opportunity when she could manage to come to terms with France. The absence of French rivalry in the Mediterranean waters motivated Italy to establish her dominance over the minors in the region. Turkish

¹¹⁵ İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 23.

¹¹⁶ Barlas, “Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean,” 454.

Foreign Minister Aras was in alarm when Greece was approached by Italy to make a tripartite pact with Turkey and Italy excluding Romania and Yugoslavia. Greece stand firm and did not accept such proposal seeing this diplomatic maneuver of Italians as an attempt to break down the Balkan Entente. Later on, the same proposal by the Italians was made again to the Turks and it was rejected.

Turkey was intimidated by the growing Italian navy in the Mediterranean, which was going to reach the strength of the combined Anglo-French naval forces in the Mediterranean when the war started. Turkey was also anxiously observing the decreasing British naval presence in the Mediterranean. The Turkish Chief of General Staff made out that the British fleet in Mediterranean was not able to protect Turkey from Italy in case the hostilities were to break out.¹¹⁷ Furthermore the reliability of the League of Nations almost dissolved; and Turkey's Balkan allies and even an alliance with Soviet Union were not adequate for Turkey to defend herself in the Mediterranean. The security problems rooting from Turkey's geographical location were discussed. Another factor feeding Turkish apprehensions was the military developments, especially the increase in air warfare's effectiveness. The planes were covering more distances and they were carrying more bombs, and even troops. In order to prepare herself for a possible scenario, Turkey hastened the consignment of armaments and the dispatching of conscripts to the Mediterranean coasts of Turkey. The Italian threat was going to cause more problems and further prompt Turkey to take extreme measures, even preventing officials from undertaking the young republic's most ambitious projects. For instance in 1936, Turkish Chief of the General Staff Fevzi Çakmak prevented the Antalya railway construction. He believed if it was ever built, the railroad was going to be used by Italian troops in

¹¹⁷ İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 23.

case of an invasion, and deny Turkey the chance of using the terrain for her advantage.¹¹⁸ Consequently, Turkey tried with great exertion to convince Britain to involve itself in Mediterranean balance of power, because, according to Dilek Barlas: “By 1935, the Turkish political leadership was already convinced that Britain would be a determining factor in preventing any aggression in the Mediterranean.”¹¹⁹ Turkey pressed hard to fulfill her aim explaining her case to Britain and predicating a loss of trust in for the League of Nations. Atatürk himself tried to warn Britain about the Italian danger and urged her about the further Italian expansionism in the region. Pointing out Turkey’s recent and deliberate effort in realizing the Mediterranean pact Aras praised Turkey in his interview with a French newspaper. He claimed that Turkey had increased her importance in Mediterranean. However, according to the British, Turkey had hotheaded diplomatic plans and incentives and Britain had no enthusiasm towards those. The British rather worked for Anglo-Italian détente and more Abyssinian soil was ceded to Italy for the sake of the détente.¹²⁰

Britain kept appeasing Italy through this process. His Majesty’s government was motivated to do so since there was a bigger and more proximate threat growing at the heart of the Europe. Germany’s irredentist and expansionist discourse with better industry and vast population on top of the nation’s proven art of war skills surely drew Britain’s attention. Furthermore, there was also a new naval power rising at the far side of the Pacific which was going to threaten the colonial possessions of the British Empire. Under these circumstances, it was natural for Britain to get close to the idea of an alliance with Italy against Germany. This sort of action would not only deter Germany and surround the Hitler’s southern flank; it would also free

¹¹⁸ Muzaffer Deniz, “Afyon-Antalya Railway Project in Official Documents (1924-1942)”, *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3, no. 4, (2011), 30.

¹¹⁹ Barlas, “Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean,” 456.

¹²⁰ Barlas, “Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean,” 460.

Britain's hand in the Mediterranean since there would be no naval rivalry in the region. The German threat and narrow English Channel also necessitated the British navy to focus on the home islands. Britain smartly tried to use the German-Italian dispute over Austria and German speakers in Northern Italy to secure an Italian alliance against Germany. The effort at uniting against Germany has blossomed forth when Mussolini openly censured Hitler's rearmament policy and explained how it was not suiting the ideals of the League of Nations to unilaterally break the treaties.¹²¹ However, the Anglo-Italian rapprochement did not clear the issues in the Mediterranean even though Mussolini explicitly stated that Germany's actions were endangering the "peace of Europe". To Britain, Italian expansionism in Africa seemed more tolerable than German domination of Europe. British attempts at creating a bloc against Germany produced a decision made by the Council of League of Nations. Countries which included Britain, France, the Soviet Union and Turkey all "voted for the principle that treaties should not be broken by unilateral action" and they agreed upon economic sanctions including a heavy embargo on Italy.¹²² During this period which lasted until the invasion of Abyssinia Britain was disregarding Turkey's attempt to realize the Mediterranean pact. When the appeasement policy failed and the Italian army started advancing in Abyssinia without a declaration of war in October 1935, Britain started to pay heed to Turkey's proposals regarding an alliance in Mediterranean. Subsequently, Britain initiated another diplomatic attempt to secure an alliance in the Mediterranean right after Italian advance in Abyssinia. The previously signed declaration of League of Nations constituted a base for the bilateral treaties that were made between Britain and four Mediterranean states: France, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey. Turkey's

¹²¹ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 1:165.

¹²² Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 487.

alliance with Britain therefore was perceived as a liability of the aforementioned council declaration.¹²³ The treaties are called “the Mediterranean Treaties” and the agreements upon the prospective treaties were first started to be discussed on 18th of October 1935, three days after the Italian invasion. Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey announced that they accepted the treaty in December and the treaties were announced officially again in January 1936 to the council of League of Nations.¹²⁴

The Mediterranean treaties were groundbreaking in terms of uniting all Mediterranean powers except Spain against Italian aggression. Furthermore, Britain and France according to the minor states were a *sine quo non* for any such treaty and it was a big relief especially for them to see that it was Britain who took this initiative. However, when the Germans remilitarized the Rhineland the attention of Britain and France shifted to continental Europe. Again, as it was mentioned, they started to seek ways to include Italy into a coalition of states to deter Germany from starting a war. Therefore the Mediterranean treaties which meant so much for the region and Turkey became nonsensical. Britain waited for Abyssinian war to end, and then she first lifted the previously imposed sanctions, and then unilaterally annulled the Mediterranean treaties on 15th and 27th of July respectively.

When Italy again oriented towards the German axis, Turkey made use of this opportunity and managed an advantageous Montreux Convention in July 1936. Yücel Güçlü makes a direct correlation between the remilitarization of Rhineland and the Montreux Convention. He claims the Remilitarization of the Rhineland increased German threat with their soldiers deployed on French border, Britain became anxious and started giving more concessions in order to acquire more allies

¹²³ Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 487.

¹²⁴ Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 487.

especially in Mediterranean. Furthermore, the Rhineland had already been militarized; the militarization of the straits could not constitute a precedent for Germany.¹²⁵ The strategic location of the straits made the issue directly related to the defense of the Eastern Mediterranean. France thus saw Montreux as an opportunity to include the Soviet Union into the Eastern Mediterranean balance of power since both countries already had been committed to a mutual pact that was signed in May 1935. After the convention was made, Turkey rapidly started reinstallation of armaments and general militarization at the straits. The effort according to Yücel Güçlü, was going to “restore Turkey’s position of a power factor in the Mediterranean.”¹²⁶ Montreux was also important for Turkey in terms of restoring Turkey’s broken trust to the collective security treaties and non-aggression pacts. The Western democracies were on the other hand pleased to conduce to a peaceful diplomatic revision of an existing peace treaty.

Italy was obviously not happy with the convention, but she chose to accept the new status-quo and subsequently abandoned aggressive and expansionist rhetoric in the Mediterranean for a while. Turkey responded in same way, and, became the first country to withdraw her diplomatic representatives from Abyssinia. Britain was pleased to see that Mediterranean was cooling down and connived at a Turco-Italian rapprochement.¹²⁷

The German Italian axis was also forcing France to revise her Mediterranean policy. After the Sudeten crisis, France was concerned about Italy at Savoy and the German army in the Rhineland. Also the growing Italian navy constituted a huge threat for French possessions in North Africa. In fact, according to Yücel, the

¹²⁵ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 148.

¹²⁶ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 149.

¹²⁷ Soysal, *Türkiye’nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 488.

Mediterranean became the only way to maintain an eastern front against Germany for France. Therefore, France decided to increase her presence in the region and started to improve relations with Turkey.¹²⁸

The civil war in Spain only further entangled the situation in Mediterranean. The increased submarine warfare in the Mediterranean, the sinking of merchant ships and many other reasons related to the civil war, and provided an environment for a new treaty. The treaty was signed after four days of conference, and negotiations. Britain and France led the conference and it was also attended by Soviet Union, Bulgaria and the Mediterranean countries excluding Italy. The conference was assembled in Nyon Switzerland, and the final treaty was called with the same name. The treaty aimed to protect Mediterranean shipping from Axis submarines. Even so, the submarines were obliged to navigate with a surface ship.¹²⁹ Although the content of the treaty was mainly about standardizing submarine operations among the signatories, it was another attempt to reinstitute the collective defense bloc against German-Italian aggression in the Mediterranean and Turkey was among the countries present at the conference.¹³⁰ Turkey's participation was specifically praised by Anthony Eden as he states how the smaller nations in Mediterranean were doing their part under the friendly leadership of Turkey validating Turkey's regional leadership status.¹³¹ Afterwards, Turkey also signed a treaty of friendship with Egypt, which was merely a satellite of Britain, increasing the number of her friends in Mediterranean.¹³² Throughout this period, Britain perceived the prospective Mediterranean pact as the Turkish proposal which was "universally accepted, great

¹²⁸ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 244.

¹²⁹ Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 533.

¹³⁰ Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 533.

¹³¹ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 1:294.

¹³² Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 537.

consolidating and stabilizing force throughout the whole of the Black Sea area and the Eastern Mediterranean.”¹³³

2.3 The Anglo-Turkish Alliance at the Outbreak of the War

The Prime Minister Chamberlain said in May 1938 that Britain should avoid making the same mistake. He condemned the experience of the previous war and specifically the Dardanelles fiasco by labeling it as the “disastrous mistake” indicating Churchill.¹³⁴ The cost of this fiasco to the British was 300.000 soldiers and it was anticipated that the war was prolonged for two years because of such a move. Therefore it was essential for Britain to ensure at least Turkish benevolent neutrality if not Turkish alliance. France was in agreement with Britain on this issue, Turkey’s existence relieving France’s hand in Syria and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey did not ratify the Franco Turkish friendship pact that was signed on 4th July 1938 because Britain was not in it. The reason Britain was reluctant because it was attempting rapprochement with Italy at the time. A collective tripartite pact between these three states would surely antagonize Italy and break Britain’s effort on getting Italy’s support or at least her neutrality in case of a war against Germany. This can be considered as another example of how Italy was still the determining factor in Turkey’s foreign policy. Still distancing herself from Turkey, Britain did not give any affirmative response to Turkey’s request on the issue of the Hatay.¹³⁵ Certainly Britain’s attitude regarding Hatay was also influenced by the Anglo-French relations.

After the German intentions started to appear clearer and the prospect of Italy siding with the western democracies to fend off Germany seemed lost with the

¹³³ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 1:438.

¹³⁴ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 254.

¹³⁵ Atabey, *Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, 36.

invasion of Albania, Britain gravitated towards to making a Turkish treaty in order to secure Mediterranean. It was explained by British Chiefs of Staff in February 1939 that an alliance with Turkey would be vital and there was no way “to overemphasize the influence which Turkish intervention on our side would have in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean,”¹³⁶ Britain anticipated that Turkey’s existence in such an alliance would deny Italy the trade routes which she uses to defray her oil consumption. In fact 10% of all Italian trade and 23% of all Italian oil was passing through the Turkish straits. Also the aviation technologies were still not adequate to launch long-range bomber and fighter flights, therefore the possessions of airfield spread across Turkey’s long coast line was a necessity for Britain to strengthen her grip in the Eastern Mediterranean. The considerations were limited to the defense against Italian aggression in the region; Britain did not map out any plans for Turkey against German expansion. More importantly, the Committee of Imperial Defense which represents Britain’s official shift from appeasement policies to guarantees, mentions Turkey alongside Poland as the two key points of the desired British coalition of states. In fact, according to the British *Times*, Britain’s pact with Turkey was more important than her pact with Poland considering the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.¹³⁷ The official report highlights the significance of having the free passage through the straits by the way of Turkish alliance.¹³⁸

The invasions of Sudetenland and Albania were also the determining factor for Turkey. Although some scholars claim that German eastern expansion equally caused apprehensions in Turkey,¹³⁹ it is unanimously agreed by the scholars that the invasion of Albania was the most important event which strongly urged Turkey to

¹³⁶ Güçlü, *The Question Of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*, 253.

¹³⁷ Atabey, *Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, 63.

¹³⁸ Atabey, *Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, 38.

¹³⁹ Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye’si*, vol.1. (*İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları*, 2014), 68.

side with the Britain and France ending the short-lived Turco-Italian rapprochement. Turkish Prime Minister Refik Saydam declared in his speech in the parliament that the invasion of Albania, in terms of effecting Turkey's security concerns in The Mediterranean, eliminated Turkey's option to maintain her neutral foreign policy which had lasted since the Lausanne. Because of the invasion of Albania, Turkey then had to side with the western states in order to withstand the offensive. It was an open declaration suggestion that Turkey was embracing the policy of alliances.¹⁴⁰ After the incident, encouraged by Britain's attempt to reinstitute collective defense around Europe, Turkey once again set out to strengthen the Balkan pact. Germany's eastern expansion disturbed the Soviet Union greatly; therefore Turkey's endeavors in the Balkans were not going against the Soviet Union's policies. Along the same line, the Soviet Union did not show any open discomfort towards Turkey's drift to the Britain's side. In fact Soviet deputy Foreign Minister Potemkin said that the Soviet Union approved Turkey's efforts to procure security in the Mediterranean¹⁴¹ which allowed Turkey to continue with her aforementioned active foreign policy eventually creating the Turkish-British-French alliance.¹⁴²

The signing of the aforementioned common declaration in April 1939, which aimed to create a future diplomatic and military partnership, angered the Axis and created a domino effect by expediting the polarization and the formation of the alliances. Italy condemned the declaration as an encirclement policy and shortly after she signed the Pact of Steel with Germany in May 1939.

Turkey's official rapprochement with Britain and France was criticized by the Russian foreign Minister Molotov who was skeptic about the real intention of these

¹⁴⁰ Atabey, *Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, 73.

¹⁴¹ Atabey, *Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, 51.

¹⁴² Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, 1:71.

declarations. Suspecting that these declarations will lead a formation of a pact, Molotov in September 1939 asked his Turkish counterpart Saraçoğlu that against whom this prospective pact was directed and how far the relations between Britain, France and Turkey have progressed. He even suggested Saraçoğlu that the pact would be better left unsigned.¹⁴³ Even though Molotov's accusative questions towards Turkish foreign policy created a tension, Stalin later opened up to Saraçoğlu. The Soviet leader stated that he saw Turkey as a Mediterranean power and he was aware of the help Turkey would need in an event of war. Stalin also relieved Saraçoğlu by pointing out to the strong Mediterranean navies of Britain and France and how they were more competent of helping Turkey in Mediterranean. Stalin accepted that Soviet Union was in no position to offer a similar guarantee to Turkey and told Turkish Minister that the Soviet Union understands Turkey's aim to seek collaboration with Britain and France.¹⁴⁴

The treaty Turkey signed with the Western Allies dictated that Turkey enter the war. However, there were a lot of articles which Turkey could point to in order to be exempt from entering the war. After Italy declared war on France and the war officially spread to the Mediterranean, Britain and France once again requested Turkey's support according to the treaty. Nevertheless, Turkish officials figured out to use the existing Turkey-Soviet friendship and non- aggression treaty to exempt from fulfilling the wishes of Britain and France. Turkey also was constantly pointing to the unfulfilled armament deliveries which had been promised by Britain and France.¹⁴⁵ Turkey was to pretext these deliveries throughout the war.

¹⁴³ Jamil Hasanlı, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War, 1945–1953*, (Lexington Books: Plymouth, 2011). Epub, Chapter One: Soviet-Turkish Relations during the Second World War: From Neutrality to Escalating Tensions, 3.

¹⁴⁴ Hasanlı, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War*, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*, 604.

2.3.1 Britain Desires a Neutral Turkey Rather Than an Active Belligerent

No matter how Britain desired an immediate participation from Turkey when the war just broke out, later she embraced the idea that a neutral Turkey would serve British interests. Supporting this claim we can look at the British response towards Turkey's position after the invasion of Greece. As Ataöv suggests, Britain did not call Turkey to war, rather she tried to ensure Turkey's neutrality.¹⁴⁶ Ataöv seems to be accurate in his assessment as Knatchbull-Hugessen states that Britain wanted Turkey neutral until her belligerency would be more desirable and practical.¹⁴⁷ Also more convincingly; when Anthony Eden met three Commanders-in Chief in February 1940, they agreed that Turkey would be a liability rather than an asset because Turkey did not know how to use technical arms. And then in July 1940 after France fell, Lord Halifax said in his speech in House of Lords that Britain recognizes Turkey's conditions as well as Turkey's decision to stay neutral in the ongoing conflict.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, Turkey although having formidable air wings compared to other states in the region, had a very low operational efficiency in the air.¹⁴⁹ The condition of the Turkish Army was not only criticized from the point of view of an industrialized country such as Britain. Kazım Karabekir's continuous warnings during his parliament speeches regarding the Turkish Army's inability to use even the advanced artillery indicate how deplorable the situation was for the technical abilities of the Turkish Army.¹⁵⁰ These remarks prove Annette Fox right since she pointed out that: "Churchill seemed more interested in the use of Turkish territory

¹⁴⁶ Türkkaya Ataöv, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniv., 1965). 81.

¹⁴⁷ Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, (London, : J. Murray, 1949) 180.

¹⁴⁸ Atabey, *Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, 126.

¹⁴⁹ Anthony Eden, *The Eden memoirs: the reckoning*, (London: Cassell, 1965), 196.

¹⁵⁰ Kazım Karabekir, *Ankara'da Savaş Rüzgarları*, (İstanbul: Emre, 2000), 121.

than in the participation of its still unmechanized troops.”¹⁵¹ This indicates another divergency in British decision making.

On the other hand, Turkey still was the strongest prospective ally of Britain in the region in terms of manpower and geographical position. Asım Gündüz told Knatchbull-Hugessen: “Turkey at the present moment [is] in the position of a fortress. Direct attack on fortresses or direct passage through fortresses is always difficult, and for this reason the Germans would not wish to attack Turkey, and are in fact already suffering considerable disadvantages in having to go around Turkey.”¹⁵²

Ambassador MacMurray also mentions the advantages of having Turkey as neutral.

“We do not require Turkey to enter the war aggressively at the present moment, but only to maintain a stolid, unyielding front to German threats and blandishments. As long as Turkey is not violated or seduced, this great oblong pad of poorly developed territory is an impassible protection for the eastern flank of our Nile Army.”¹⁵³

Turkey’s undeveloped roads and infrastructure was hinted among the reasons for Turkey’s neutrality. As long as Turkey maintains her pro-Allied stance, having her as a neutral would benefit the Allied cause in general when the dire situation of the North African theatre is considered.

After the tides had turned for the allies, their pressure increased over Turkey. In December 1942, Knatchbull-Hugessen frankly states that the

¹⁵¹ Annette Fox, *The power of small states : diplomacy in World War II*, (Chicago, Ill., U.S.A. : University of Chicago Press, 1959), 34.

¹⁵² Weber, *The Evasive Neutral*, 96.

¹⁵³ William L. Langer, *The undeclared war, 1940-1941*, (New York: Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Harper, 1953), 799.

Turkish belligerency on the side of the Allies was decided.¹⁵⁴ Reflecting this situation on January 2nd, 1943 Rauf Orbay informs Ankara of the potential British pressure on Turkey for the entry to war. The Turkish ambassador also mentions that it is highly likely for Allies to offer Turkey a seat in the peace conference in return of Ankara's participation.¹⁵⁵ Germany still wanted a neutral Turkey even if this neutrality would not be a pro-Axis one. Even though Hitler was confident enough to leave the job of checking Turkey to 10 divisions¹⁵⁶, Prüfer mentioned that Turkey was the only Muslim country that could harm Germany, and Turkey's neutrality must be assured at all costs.¹⁵⁷ Germany considered Turkey as a threat and realized her limited yet hard-hitting capabilities. The risk of retaliation from other belligerents enabled Turkey a pretext for sustaining her neutrality until the end of the war.

Ironically, the Allies considered using Turkey's position to bomb both the Baku and Romanian airfields which were feeding the German and Soviet war effort respectively. Turkey's geopolitics therefore should be considered as one of the primary factors explaining Turkey's pro-Allied non-aligned policy. After Spring 1941, Turkey being the neighbor of Axis and Comintern again is a crucial matter. However, one important detail is that Turkey also became a neighbor of the Allies after remaining Vichy control was ended in Syria in the 12th of July 1941. This situation by itself shows how really entangled the Turkey's situation was. Eastern Balkans, Dodecanese, Northern Syria, Caucasus along with a 8.000km coast line spreading through three seas which makes Turkey a vulnerable target for the

¹⁵⁴Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, 185.

¹⁵⁵ Nur Özmel, *Rauf Orbay'ın Londra Büyükelçiliği*, (İstanbul, Bağlam Yayıncılık: 1999), 187.

¹⁵⁶ Ataöv, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 82.

¹⁵⁷ Weber, *The Evasive Neutral*, 155.

amphibious assaults considering the weakness of her navy¹⁵⁸, all are factors indicating that a case of a Turkish belligerency on either side means a threat of retaliation that could come from all directions.

It is also important to examine the nature of Anglo-Turkish alliance. The fundamental reason for the British alliance especially considering the deteriorated relations with the Soviets can be perceived as Turkey's strong belief concerning Britain's capabilities. Turkey held on to this belief even in the "darkest hour" of the allies.¹⁵⁹ Supporting this view, Ruaf Orbay, who served as the ambassador to His Majesty after 1942, stated his steady opinions regarding the invincibility of British Empire in the long run due to her ability to raise up to 45 million soldiers. Therefore, Orbay desired a weakened Britain for Turkey's interest rather than an outright victory for the Empire.¹⁶⁰ Other than the old hostilities and the bitter memories of WW1 including the occupation of İstanbul, there were more material reasons for this distrust towards Britain. There was hearsay that Britain has made concessions to Italy at Turkey's expense at the outbreak of the War.¹⁶¹ Churchill seemed to be willingly to sacrifice small nations in order to buy himself time and drag war to the periphery.¹⁶² Realizing this trait Nail Çakırhan claimed in *Tan* that the absence of British guarantees of the Baltic States against Soviet aggression and the silence acceptance of the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland all indicated a British will of creating a long borderline between the two military juggernauts and hopefully triggering armed conflict.¹⁶³ This aim of Britain was despised by Çakırhan as a

¹⁵⁸ Not only the Turkish navy was inadequate in terms of defending the coasts, it was also vulnerable against air attack. Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 25.

¹⁵⁹ Özel, *Rauf Orbay'ın Londra Büyükelçiliği*, 172.

¹⁶⁰ Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 100.

¹⁶¹ Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 81.

¹⁶² Higgins, *the Second Front*, 66.

¹⁶³ Nail V. Çakırhan, *Tan gazetesi yazıları/1942: Harbin eşiğindeki Türkiye*, (İstanbul : TÜSTAV, 2003), 46.

capitalist plot yet Churchill in October 1939 states that he perceives a strong Soviet Union in Germany's doorstep as a strong deterring factor.¹⁶⁴ However, this makes little sense because; Çakırhan's statements are considered no more than as the Soviet propaganda.

Orbay said to the British officials that in case of an attack Turkey would defend herself at all costs. He said: "Our generation grew up in wars, and it has learnt that there is no place for apprehension and hesitation neither in the head nor in the heart of the ones who have decided to protect their legitimate rights."¹⁶⁵

No matter how the successes of German war machine and highly threatening expansion of the Reich kept the Turkish apprehensions fresh, vulnerability caused by the naval inadequacy kept Italians as the main antagonists. In fact according to Ferenc Vali, Turkish leaders expected Germans to lose interest in the Balkans.¹⁶⁶ Their expectations were accurate for two main reasons. Firstly, after conquering Western Europe, securing channel ports and denying Britain from Baltic Sea with the successful operation of Weserübung, Hitler had built up confidence and he felt ready to make the next big move by invading Great Britain. Although his military advisors conflicted with Hitler on this issue, Führer was not to bother himself with the secondary objectives of expanding in Balkans or in Middle East. Even so a lesser direct approach; acquisition of Atlantic islands which was considered as a sine quo non for naval invasion of Britain remained only as a diplomatic initiative. Subsequently, commitment to the Sea Lion further pruned German expansion in Balkans. A two front war was a German nightmare and Germany decided to commit

¹⁶⁴ Churchill, *Churchill War Papers*, 191.

¹⁶⁵ Özmel, *Rauf Orbay'ın Londra Büyükelçiliği*, 169.

¹⁶⁶ Ferenc A. Vali, *Bridge across the Bosphorus: the foreign policy of Turkey*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 30.

all her means for the invasion of Britain. This decision ultimately meant more appeasing approach to the Russians in the Balkans. Germany could not afford to antagonize Russians at the same time they were preparing to invade Britain.

Secondly, even after the failed attempt of preparing an invasion of Britain, Germany did not consider neither Balkans nor Turkey as their next target especially while they were busy with the preparations for Barbarossa since July 1940.¹⁶⁷ Although Germany was surprised to hear the news of Italian invasion of Greece, Wilhelmstraße was pleased to see the Axis control extended through south east Europe and the Aegean. After the Italian invasion failed and Duce's troops were chased back to the Albania by the Greek counter offensive, Hitler explicitly said that the Italians committed "a grave and inexcusable error" by starting a war with Greece.¹⁶⁸ Italian failure some sense coerced Germans to seize the opportunity. Even though it was the Germans who invaded Balkans, it was not their primary intention to do so. For this reason I claim that the prediction of Turkish policy makers concerning German desires in Balkans were correct.

British expectations too were determined in the same way with the Turkish. It was a tense issue to make predictions on Germany's next target since Germans had the absolute initiative after summer 1940. Atlantic coastline stretching from Aquitaine to Narvik, Italian possessions in North Africa, German puppets in Balkans and pro-Axis Spain all offered various promising expansion routes to Germany. These assets allowed Germany to prepare deceptions regularly.

¹⁶⁷ In 4-12 November Germans made the final decision concerning their Grand Strategy, ruling out and attack on Turkey. For such an attack would not be compatible with an attack on Russia. Francis H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War Its Influence on Strategy and Operations*, vol. 1 (London: Government Bookshops, 1979), 250.

¹⁶⁸ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 17.

In September 1940, Czech intelligence caught up a correspondence which suggests that Germans were ultimately preparing an attack on Turkey. This attack was ought to be accompanied by an Italian attack on Libya and a separate German move to Gibraltar and ultimately to French North Africa through Spain. However these Intel were not enough to make British desist from their main prediction. British High command was still expecting Germans to commit themselves to attack Egypt from North Africa with Italy. While the naval superiority in the Eastern Mediterranean was still contested Whitehall was confident that Germans would not consider attacking Turkey.¹⁶⁹ It is evident from the British approach that they see Turkey's fate interdependent with British military existence in Mediterranean. As well as Britain dependent on Turkey in their Mediterranean policy, German threat on Turkey was also dependent on British strength in the region.

¹⁶⁹ Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 1:252.

CHAPTER III

BRITISH GRAND STRATEGY AND INTER-ALLIED DIVERGENCES

3.1 Differences between American and British Strategies

Americans did not support the idea of a defensive ring prior to offensive action. Russell Weigley mentions in his *American Way of War* how the US strategy stemmed from the Civil War era and was mainly dependent on directing masses at decisive points. It is not hard to argue that the American strategy for winning World War II was dependent on the same principles, which had been very much proven to be effective for the Americans both in the Civil War and in the Great War. Yet, it is hardly a uniquely American strategy. It goes back to the lessons of the Napoleonic Wars, if not further. Americans were still thinking that the attack on Berlin by the shortest path would guarantee the swiftest victory.¹⁷⁰ Air-Force General Henry ‘Hap’ Arnold disapproved of any operation but the cross-Channel operation. Americans also considered the threat of Spain in response to the planned Allied invasion of Azores as the prerequisite of Operation Gymnast. They perceived these operations as “sideshows”¹⁷¹. The US General Joseph Stilwell went even further and

¹⁷⁰ Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 95.

¹⁷¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, vol. 3, 4 January 1942. Epub

claimed that Roosevelt was “completely hypnotized by the Limeys.” According to Stilwell, *Gymnast* was going to commit the US forces to the British imperial project,¹⁷² But still, looking on the bright side, Marshall mentioned how a great deal of Allied mercantile shipping would be saved through the opening of the Mediterranean. Eisenhower, belittling the importance of the region, argued that the only good thing that would come out of the Operation *Gymnast* would be the loss of German submarine bases located in French West Africa.¹⁷³ As has frequently been examined in the literature, the US and Britain maintained their disagreements over the issue of the Mediterranean. Research on the strategic planning and the importance of Mediterranean very much had been concerned with the Allied standpoints and their inner conflicts.

The strategy of Germany, one of the most crucial arbiters, also has to be included in this discussion. I do not completely disagree with the American view that the Mediterranean was only a sideshow. However, it should not be disregarded that the Mediterranean was also considered a sideshow by Germany.¹⁷⁴ The combined Allied industrial capacity would allow the Anglo-Saxons to divert their focus to be active in the Mediterranean without disrupting much of their main effort, but the implications for Germany, already troubled by a long and deadly front in the East, would be much more serious if the Allies indeed were going to use North Africa as a launching pad. In order to defend Italy, Germany was going to send a lot of men and material to the peninsula after the Operation *Husky*.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Andrew Buchanan, *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean during World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 136.

¹⁷³ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 1948, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1948), 77-8.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Collier, *The Second World War*, vol. 4 (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7.

¹⁷⁵ Gerhard Schreiber, Bernd Stegeman and Detlef Vogel, *Germany and the Second World War*, trans. Deasn S. McMurry, Ewald Osers, Louisie Willmot, vol.3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 1151.

On the other hand, some US officials found the Mediterranean approach worthwhile. For instance, the future head of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Colonel William Donovan, had already started conducting meetings with the British in March 1941. More importantly he visited countries around the Mediterranean: Spain, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Egypt. Andrew Buchanan claims that Donovan's experience on the Western Front during the Great War influenced the colonel to embrace a more indirect approach similar to the British.¹⁷⁶ In his meeting with the British Prime Minister in December 1941, Donovan opened up about his views on the importance of Mediterranean which he defined as the "southern front" in the war. He summed up by saying that Americans failed to realize the actual importance of the region. Colonel Donovan proposed the study "the economic, political and military implications of the Mediterranean," as well as to encourage Churchill to come up with a shared game plan for barring German expansion from the region.¹⁷⁷ The indirect approach embraced by Donovan should not be interpreted as embracing an all-out defensive approach. Buchanan suggests that the colonel perceived the Mediterranean as a launching pad uniting North Africa with Southern Europe rather than simply interpreting the sea as an east-west corridor. This perception signaled the existence of an American intention to pursue a peripheral defense strategy which could also prepare the region for future major offensives, especially when the combined Allied power would have dwarfed Axis capabilities.¹⁷⁸ Donovan's geographical perception and redefinition of the Mediterranean amounted to an American notion of the "soft underbelly" of the Axis Europe. In a sense, he conceptualized how a defensive approach in a long war of attrition could still carry

¹⁷⁶ Buchanan, *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean*, 17.

¹⁷⁷ Douglas Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011). Chapter 7: Envoy. Epub.

¹⁷⁸ Buchanan, *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean*, 17.

an attacking intent. As it turned out, of course all American action in the Mediterranean was offensive in nature. The defensive phase ended with the 2nd battle of El Alamein.

American zeal for an offensive approach could be used effectively if new fronts had allowed the growing Allied resources in men and material to be effectively utilized. In this case, Italy could be seen as the weak point of the Axis. As the events kept unfolding, we now know that the soft underbelly was not that soft after all, as was laid down by Eisenhower. It was fairly disadvantageous to attack Germany through the natural barriers protecting the Reich's southern and south-eastern flanks.¹⁷⁹ However, it should not be forgotten that Germany had around 400.000 troops in Italy by 1943 and the number of German troops gradually increased until the end of the war reaching roughly to 600.000.¹⁸⁰ Italy's defense was of primary importance for Germany, therefore the German Army kept sending her available troops to Italy.¹⁸¹ These constituted huge distraction for Germany barring her from completely focusing on her defenses in the west. When the vast numbers of men and material the combined Allied forces could deploy are considered, the invasion of Italy seems very favorable for the Allies even if the terrain and the mountains prevent Allies from penetrating deep into German homeland. The invasion of Italy caused Italy to capitulate, cemented the Allied control of Mediterranean and resolved the concerns over the protection of Allied colonies and resources from the Axis menace, while ensuring that none of the former Allied colonies experienced a pro-Axis revolt. All of these also prevented Japan and Germany from having a land connection, although quite a lot would need to happen for that to be established.

¹⁷⁹ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 43-5; Higgins, *The Second Front*, 106.

¹⁸⁰ Schreiber, Stegeman and Vogel, *Germany and the Second World War*, 3:1151.

¹⁸¹ Matloff, and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, 2:493.

Nevertheless, the Allied troops deployed in Italy could not pass the mountainous Northern Italy and the German troops fiercely contesting the Italian peninsula. Consequently, the Allies could not directly threaten Germany from a southern front. This was the main reason why this attempt was criticized by scholars such as Higgins. Although they present only a little more than a counterfactual speculation on a WWII without American involvement in the Mediterranean, they argued that the valuable time spent in Italy allowed Germany to survive for a little longer, and most importantly, it allowed Nazi atrocities to continue in Europe. Later, it was claimed by Churchill and many other scholars that the invasion of Italy was the necessary step ensuring that the Allied command would gain valuable experience for the upcoming cross-Channel amphibious assault. Furthermore, during the Italian campaign, the Allied troops faced the German army whose combat strength was more solid thanks to the relatively intact supply lines compared to the Afrikakorps, that had been hardly getting any supplies due to the Allied naval superiority in the Mediterranean.

Churchill's views were also considered more political rather than military by General Stanley Embick, who was Marshall's senior advisor on Strategy. Embick concluded that a new theatre in North Africa was better suited to the Germans than the Allies.¹⁸² Embick was not alone in his views; as Eisenhower noted that the strategic planning was in the hands of politicians rather than professional soldiers.¹⁸³ Even after Operation Gymnast was agreed upon, Eisenhower was not hiding his discomfort on devoting their power to these "sideshow". He showed his frustration by saying: "Everybody is too much engaged with small things of his own. We've got to go to Europe and fight — and we've got to quit wasting resources all over the

¹⁸² Matloff, and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, 1:104-5; Higgins, *The Second Front*, 91.

¹⁸³ Buchanan, *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean*, 36.

world — and still worse — wasting time.”¹⁸⁴ The President’s concerns were also paralleled with Eisenhower’s apprehensions. In his cost-benefit analysis, the General was convinced that the probable gains of the Mediterranean and North African ventures would only increase their presence in the Mediterranean due to the denial of submarine and aircraft bases for the Axis and introducing Allied convoys to the Mediterranean.¹⁸⁵ No wonder that all these prospective nautical gains did not fascinate the Army commander.

It was also stated that Americans “must differentiate sharply and definitely between those things whose current accomplishment in the several theaters over the world is necessary to the ultimate defeat of the Axis, as opposed to those which are merely desirable because of their effect in facilitating such defeat.”¹⁸⁶ It is true that Britain’s armament production and mobilization were dwarfed by the American contribution to the total war effort. The US was cementing its military leadership with the American merchant fleet, which was overtaking that of Britain. Furthermore, American munitions production was six times greater than the British.¹⁸⁷ However, since Britain had the highest priority of defensive needs, and land and air operations against Germany had to be conducted from Britain, American desires in war planning did not always prevail.¹⁸⁸ This was also partly caused by Britain’s insistence on playing the role of a full partner rather than leaving the status of senior partner to the US. It is also claimed that the combined approach necessitated an equal partnership. Otherwise, Britain might have ended up as a satellite of the US, which would be disastrous for Britain. Therefore, they had to play

¹⁸⁴ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 97

¹⁸⁵ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 72.

¹⁸⁶ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 99

¹⁸⁷ Matthew Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 15.

¹⁸⁸ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 99

the “full partnership game”.¹⁸⁹ The game of full partnership allowed Britain to equally participate in the decision-making process. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the inter-Allied imbalances of power and capabilities did not directly reflect on the strategy making and war planning. This issue prompted some historians into thinking that the British were deceiving the Americans with their devious diplomatic skills into protecting British imperial interests while creating an American dependence on British decisions. This dependence is explained by American desire to ensure Britain’s survival. The aforementioned memorandum of Admiral Stark also supports this argument, where Stark says that Americans could not make war against the Germans without Britain.¹⁹⁰

Another factor which should be incorporated into the discussion of British-American divergences is the American dependence on British trade. No matter how Stark’s memorandum was mostly based on military matters, he also pointed out that trade was the only way for the US to provide itself with the needs of the armament industry. The continuity of the US arms production was possible with the protection of the integrity of the British Empire due to her vast resources.¹⁹¹ In fact the Empire was more important than Britain itself in this particular case. It should also be kept in mind that Britain was virtually the only trade partner of the US by September 1940, since almost of the entire continental Europe was under Nazi occupation.¹⁹² Therefore, it can be understood that close economic ties were also a factor in the outstanding political and military cooperation between the US and Britain. In order to underscore the importance and the success of the US – British partnership, McNeill states the following: “The intimacy and effectiveness of Anglo-American co-

¹⁸⁹ Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War*, 24.

¹⁹⁰ Stark, “Memorandum for the Secretary.”

¹⁹¹ Stark, “Memorandum for the Secretary.”

¹⁹² “U.S. Trade Picture is Redrawn by War,” *New York Times*, Oct. 20. 1940.

operation was from many points of view, the most remarkable political and military achievement of the war.”¹⁹³ And this achievement was not an overnight success. The Great War’s legacy of Admiral Sims, who first conducted naval strategic planning with the British, surely helped these close ties to be re-established smoothly.

The general tone in the literature has so far suggested that the reason for the American decision to abide by the British preferences was related to Churchill’s effort and success in persuading Americans to drag the war to the periphery. However, the recently published work of Andrew Buchanan¹⁹⁴ explains that it was in the US’s favor as well to be active in the Mediterranean. He claims that Roosevelt had realized the aforementioned advantages and the potential of stepping on solid ground in the “southern front”. Buchanan states that Roosevelt’s intention of abiding with British Mediterranean strategy was also targeted the incorporation of the anti-collaborationist wing of French locals and authorities in the region. Henry Stimson defined this aim in his diary as the “president’s great secret baby”.¹⁹⁵ For these reasons, the decisions that led Americans to support operations in the Mediterranean region should not be explained solely by the prevalence of British opinions in the dynamics of the Anglo-American alliance.

3.2 The Importance of the Soviet Union for the Anglo-American Strategy

The eagerness of the US to hastily open a second front and to batter the Germans into submission through a policy of a single concentrated attack, which was expressed with Roosevelt’s concerns over “wasting time”, was supported by the President because of the indefinite situation in the Eastern Front. Americans were

¹⁹³ McNeill, *America, Britain, & Russia*, 5.

¹⁹⁴ Buchanan, *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean*, 2016.

¹⁹⁵ *FRUS*, 1940-1949, Volume II, The Conferences at Washington, 1941–1942, and Casablanca, 1943., Roosevelt–Churchill meeting, morning and afternoon, Henry Stimson Diary, June 21 1942 434.

rightfully thinking that an early cross-Channel assault could only happen while Russia was still in the war. And “that assault was the necessary prerequisite for continued Russian resistance in the East.” Using plain logic, any refusal on the side of the British meant that the islanders did not really intend to pursue a quick victory in Europe, but rather aimed at “imperial political goals in the Mediterranean.”¹⁹⁶ In March 1942, Stimson explained that launching the cross-Channel while the Russians were still in the war was “the proper and orthodox line of our help in the war... and that it would now have the effect of giving Hitler two fronts to fight on if it could be done in time while the Russians were still in.”¹⁹⁷ Contrary to the common opinion, the Soviet defense at the gates of Moscow in the winter of 1941-42 had not fundamentally altered the overall course of the war, for the Germans were still holding Soviet territory comprising 40% of the population and more than half of the coal, steel, aluminum and pig iron resources, including 41% of all railroads in the U.S.S.R. Apart from industrial resources, Germans were also occupying the land that produced 38% of grain and almost all the sugar. This was depriving the Soviets of the most essential goods needed to feed their large population. In fact, according to Deutscher, not even in terms of manpower was Russia in a better condition than Germany, if the combined manpower of Reich and her allies is considered.¹⁹⁸ Therefore Stimson’s apprehensions are accurate despite the Soviet defense at the Battle of Moscow. This idea of the Soviet Union being at the verge of collapse was also unanimously entertained by the British Chiefs including the Chief of the Imperial General Staff Alan Brooke. He fairly laid out his views in spring 1942 stating: “...the Western Allies should land in France only in the event that the

¹⁹⁶ Michael Stoler “The 'Pacific-First' Alternative in American World War II Strategy.” in *International History Review*, 2, no. 3, (1980), 437.

¹⁹⁷ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 102.

¹⁹⁸ Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin a Political Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 470.

Russians proved unexpectedly strong instead of in a state of semi-collapse as in the American proposal.”¹⁹⁹

The American perception of the Soviet Union’s situation on thin ice continued for some time. Despite having been defeated in the Battle of Stalingrad, German forces were still too close to the strategic targets of the Operation Barbarossa, Baku oil, which had been the ultimate prize for the planned German conquest of the Soviet Union, as well as encircled Leningrad and the Soviet capital were all still within reach of the Wehrmacht. Retrospectively, we now know that the Case Blue²⁰⁰ was the “the last year, perhaps, in which the mass of the Wehrmacht can be put into action on a single front.”²⁰¹ However, the Allies were not aware of this fact and probably neither were Germany and certainly nor Germany’s allies. Under these circumstances, one is right to assume that another prospective German assault was still capable of materializing a separate peace between these two juggernauts if not causing the capitulation of Soviet Union. Though the Allies were not capable of ensuring the survival of the Soviet Union, this apprehension was sufficient to influence the Allied grand strategy in terms of altering the war plans in a way that would necessitate the survival of the Soviet Union.

Another divergence between the US and Britain emerges at this point. The US wanted to utilize the existence of the Soviet Union, whose continuous war efforts proved a valuable asset for the Allies, to the fullest. The US had not been touched by the destruction of the war with the exception of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Therefore, it was in the best interest of American decision makers to maintain the

¹⁹⁹ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 110.

²⁰⁰ *Fall Blau* in German was the name of the German strategic offensive that aimed to advance from the southern flank of the Eastern Front.

²⁰¹ The officer is Kurt von Tippelskirch. Robert M. Citino, *Death of Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 156.

belligerent status of the enemies of the Reich and to make good use of them without risking too much of the US's own security and manpower. Britain, on the other hand, was not expecting too much from Soviet resistance. Churchill seemed convinced that the Soviet Union was on the edge of collapse and he was therefore structuring a more patient and defensive grand strategy. He thought in April 1942 that the defense of the periphery was vital in that it could make a separate peace between Germany and Soviet Union irrelevant: "To allow the Germans and Japanese to join hands in India or the Middle East involved a measureless disaster to the Allied cause. It ranked in my mind almost as the equal of the retirement of Soviet Russia behind the Urals, or even of their making a separate peace with Germany."²⁰² In fact, according to Higgins, the Prime Minister perceived Soviet Union as a lost cause and he had never really committed to the idea of a cross-Channel operation, since it would have been a futile effort in Churchill's assessment.²⁰³ Soviet resistance on the Eastern Front was important and was indeed unexpected for Britain, since the British policymakers alongside the US State Department experts anticipated, when Operation Barbarossa started, that Germany would win in Russia in three to six weeks without heavy losses,²⁰⁴ which prompted an immense focus on the Atlantic by the US. However, the Russians survived, and in fact according to Roosevelt in 1941, they were killing more Germans and destroying more equipment than all the Allied forces around the world combined. Yet, Churchill showed his commitment when he ambitiously proposed to his allies that the entry of Turkey to the war in the spring of 1942 would enable them to bomb the oil fields in Romania while allowing vital material shipments to Russia through the straits. The Prime Minister's proposal contradicts

²⁰² Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:405.

²⁰³ Higgins, *the Second Front*, 111.

²⁰⁴ F. H. Hinsley, and Richard Langhorne, *Diplomacy and Intelligence during the Second World War: Essays in Honour of F.H. Hinsley*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

the point made by Higgins where he indirectly condemns Churchill for deceit. If in fact Churchill believed at that time that the Soviet Union would fall, bombing the oil fields in Romania would have inflicted only a minor blow to the German war machine since the Wehrmacht could have gained the big prize of the Caucasus oil fields if they were successful in defeating the Soviet Union.

Except for the minor advantages of maintaining the Soviet belligerency, in the Prime Minister's assessment, the Allied cause was not dependent on Soviet belligerency and thus, should not be constructed accordingly. Furthermore, Britain had already felt Germany's firm punch with the Battle of Britain at the heart of the Empire. London had been bombed heavily, and the Londoners who had had to sleep in the metro tunnels as well as the Whitehall's personnel, who had been conducting their meetings in underground bunkers, felt the catastrophe of the war and full involvement in it, unlike the American public and the decision makers who were following the war from the news and making their decisions without the fear of an air raid. I think these different conditions fostered the differences between the British and the Americans.

Britain's stance on the Soviet participation continued to be different from the American attitude even until the end of the war. As will be discussed later, Churchill was always more concerned with the post-war settlement of the world and assigning the spheres of influences to the victors. He was accused by Higgins of cashing in his political chips before the victory was won or whenever the course of events was in Churchill's favor.²⁰⁵ Indeed, Churchill was more reluctant to give a free hand to the Soviet Union in gaining spheres of influences in Europe, although, naturally, the survival of the Soviet Union meant that large concessions had to be made by the

²⁰⁵ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 213.

Western allies after the victory was won. This was one reason why he wanted an early push into the Balkans. This fear became more apparent when it was realized by Roosevelt and Churchill that it was the Red Army that was inflicting the most casualties upon the German forces. The US approach in this sense, from the point of view of Higgins seems more benevolent than the British. Although both were concerned with the post-war order, the US was more concerned with the future of the international system, its harmony and its cooperation, whereas Britain, or more specifically Churchill, seemed more concerned with the imperial life lines and political spheres of influences. Preserving the British real and normative power after the war came before the future of the world system in Churchill's agenda. This difference between the two caused Britain to be more hesitant towards committing herself to an all-out alliance with the Soviet Union all throughout the war, which reflected upon British grand strategy in terms of not perceiving Soviet survival as an indispensable part of the Allied war planning. This attitude expectedly placed Britain in a dilemma. On the one hand, Churchill was not prioritizing the survival of the Soviet Union; on the other hand, he was reluctant to cut and leave the Soviet Union alone. Furthermore, the aforementioned remarks of Roosevelt reminding Churchill how the Soviet Union was indeed a crucial ally helped the Prime Minister to rationalize the necessity of the Soviet Union's survival. In a sense, he felt that Britain was placed in Soviets' debt.²⁰⁶

3.3 Second Front: When and Where?

At least until the end of 1942, Britain was fighting a defensive war which was identified with Churchill's infamous "We shall fight on the beaches" speech. Even before the war, British plans, as they were mentioned, were mainly about extending

²⁰⁶ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4: 792.

alliances and founding coalition of forces that would surround and deter German aggression. This defensive attitude was even supported by President Roosevelt at the opening rounds of the war, as he advised then Prime Minister Chamberlain to stay on the defensive, urging him to base his strategy around a defensive blockade.²⁰⁷ Americans, just like everyone else, thought that combined Anglo-French navy would have been sufficient to suffocate Germany and eventually pinning her down. However, Roosevelt's suggestion was also pointing out that this defensive approach should only last until the Neutrality Act could be thinned down. Once the American war participation increased, Britain was expected to abandon her defensive strategy and obtain an offensive one, acting confidently along with the power of her transatlantic ally. Yet, we now know that the British endorsed an opposition to an all-out offensive strategy, if not the continuation of this defensive approach. As early as 1942, when British bastions of the home islands were adequately manned, Prime Minister urged to deploy the stockpiling forces to the North Africa.²⁰⁸ This move was obviously a forerunner to the future British intentions in the Mediterranean region and it was important for two main reasons. Firstly; it was an open signaling to the Americans, saying that instead of accumulating all the necessary forces in the British Isles and preparing for the earliest date of a prospective cross-Channel assault, Britain wanted to persist on the peripheral war and continued to carry an intention to attack Italy first, instead of Germany. Secondly; if there would be a strong opposition to the British strategy, Churchill could present the accumulated forces in the North Africa before the Operation Torch as the trump card pleading their idleness to justify maintaining his policy of being militarily active in the Mediterranean region.

²⁰⁷ Justus Drew Doenecke, *From Isolation to War: 1931-1941*, (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1968), 96.

²⁰⁸ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 47.

British insistence on the opposition to the offensive approach revealed itself as the series of operations outside of the main theatre of the war. Mediterranean, being one of the most important theatres of war, is also a good example of the British aim of dragging the war to the periphery. According to the British thinking, pursuing goals outside of Europe was not strictly a defensive approach for winning the war, but, their ally had discomforts for supporting such plans. American Operations Division (O.P.D.) rejected the military commitment to Mediterranean on March 27, 1942 since the prospective deployed US troops would be strategically defensive in their judgment.²⁰⁹ We know eventually that the North African campaign succeeded and it constructed a basis for the Operation Husky. However, retrospectively, the Americans had rightful concerns over committing large forces to the French controlled regions of the North Africa, especially after Marshall Petain had warned the Americans that the French would resist to any newcomers.²¹⁰ Americans were also prepared to sacrifice South-west Pacific²¹¹ in order to continue building up forces in Britain for the cross-Channel operation. I believe this situation explains why Americans were considering the North African operation as a peripheral thrust. Higgins uses General William F. Kernan's views to underscore American frustration with the British obsession in the Mediterranean region that would be shared by younger generation of soldiers. General says in May 1942 that anyone with the simplest knowledge of history would know that it was the control of Italian peninsula that makes the defense of Suez and Dakar possible. He thus claims that Britain wanted to divert the common Allied cause in order to ensure the survival of the British Empire.²¹² Americans, on the other hand, were leaning towards to the cross-

²⁰⁹ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 105.

²¹⁰ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 101.

²¹¹ Roughly the area between the Solomon Islands and French Polynesia

²¹² Higgins, *The Second Front*, 121.

Channel attack right away and they were serious about it. Although Roosevelt toyed with the idea of Mediterranean operation when the American decision makers met in Washington on March 25, 1942, his war cabinet were adamant in their position to remain loyal to the cross-Channel operation. Two days later, they laid down the framework of what will be known as the Operation Round-up. Having brought up Kernan's accounts, Trumbull Higgins, who is a critic of Churchill, adds to his own argument by claiming that the conquest of Italy lacked the means of granting Allies the decisive victory.²¹³ Contrary to this view, Churchill explains his motivations for opting for such a choice in strategic planning in his six volumes of *Second World War*. He tries to justify his ambitions in Mediterranean with making use of his troops, forcing Germany into engagement in a region in which her enemy has supply and infrastructure advantages, and indirectly helping Soviet Union by keeping Germany busy and forcing her to disperse her troops. This view was contradicting with the American views and even angering the US generals.

In retrospect, it is clear now the invasion of Italy, successfully necessitated the transfer of German divisions to the Southern Europe which were needed against the Soviets in the East. Overwhelmed by these new requirements, Joseph Göbbels himself said that the fifteen or twenty strong, intact divisions were sufficient to repulse the Soviets, but they had been sent to Italy and Yugoslavia.²¹⁴ Considering that the Luftwaffe had to divert a substantial force to deal with the Allied air attacks in the south, the stalemate in the Eastern Front has ended and the Soviets got important victories at the end of September 1943.

However, since these results were not known, the two conflicting views on the second front have continued to be discussed in the series of Allied conferences which

²¹³ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 121.

²¹⁴ Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West 1943-1946*, (Suffolk: Richard Clay and Company, 1960), 29.

were all considering postponing imminent cross-Channel operation to 1943. Not surprisingly, this inclination did not help easing the American military staff - especially the navy- which had had discomforts over British opinions being prevailing.²¹⁵ Eisenhower, as early as February 1942, insistently demanded the cross-Channel operation to take place. If it was not possible, he suggested the US to go after Japan in Pacific turning their backs to the British.²¹⁶ Roosevelt was now aiming at smoothening his staff that was seriously considering abandoning the *Europe first* strategy and concentrating on Japan instead. Over these apprehensions, Roosevelt cleared things up to Hopkins:

But my main point is that I do not believe we can wait until 1943 to strike at Germany. If we cannot strike at Sledgehammer (an early cross-Channel assault plan which later is going to be described), then we must take the second best - and that is not the Pacific . . . If Sledgehammer cannot be launched then I wish a determination to be made while you are in London as to a specific and definite theater where our ground and sea forces can operate against the German ground forces in 1942. The theaters to be considered are North Africa and the Middle East. Gymnast has the great advantage of being a purely American enterprise, it would secure West Africa . . . it would offer the beginning of what should be the ultimate control of the Mediterranean - it is the shortest route to supply . . . Under any circumstances I wish Bolero and Roundup to remain an essential though it must be interrupted. I am prepared to consider in the event Sledgehammer is not mounted - an

²¹⁵ Douglas E. Delaney "Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy: December 1941 to January 1943," *Defence Studies*, 2 no: 3, (2002), 15, doi: 10.1080/14702430208405038

²¹⁶ Stoler, "Pacific-First," 436.

appropriate transfer of air and landing craft to the Southwest Pacific.”²¹⁷

These lines clearly set up the President’s reasons for making the decision for *Torch*, as he comes to the conclusion that this was the strategy which was serving both to the American cause and the Allied strategy. It was also the case that the Americans, to some extent, believed that the *Round-up* was still in the realm of possibilities. After clearing North Africa from the Axis, the joint command then could concentrate on the cross-Channel operation right away. However, it was to be understood after the operation *Torch* that everything, including the material –landing crafts were being the most crucial and scarce in this equation- and the planning staff that were needed for the operation *Round-up* was assigned for the operations in North Africa.²¹⁸

According to Mark Stoler, American Staff’s effort was genuine and it was not built on sand. Ever since Pearl Harbor, American public have been perceiving Japan as the real enemy and the military staff saw Pacific as a viable option if the cross-Channel assault had not became reality. For these reasons, the idea of abandoning *Europe-first* strategy was not a bluff. British too realized the graveness of the situation and how going after Japan in the Pacific suited the public and military desire. According to Stoler, this possibility allowed American cross-Channel plans to be approved by the British.²¹⁹ Therefore, the President, to an extent, was successful to make *Gymnast* a purely American enterprise in May 1942.

²¹⁷ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: an inmate history* (New York: Harper, 1950), 600-605.

²¹⁸ Gordon A. Harrison, *United States Army in World War II: The European Theatre of Operations: Cross-Channel Attack*, (Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D.C., 1993), 30.

²¹⁹ Stoler, “Pacific-First,” 436.

The eventual landing followed by the Allied assault on the Western Europe was called *Round-up* which was later to be named as *Overlord*. *Round-up* was rather a general plan indicating the Allied commitment to the opening of a front on the Western Europe for it was thought to be the most useful method of taking the weight off from Russia.²²⁰ In April 1942, after Harry Hopkins and Marshall proposed *Round-up*, Churchill declared his reluctant support. However, Prime Minister also added the necessity of not neglecting India and the Middle East. He pointed out how unbearable it would have been for the Allies to lose an army of 600,000 men and the whole manpower of India along with the loss of connection between Australia and the Allies. For this reason, they “could not entirely lay aside everything” for the sake of achieving the main objective.²²¹ American desire for mounting an amphibious assault firstest with the mostest was contradicting with British concerns over the security of the Middle East. In early 1942, British obsession of keeping the Middle East was recognized by the United States Chief of Staff as he believed that Britain was making too much of a sacrifice trying to maintain her hold in the region. President Roosevelt was sharing the same concerns with his Chief of Staff.²²² They seemed right in their assessment as almost half of the British Military production was being sent to the Middle East theatre in April 1942.²²³ This could and was seen as a clear indication of the importance given to the Mediterranean by the British.

Higgins evaluates the Prime Minister’s cost-benefit analysis as he underlines how Churchill suffered from the loss of British Empire in Far East to Japan for the sake of sending war material to the Soviets. For this reason, according to Higgins,

²²⁰ “Western Europe is favored as the theatre in which to stage the first major offensive by the United States and Great Britain. Only there could their combined land and air resources be fully developed and the maximum support given to Russia.” (US joint staff memorandum to Churchill). Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:396.

²²¹ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:317.

²²² Churchill *The Second World War*, 1:424-5.

²²³ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 303-14; Langer, *The Undeclared War*, 563-91.

Churchill was unwilling to do the same by surrendering Middle East or India as either of these options would mean the end of Churchill's stay in the office even if it ensured the survival of Soviet Union.²²⁴ More specifically, American desire of an early commitment to the cross-Channel operation came into existence with the name of *Operation Sledgehammer* which Churchill defines as "American idea of a preliminary emergency landing on a much smaller but still substantial scale in the autumn of 1942."²²⁵ The plan aimed at capturing French Atlantic ports in early fall of 1942. The proposed date of the operation indicates the American flurry since it was aimed to be launched when the German armies were standing deep in the Soviet territory. Churchill managed to persuade Americans to abandon *Sledgehammer* for the operation was aiming at the two French Atlantic ports which were estimated to be defended valiantly by the Germans. Moreover, a necessary build up for an amphibious assault of that scale would have given Hitler's armies a breathing space that would allow Germany to consolidate her power in the North Africa, where Churchill had wanted to have an edge over his enemies. According to the Prime Minister, it does not mean that he had embraced a defensive strategy in general just because he was against an immediate cross-Channel operation. Churchill was looking up to every possibility to use the troops that were staying idle. His concerns were not only for the British soldiers, he was also estimating that the American soldiers preparing for *Sledgehammer* would have been staying idle too. By the year 1942, Britain successfully manned the bastions, the American soldiers piling up there would have had no use for the Allied cause according to Churchill's point of view. Even after declaring his support to *Round-up*, Churchill continued to scrutinize the current situation. There was more than one year to the planned amphibious assault on

²²⁴ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 111.

²²⁵ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:398.

the Northern France to take place, and the very purpose of this hasty operation, which was planned by ignoring the shortage of naval and air vessels, was to aid the Soviet Union as soon as possible. If the main armies would only spend this time preparing for the amphibious assault -which ended up being prolonged to more than two years-, Allies would have involuntarily granted the invaluable breathing space to the Axis. "The main armies could not simply be preparing all that time." said Churchill in order to highlight the important prospective gains in other theatres of the war. American war planners and the generals denounced Churchill's aims as merely desirable and a waste of time for those aims, in their opinion, were not serving the cause of the ultimate victory. Ironically, Churchill, while explaining his desire to keep the preparing troops active, points out that the Soviets were "fighting on a gigantic scale from hour to hour against the main striking force of the German Army, we could not stand idle."²²⁶ Later he explains how it would benefit Allies and most importantly the Soviets to utilize those idle troops for the relatively little campaigns in French North Africa and Norway. The latter in Prime Minister's opinion meant the direct aid to Soviets as the "only method" which equated to a second front.²²⁷ After all, the architect of "closing the ring" was aware in fall 1942 that "a stalemate was Germany's last hope" and he was determined not to give Germany the chance of benefiting from a stalemate.²²⁸ In order to ensure the efficient use of prospective fronts, Churchill had in his mind a couple of options. He was a strong supporter of an Allied advance in Norway as well as a new Balkan front to be opened with the help of Turkish belligerency. The second being the focus point of the subsequent chapters, Prime Minister has never abandoned the idea of utilizing the Turkish and Norwegian

²²⁶ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:408.

²²⁷ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:406.

²²⁸ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:792.

entryways to *Festung Europa* since he considered these options even on the eve of D-day.²²⁹

In Early November 1942, Churchill seemed to abandon his previous promise of committing himself to the cross-Channel operation. By the time, it can be considered surreal to believe both *Torch* and *Round-up* would be mounted simultaneously. Although he has never been vocal about it, especially the Americans were sounding their annoyance. In his own books, Churchill expresses his real intention heaps of times. Prime Minister keeps telling the reader how the indirect approach he had embraced was actually benefiting the ultimate cause of defeating Germany with littlest casualty. Yet again, the commitment to the indirect approach meant more activity in other regions and in other prospective fronts. He rather had in his mind delivering a substantial blow against the Axis in Mediterranean accompanied with a Turkish assisted Balkan invasion instead of Norway. Turkish assistance was vital for according to Churchill “No Balkan front could be opened without the help of Turkey.”²³⁰ According to Churchill’s perception of forty-five strong Turkish divisions was a distracting factor for the minor German forces deployed in the south east Europe.²³¹ It is important to note that the Foreign Office has recognized that Turks would not intervene on the Allied side until Britain’s power is demonstrated against the Germans in North Africa. Nicholas Tamkin claims that the Foreign Office deduced that the victories against Vichy France or Italy would not satisfy Turks in terms of Britain’s capabilities to defend Turkey if Turkey was to enter the war.²³² Continuing the war in North Africa against Germany was going to have a substantial effect on Turkey’s entry which had been regarded as one

²²⁹ Letter from Churchill to Ismay, 19 February 1944. Churchill, *The Second World War*, 5:846.

²³⁰ Denniston *Churchill’s Secret War*, 59.

²³¹ Higgins, *the Second Front*, 171

²³² Nicholas Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union, 1940–45: Strategy, Diplomacy and Intelligence in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2009), 51.

of the necessities of the British strategy. Aegean operations and Balkan fronts which were regarded as the logical extensions of *Torch*, to a large extent necessitated Turkey's collaboration. Yet again the successful banishment of Germans from Egypt could very well endanger Turkey's position since in such a situation, Turkey would be Germany's only option to attack Middle East or take the Red Army in rear of the Caucasus.

Apart from venturing in Norway or in Turkey, Churchill surely wanted to consolidate his power and ensure a long lasting Allied presence in the North Africa. This meant an Allied operation in the region prior to the cross-Channel operation. North African campaign in terms of presenting an opportunity for the idle troops to be used effectively was an appealing option for Britain to support. Another factor that genuinely necessitated the control of Mediterranean by the British was the long supply lines that would be significantly shortened. Higgins says, in summer 1942, that this sort of a route for the convoys should only be tolerated in a defensive war with limited supplies. Since Allies were in attack - despite the loss of Tobruk- and they had a growing production subsequently causing Allies to ship more men and material, the route needed to be shortened. This aim could only be fulfilled through a successful campaign in Mediterranean theatre. It was also vocalized by Churchill in his letter to Roosevelt in November 1942, that the prospective Mediterranean trade routes that will be opened after a successful campaign, will surely enable Allies to construct close relations with Turkey.²³³ Nevertheless, the concerns over the supply routes were self-defeating according to General Marshall. The Allies would no longer have to supply the lands of North Africa with its poor infrastructure, since after the Axis would have been defeated in that region. If *Round-up* was to be

²³³ Letter from Churchill to Roosevelt, November 1943, Levent Konyar , *S.S.C.B. Dış İşleri Bakanlığı: Stalin, Roosevelt ve Churchill'in gizli yazışmaları'nda Türkiye (1941-1944) ve ikinci Dünya Savaşı öncesi Sovyet barış çabaları ve Türkiye, 1938-1939*, (İstanbul: Havass, 1981), 92

prioritized before anything, and the English Channel was going to be the decisive theater of the war after *Torch*, why would the Allies be in need of supplying their troops deployed in the Mediterranean theatre?²³⁴

The American Chiefs had their concerns but it was up to the main decision maker of the US; President Roosevelt. No one knew what the exact thoughts of the President were as he was not found of giving written approvals and he indeed enjoyed juggling the different ideas as well as people.²³⁵ Maybe he thought this would give him the leverage considering the next decision or he has been opting for this idea all along. One way or another Roosevelt decided on committing his forces to the North African operation which had the code name: *Torch*.

The dissidence between the allies ceased down when Roosevelt decided upon *Torch* and, Eisenhower being in the first place, the American generals who strongly opposed the Mediterranean operations perceived the *Torch* as the direct order from President and they quit their claim for Pacific. However this did not mean the end for the disagreements between the Allies. Americans again wished to have a rather quick operation from the Atlantic shores of North Africa without provoking Petain and Franco whilst Churchill, as he had many times emphasized its importance, openly declared his support for the invasion on the Mediterranean coast of Tunis. According to the Prime Minister, this choice was preferred for it was the prerequisite of the future invasion of Italy.

As it was expected, the American staff was disturbed again. General Marshall kept questioning the sincerity and the underlying goals of the British war aims. He

²³⁴ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 135; Matlof and Snell *Strategic Planning and Coalition Warfare*, 1:378

²³⁵ "Roosevelt habitually chose to approve potentially controversial plans on an oral basis, with no written notes showing that he had even looked at a document." I. Joel Holwitt, "*Execute Against Japan*": *The U.S. Decision to Conduct Unrestricted Submarine Warfare*, (Texas A&M University Press College Station 2008), 157.

even asked Churchill whether or not British Chiefs of Staff considered the attack on Sicily as a mean to an end or an end itself. Nevertheless, General Marshall accepted the Mediterranean operation believing that due to Sicily's position, the Island's invasion would exterminate any further operations in the region.²³⁶ As he will see, the invasion of Sicily was only going to be the start of the events in the Italian Peninsula.

Henry Stimson too had problems with the British theory. According to him, the British desire of actualizing series of attritions in Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Italy is dangerous especially considering the post war problems. Stimson believed that unending attempts of Churchill to postpone the cross-Channel operation may cause Stalin to think that Allies did not keep their pledge of helping the Soviets.²³⁷

The Torch decision was a bitter pill to swallow for Marshall and Stimson. For them, the plan meant the “adoption of a strategy of encirclement, of periphery-pecking, and of what Maj. Gen. Thomas T. Handy later termed scatterization. It meant inevitable postponement of a definitely scheduled direct thrust against Germany.”²³⁸

Before assessing the real importance of Mediterranean to the British, one should try to understand the British strategy. The strategy was shaped by variety of aspects. Firstly, the past experiences of the Great War showed Britain how it was advantageous to embrace a defensive approach, and that the aggressive offensives were too costly. The defensive approach necessitated eschewal from a head-on collision with Germany in Europe. Britain instead focused on peripheral defense to limit Germany's quest for resources. The proven strength of Nazi war machine

²³⁶ Harrison, *United States Army in World War II*, 15-9.

²³⁷ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 67.

²³⁸ Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare* 2:14.

obliged Britain to count on the facilities of her empire to withstand the German aggression. Therefore, Britain became more and more concerned with the protection of her empire's life-lines and post war spheres of influences. This caused Churchill to be criticized for making political decisions instead of the military ones.

The Prime Minister was said to have started to "cash in his political chips" early on before concentrating everything upon defeating the strongest enemy. Americans predicted that Churchill's intentions were far from being aimed at the ultimate goal which was the defeat of Germany.²³⁹ Prime Minister was instead mapping out opportunist plans according to even his own allies. General Marshall's distrust and reluctance towards Churchill's Mediterranean operations were also to some extent caused for this particular reason. The general did not want Americans to die for political purposes.²⁴⁰

The dependence on the empire made Britain even more concerned with the defense of Mediterranean which subsequently caused dissidences between Britain and the US. The American perception and desire which hoped for a direct concentrated assault on Germany was often contradicting with the British one. Furthermore, the Anglo-American alliance was also becoming dissimilar in terms of their perception of the Soviet Union. While the US was seeing it as an essential part of the anti-German alliance and hastily trying to ensure the Soviet survival, Britain had constructed her grand strategy independent from the Soviet Union's survival. No matter how these factors caused disagreements between the Allies, they agreed upon reinstalling Allied presence around the Mediterranean.

After Torch was implemented Roosevelt had to reluctantly accept that a cross-Channel operation was left earliest to the following year. The 'inevitable

²³⁹ Higgins, *The Second Front*, 213.

²⁴⁰ Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 93.

postponement of a definitely scheduled direct thrust against Germany' meant that it was the defensive ring around Germany strategy which was then being used against the enemy. The denotation was contradicting with the Germany first strategy. On the one hand, American troops had engaged with their German enemies as early as 1942 for good or ill, on the other hand, with the increasing American presence on the North Africa and the adamant Russian resistance, Germany's possibility of knocking Great Britain out of the war was simply made impossible. For the latter, some Navy Admirals considered that it was not urgent to finish off Germany anymore, they rather advocated to give rein to the Pacific pull.²⁴¹ The effort of navy was materialized with the decreasing landing craft production. The navy has managed to drastically cut down the production of the landing crafts. This was considered by the War Department as an open indication towards a more focus on the Pacific front since the rapidly produced landing crafts were to be used in the Round-up and navy needed other sorts of vessels that would have been put use against Japan. According to a navy spokesperson, the high rate of landing craft production could only be achieved on the expense of the 'every single combatant shipbuilding program'. He further complains about how the amphibious program, which was aiming to boost the numbers for the preparations of the Roundup, had 'overriding priority in every navy yard and every major civilian shipbuilding company.'

The War Department wished to keep the effort on the Pacific minimal since their primary aim was to defeat Germany first. Therefore the department had only aimed at establishing and protecting the supply lines so that the future offensives may be undertaken. However, the course of events in the Pacific necessitated ad hoc

²⁴¹ Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War*, 36.

improvements in the region. In fact, at the end of 1942, the 9 of the total 17 divisions which totaled up to 350,000 men were deployed in the Pacific theatre.²⁴² Jones claims that this alteration happened mostly thanks to the Torch. According to him, the defensive nature of the operations against Germany allowed this ad hoc increase to eventuate in Pacific.

Contrary to the general view, remaining to the British Strategy and pursuing further goals in Mediterranean were not a result of Americans complying with the deceitful British in order to make up for Churchill's imperial agenda. As it was explained by Brooke, even though all the Anglo-American forces pull out of Mediterranean and concentrate on building up in British home islands for the Round-up, the estimated number of the total troops would still fall short for Round-up to be actualized in the fall of 1943. He then concludes that if the Allies continue to operate in the Mediterranean, the total number of troops to be gathered for Round-up in Britain would only a little bit fewer. That being said, the Chief of Imperial General Staff points out the postponement of the Round-up to the 1944 as the most plausible option.

This plan also stood to reason for the American Navy wing which had always been in the opposition for the further thrusts in the Mediterranean theatre so far. Brooke's argument seemed to have convinced even the Admiral King, who saw the benefits of exploiting the clear shipping routes which enabled Allies to deal with the troubling supply problems. Instead of going back to Britain, it made sense to stay in North Africa and take advantage of the shipment which was then at premium. Brooke's proposal was also supported by H. H. Arnold, head of the US Army Air

²⁴² Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, 2:14-15.

Forces, who clearly saw the benefits of possessing new bases and airfields. With these prospective acquisitions, the US Air Force could threaten the southern Europe.

The Americans were extremely overwhelmed by the challenges of the terrain and problems with the supply. Eisenhower, in his letter to Marshall in December 1942, said that their operations “have violated every recognized principle of war, are in conflict with all operational and logistic methods laid down in text-books, and will be condemned, in their entirety, by all Leavenworth and War College classes for the next twenty-five years.”²⁴³ I think the North African theater for being the first theatre of war in which the Americans saw actions against the Germans had an importance in terms of explaining American hesitation and averseness for continuing action on the shores of Mediterranean. In fact, the primary excuse presented by the Americans for their decision not to support Turkey’s full belligerency was the enormous supply needs that would be needed in this case. Operation Torch not only made the Americans realize what they have been lacking, but it also fed their ambition to face the enemy on the supply rich soil of Europe.

There is also a possibility that the Americans did not want to abandon Africa before clearing the continent from the last remains of the enemy. On top of allowing the Allies to march into quick victories in the Eastern Mediterranean, the main motivation for them to linger in the continent was to knock Italy out of the war via the utilization of the aforementioned launching pad. In a scenario where the Allies did not exploit the Torch to the fullest, laid a future threat of Italy or any other Axis element jumping back to Africa while the region was undefended. This sort of catastrophe would return things to the beginning and might force Allies to come back

²⁴³ Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War*, 32.

to Africa, even further postponing the Round-up. Besides all the other tactical benefits, the opportunity to put a quietus upon any Axis revival in the region might very well have been appealing to the Americans.

After 1943, when Allies finally gained the upper hand and started working to actualize the cross-Channel operation, Britain's eye was still on the Mediterranean. Two main lines of offensive action, as listed by Prime Minister himself, were to occupy Sicily – with the object of “making the Mediterranean line of communications more secure”- and “to create a situation in which Turkey can be enlisted as an active ally”.²⁴⁴ Churchill justifies his ambitions by saying that the object of all the operations in the Mediterranean was to take the weight off of Russia and to give the best possible chance to the cross-Channel operation.²⁴⁵ Another aspect encouraging Churchill to insist on closing the Ring has become apparent when the Allied presence took place in French North Africa; Germany was forced to move the eleven of her total forty divisions to southern France to guard the ports and coastline. This movement has weakened Germany's defenses on the channel and strengthened Churchill's claim of staying active in Mediterranean.²⁴⁶ Moreover, Britain wanted to be the sole controller of the Mediterranean region, therefore, in his direct correspondence to the President Roosevelt, Churchill says:

“His Majesty's Government had expressed their willingness to serve under a United States Commander, since the United States would be responsible for the buildup of the invasion force and would have the preponderance in numbers. In the Mediterranean, on the other

²⁴⁴ Letter from Churchill to War Cabinet, 20 January 1943, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:843-44

²⁴⁵ Letter from Churchill to Roosevelt, 23 October 1943, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 5:386.

²⁴⁶ Letter from Churchill to British Chiefs of Staff, 3 December 1942. Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:802.

hand, practically all the naval forces were British and we had also a considerable preponderance in army forces. We therefore felt that the command of this theatre should properly go to the British.”²⁴⁷

It should also be taken into consideration that Britain had suffered a loss of 232.000 men in the region until late 1943, and was actively fighting the war in the Mediterranean since June 1940, before the Americans were in the war. These are the other factors that won the control of the region for the British. Also, as it was carefully laid down by the Prime Minister; the combined losses of both Italy and Germany numbered 950.000 soldiers; they have sunken 2.400.000 gross tons of shipping and destroyed 8000 aircraft. The number of lost enemy guns, tanks and trucks respectively totaled; 6200, 2550, and 70.000. By looking at these numbers, Churchill could then freely claim that they have redeemed a whole continent.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Letter from Churchill to Eden, 29 October 1943, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 5:365.

²⁴⁸ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:799.

CHAPTER IV

BRITAIN AND TURKISH BELLIGERENCY

Before the major Allied victories and German setbacks in Africa and in Russia, Britain was still maintaining her position on Turkish belligerency. Despite the British-Soviet invasion, Iran was a huge setback for Anglo-Turkish relations, and neither country was in a position to undertake a similar operation in Turkey. Nevertheless, the pro-Axis coup in Iraq, despite having failed, disturbed Turkey. Turks were afraid because they thought that Basra, which was the main British supply route to Turkey, was endangered. Therefore, Ankara illustrated its enthusiasm to the quick end of the hostilities in Iraq, and this enthusiasm was welcomed by Britain. The Iraq affair led Turkey's negative perspective towards Britain, caused by Iran's invasion, to rapidly fade away. Thus, Britain started to toy with the idea of Turks fighting in Middle East as early as in spring 1941. This idea never became reality, but it shows that Britain was slowly moving away from the desire of keeping Turkey neutral, even before the major turn of events. It is also important to note that ever since the Arcadia Conference, which took place in the winter of 1941-42, it was agreed between Britain and the US to divide the world into two spheres of influence. The proposal came from General G. N. Macready, Assistant Chief of the British Imperial General Staff and the word "protégés" was agreed to be used to express the

countries belonging to these spheres of influence. According to the agreement, Turkey was Britain's "protégé."²⁴⁹

Churchill perceived the Turkish alliance as an important way of exerting British influence on the Eastern Mediterranean region. He even stated in that, among Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania and Turkey; Turkey and Yugoslavia were the most important possible allies of Britain.²⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, these would be the two countries where Churchill tirelessly tried to get the approval of his allies to open new fronts in their territory. More importantly, Britain desired to continue the war in the Mediterranean, conflicting with the American and the Soviet wishes. Churchill believed that if the western allies were to continue operations in Mediterranean, this would antagonize the Americans and the Soviets. Therefore, the prospect of Turkey joining the war, in terms of necessitating the Allied assistance in the Eastern Mediterranean, would enable Churchill to fulfill his aims in the region without disturbing his allies. This fostered Churchill's Turkish ambition in the fall of 1942.²⁵¹

When the Soviets were literally begging for a second front in late 1942, Churchill explained the reasons why an amphibious assault was not possible at the time. It can be claimed that Britain was not even considering committing themselves to a Cross-Channel operation anytime soon since Germans had more soldiers in the Western Europe than the British had in the home islands in 1942.²⁵² Churchill explained to Stalin that the only way which the Allies could open a new front in the Balkans was through Turkey's entry to the war.²⁵³ Churchill was trying to convince Stalin that Turkey's military capabilities were underrated. Churchill cleverly used the

²⁴⁹ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, Part III:1942, Chapter 20: The Narrow Margin The Arcadia Conference Macready's account: Epub.

²⁵⁰ Churchill, *the Churchill War Papers*, 43.

²⁵¹ Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 86.

²⁵² Higgins, *the Second Front*, 72.

²⁵³ Higgins, *the Second Front*, 72.

military aspect, since Stalin was constantly pressuring Britain with the demands of military aids that would directly contribute to the frontline warfare.²⁵⁴ Besides, Turkish entry meant open straits, and thus, a shorter supply route to aid Russia, and it would also be serving the Soviet demand of an immediate second front in order to shorten the war.²⁵⁵

In the fall 1942, before the victories of El Alamein and Stalingrad, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın asked Churchill about the war plans. Churchill replied by saying: “I understand the challenges of your situation; I don’t ask you to do any sacrifices but to keep doing what you are doing so far.”²⁵⁶ These abstract indications soon turned into actual negotiations and were included in the war planning with the Cairo Conference which will be analyzed later. Although Churchill indirectly hinted at Turkey’s involvement in the war, in November 1942, as soon as the results of El Alamein and Torch were known, he sent the note to his Chief of Staff saying: “A supreme and prolonged effort must be made to bring Turkey in the spring. It should be possible to build up a powerful British land and air force to assist the Turks.”²⁵⁷ However, in the spring of 1943, the British and the Americans were fully occupied by the campaign against Rommel in Tunisia.

British aim of inducing Turkey to enter the war has affected Britain’s foreign policy as well. The influence was felt most prominently when Churchill was considering making an exception to Italy in the matter of unconditional surrender on the eve of Casablanca. Although he was opting for allowing Italy to make a separate peace, his war cabinet opposed the idea claiming that it may harm relations with

²⁵⁴ Churchill was calling Turkish army as ‘powerful Turkish army’ Higgins, *the Second Front*, 73.

²⁵⁵ McNeill, *America, Britain, & Russia*, 330.

²⁵⁶ Özmel, *Rauf Orbay’ın Londra Büyükelçiliği*, 59.

²⁵⁷ Letter from Churchill to Roosevelt, 26 August 1942, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:649.

Turkey.²⁵⁸ Similar to the Higgins', the aforementioned account on Churchill's tendency for cashing his political chips before the victory was won, Douglas Delaney points out to Churchill's indecision about the issue of excluding Italy as criticizes Churchill for not making the "connection between the policy and the strategy that supported it and the postwar issues."²⁵⁹ Higgins' criticism was also voiced by other scholars. Even before the war started, Britain was thinking about strengthening and expanding her imperial connections. When the aforementioned problem about Britain's weakening imperial power in Canada, the West Indies and Australia is considered, the decision makers sought to spread their influence to the Mediterranean areas including Turkey in order to "retain or use (these new areas) for bargaining purposes when peace is negotiated."²⁶⁰ This reflects the prominence of Britain's post-war motivations.

4.1 Churchill's role in the relations with Turkey

Churchill perceived Turkey as the successor to the Ottoman Empire and carried this perception to his construction of the international affairs. Turkey therefore occupied an inflated position in his mind. It is claimed that the Dardanelles campaign and Churchill's relations with the Young Turks before the Great War reinforced this inflated perception which was mentioned earlier on in this research.²⁶¹ Turkey was not considered among the great powers during the WWII, but the exceptional strategic location of this country made Churchill give close attention to Turkey during the war. In fact, he considered Turkey among the prospective post war

²⁵⁸ Letter from Eden to Churchill 21 January 1943, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4: 836.

²⁵⁹ Delaney "Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy," 18-9.

²⁶⁰ Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 113.

²⁶¹ Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 83.

major powers in the fall of 1942, as opposed to President Roosevelt's Four Policemen.²⁶²

It is a defected idea to affiliate all Britain's policy towards Turkey with Churchill. Although the king would follow the advice of the prime minister, and Churchill was, in effect, the commander in chief of the British Armed Forces, he did not have the special autonomy that an American President would have in military and foreign affairs. Even if that is not unlimited either; Churchill's authority rested on the majority in the house of commons supporting the coalition government and this meant that he needed to retain the support not only of his own party, in which he was still something of an outsider, but also the other parties too; and by 1942 his role in directing military operations was also qualified by the need to coordinate with the Americans. Churchill created the post of Minister of Defense, making himself a permanent member of the Defense Committee. Churchill controlled which plans to be developed and to be brought before the Committee for approval, as the chairman of the Committee, he had enormous influence on the final decision.²⁶³ Despite Churchill's ability to pull the wires, he often had disputes with his own War cabinet and Chiefs of Staff. Therefore, one should be careful when considering Britain as an actor since the status of the decision maker cannot simply be reduced to the Prime Minister's post. Britain's efforts on bringing Turkey to the war was also very much related to the other ranks in the state and in the army, even though Churchill wished to conduct the relations with Turkey without being disturbed by Foreign Office or General Headquarters. Churchill claimed that Turkey was 'his case', meaning that

²⁶² Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 83.

²⁶³ Delaney "Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy," 3.

Turkish entry to the war was to an extent Prime Minister's personal quest.²⁶⁴ Parallel to this claim, Eden's interest on Turkey emerged independently from Churchill's eagerness. The Foreign Secretary was also enthusiastic about allying with Turkey before the outbreak of war over the fear of an Italy-dominated Mediterranean. Normally, the General Headquarters Middle East Forces (GHQ-ME) was assigned with handling the relations with Turkey. However, in September 1941, the War cabinet wrote to GHQ-ME that:

"Turkey occupies such an important position in our foreign policy that relations with that country must be directed from London... If Turkey came the war the position would be radically different."²⁶⁵

This correspondence hints at the uncertainty of the consequences of Turkey's entry into war, still in the September 1941. However, it also proves the importance of Turkey's position and how it concerned the different branches of the government and the military. The Foreign Office, no matter how it was diplomatically effective and specifically tried to bring Turkey into the war, it had very little to say about the British military operations. Considering the fact that Foreign Office has a special interest in Turkey, it is bizarre that Turkey was not represented in the Casablanca conference.²⁶⁶

Moreover, when Churchill proposed to his Deputy and Foreign Secretary that he wished to meet the Turks in January 1943, his proposal was refused by his colleagues for the reason that the time was not ripe. Only after the Prime Minister

²⁶⁴ John Charmley, *Churchill, the end of glory: a political biography* (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1993).

²⁶⁵ Great Britain War cabinet. *Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda, 1940-1943*. (Nendeln: KTO Press, 1976), 576.

²⁶⁶ Delaney "Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy," 4.

explained his train of thoughts openly, and literally begged to see the Turks, he was cleared by his colleagues to initiate the talks with the Turks on the highest level.²⁶⁷ Churchill said how it would do no harm if Turks would have said “No”. He pointed out the capture of Tripoli, increasing Russian victories, and the fact that he would have been speaking on behalf of the two great Allies during his desired envoy to Turkey, as the factors strengthening his hand.²⁶⁸

Even though the British staff unanimously agreed to continue the war in the Mediterranean, rather than to commit to a cross-Channel attack to France in 1943, their proposed methods sometimes differed from of Churchill’s. For instance, Churchill opted for an operation to invade Sardinia; however, his chiefs wanted to land on Sicily claiming that it was going to serve the ultimate goal of knocking Italy out of the war best.²⁶⁹ This was interpreted as a move by Britain to ease the Americans in the upcoming Casablanca Conference. Delaney claims that the reason Brooke went after Sicily instead of Sardinia was partly due to his understanding of American need for decisiveness and his desire to satisfy his ally.²⁷⁰ Moreover, Brooke even felt that the western Mediterranean, where operations against Sicily or Sardinia might be conducted, could be turned over to an American command, while the British took charge in the area extending to the east of the Sicilian narrows.²⁷¹ This was an important consideration on the part of the British showing that they were willing to sacrifice. In order for Britain to be more active in the Eastern Mediterranean, they were ready to yield the command of the Italian invasion to the

²⁶⁷ “Do not, I beg you, lightly dismiss it.” said Churchill to his deputy and Foreign Secretary. Letter from Churchill to Eden, 24 January 1943, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:854.

²⁶⁸ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:854.

²⁶⁹ Delaney, “Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy,” 15.

²⁷⁰ Delaney, “Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy,” 21.

²⁷¹ Jones, *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War*, 37.

Americans. This shows how eastern Mediterranean was crucial for Britain and how they were willing to exploit the *Torch* to the fullest.

4.2 Turning Tables: Stalingrad and the 2nd Battle of El Alamein

In November 1942, it was observed by Britain that Turkey was impressed by the British military strength “for the first time.”²⁷² Nevertheless, Turkey’s loyalty to her neutrality was not shaken. Also, Turks were still claiming that it was in the realm of possibilities that Germany could launch a surprise attack either from Thrace or via an amphibious assault, despite of the fact that Britain was constantly trying to convince Turkey that there was no such a threat under the current circumstances.

After the initial success of Britain, Allies swiftly gained the upper hand in North Africa, and it became apparent that Germany was on her back foot. As soon as Mediterranean was opened to the Allied, shipping in late October of 1942, the prospect of drawing Turkey to the war was adopted by the British Chiefs of Staff. From the American perspective, the euphoria was felt before the decisive victories were won in North Africa or in Russia. Emphasizing the American gains in the Pacific in the summer of 1942, Sherwood says: “Except for the back-and-forth drives in the Libyan Desert and the Russian winter counterattacks, this was the first time that the arrows indicating advances on the daily newspapers' war maps started to point into enemy territory.”²⁷³ Having received the initiative, it was Allies’ time to make the next move.

From December 1942 onwards, Britain clarified three main objectives. First was to knock Italy out of the war, and the second was to bring Turkey into the war. The third objective aimed at preventing the Axis from recuperating, and in this sense,

²⁷² Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 77.

²⁷³ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* Chapter 27: Part IV: 1943-The Second Front Chapter 27: The Casablanca Conference. Epub.

it was an end goal which was aimed to be fulfilled through achieving the aforementioned objectives.²⁷⁴ With the *Torch*, the number of Allied troops significantly increased in the region. Churchill planned to redeploy his units in North Africa in a way to create strong force to support Turkey after the German forces were liquidated.

However, the end of the 2nd Battle of El Alamein did not mean the end of German threat in North Africa nor did the Soviet counter offensive in Stalingrad mean the end of German threat in Russia. The long-lasting Tunis campaign and Mantstein's successful spring 1943 offensives are proof of the previous statement. In North Africa, Wehrmacht could take a defensive position against the British, who has been deeply troubled by the supply problems. Allied decision to fight in the North Africa had some difficulties. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, Churchill's trepidation over idleness of his troops was a determining factor for this choice of strategy. Considering that the US men and material were added up to the commitment in North Africa, one would expect German forces in the region to be erased easily as they were suffering from failed shipment and loss of valuable supply in the desert. However, as the British troops before the US entry to the war experienced the North African terrain and the desert war in general were not admirable military constructions even though they have been romantically subjected as beautiful. Many assumed that the desert had blessed the tanks with plain terrain for free movement and maneuver with the absence of urban areas as well as sparing the troops and the commanders from the nuisance of the civil folk and the behind-the-line resistance movements. These assumptions were not correct as military historian Robert Citino states the desert "...was a pain, for the most part, and fighting

²⁷⁴ Delaney, "Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy," 14.

in it was a nightmare for both sides. Far from allowing tank fleets to roam free, the desert chained them inexorably to their supply lines...’’²⁷⁵ The limitations of supplies and the frequency of mechanical malfunctions, caused armies to be more immobile which eventually entailed the warfare in the desert a static one, and it relied more on the fixed defenses compared other theatres of war. Therefore, Germany, despite taking a huge loss, continued to constitute a threat against strong Britain.

Furthermore, the Vichy remnants in Tunisia rejected the Darlan’s ceasefire and sided with the Germans.²⁷⁶ This resulted with a stalemate at the end of December 1942 and delayed any prospective deployment of the soldiers in that theatre to support Turkey which was initially hoped to take place in mid-1943. Churchill believed that Turkey needed to be provided with “a ceaseless flow of weapons and equipment” since November 1942. Under these circumstances, it was not possible for Britain to send material to Turkey.²⁷⁷

Under these circumstances, no matter how Turkey seemed to lean towards being an active belligerent, the British officials were aware that Turkey would not enter the war before they were convinced that it was safe for them to do so. Brooke was aware of this yet still he was ready to gamble to gain the Turkey’s belligerency which he considered as the “great prize.”²⁷⁸ Denniston, noting Turkey’s incremental importance with the newly gained Allied momentum, said: Turkey had been temporarily sidelined by a spasm of massive indecision by all the belligerents, but the Foreign Office continued to play what was left of the Turkey hand.²⁷⁹

Highlighting the Foreign Office’s effort, Churchill said in January 1943: “To bring

²⁷⁵ Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 116.

²⁷⁶ Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 80.

²⁷⁷ Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 79.

²⁷⁸ Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 82

²⁷⁹ Robin Denniston, *Churchill’s Diplomatic Eavesdropping And Secret Signals Intelligence As An Instrument Of British Foreign Policy, 1941-1944: The Case Of Turkey*, 126.

Turkey into the war on our side had for many months been our aim. It now acquired new hope and urgency.’²⁸⁰

4.2.1 Adana Conference

The Casablanca Conference was a decisive moment for the Allied strategy in terms of defining the direction of the joint war effort after North Africa was cleared off. It was agreed to continue the war in the Mediterranean theatre by invading Italy. Allies believed that it was essential to knock Italy out of the war in order to defeat Germany. Such a move was thought to force Germans to deploy a lot of their troops, which normally would have helped to guard the Atlantic shores of the Reich on their southern border. This prediction was correct. However, the decision to continue fighting in the Mediterranean, again, meant another postponement of the cross-Channel operation which would further foster the American disturbance. The US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral King General Marshall had already been seriously considering Pacific first strategy when it started to seem as the cross-Channel operation was going to be postponed for the sake of operations in the Mediterranean. Thereafter in they openly requested the allocation of 30% of the Allied resources to the Far Eastern theatres which was considered as an “all-out war against Japan” by Alan Brooke.²⁸¹ Ergo, in order to justify the Italian campaign, the Prime Minister also hinted at the possibility of helping out the Americans in Pacific with the British squadron of battleships and aircraft-carriers which would have been relieved from the duty of checking Italian fleet in the Mediterranean.

Consequently, the final decision of the conference can be considered as another victory for Britain for she managed to convince her reluctant ally. Delaney

²⁸⁰ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 4:848.

²⁸¹ Delaney, “Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy,” 16.

explains British victory in the Allied planning by mentioning the fact that Britain was still the dominant power in the Anglo-American alliance. In January 1943, Britain had more troops and resources on the field and in action against Germany. These facts, according to Delaney, were preventing the US from exerting its influence as the senior partner.²⁸² However, the agreement on the “unconditional surrender” disturbed Churchill who considered this simply as *fait accompli*, but he played along for the sake of the Allied unity. The decision for unconditional surrender also disturbed Turkey who was very much concerned with the Soviet dominated Europe after Germany was torn apart.²⁸³

After it had become apparent that Britain could not provide Turkey with the necessary material due to the ongoing stalemate in North Africa, Churchill started to seek other ways to bring Turkey to the war while revising his Turkish policy with the new decisions and realities of Casablanca. The Prime Minister displayed courage and enthusiasm in his attempt to meet İnönü in Turkey. Prior to his decision to go to Turkey, Churchill was informed by Ambassador Hugessen about Turkey’s changing attitude towards entering the war. According to the Ambassador, Turkey was showing signs of moving away from strict neutrality over the demonstrated British power displayed in North Africa. Considering the Middle East had been secured a year earlier and a pro-Axis revolt was not a prospect anymore, Turkey would consider joining the war if Germany was to withdraw from Balkans. For sure, Turkey was still in need of armaments, which was expected to be delivered by Britain. Hugessen’s over-optimistic assessment of Turkey’s position encouraged Churchill to take action. Robin Denniston, on the other hand, acknowledges the fact that

²⁸² Delaney, “Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy,” 18.

²⁸³ Edward Weisband, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı’nda İnönü’nün Dış Politikası*, trans.M. Ali. Kayabal. (İstanbul : Yeni Gün Haber Ajansı Basın ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2000), Epub.

Churchill had been aware of the significance of Turkey's strategic partnership even before he dug deep into the ciphered telegrams. However, Denniston also claims that Prime Minister's ability of engaging bilateral talks with the Turks, while knowing what to say and what to avoid, were made possible through Churchill's use of those telegrams. The author goes even further and says that the Adana conference would have not taken place if Churchill had not been constantly reading those.²⁸⁴

The Prime Minister's ultimate aim was to bring Turkey into the war. However, he did not feel the urgency to achieve the Turkish belligerency in the matter of weeks. He adjusted his aims according to the changing realities of the war. The aforementioned stalemate and the subsequent failed deliveries to Turkey were some of the factors that affected Churchill's expectations. The other factor I believe was about the war experience. From 1939 to 1943, Churchill experienced the modern warfare and what really took to defeat the Germans. Knowing the fact that Turkey was far from being modernized and battle-ready, he was not rushing for the Turkish belligerency. Despite the stalemate was continuing in Africa, Britain successfully prevented the Axis from dominating the North Africa and denying Britain from the region. Tamkin therefore claims that Churchill went to Turkey first and foremost to convince them that the tides were indeed turning. The Prime Minister believed that the Turks should be notified firsthand about the general change in the war and his voyage represented the official change in the British position from desiring a neutral Turkey to seeking an active belligerent.

Churchill pointed out three main reasons to explain his desire to prepare Turkey for war. He first said that the Germans were rapidly arming the Bulgarians, therefore, it was essential for Turkey to do the same. Secondly, according to

²⁸⁴ Denniston, *Churchill's Secret War*, 116.

Churchill, internal disorder and an overall anarchy were imminent in Balkans, thus the Turks should be ready to intervene if such opportunity presented itself. Lastly, the Prime Minister explained the possibility of a German attack on Turkey caused by German defeat in Africa. Churchill and İnönü agreed that the time was not ripe for Turkey to enter the war. Churchill was afraid of antagonizing Germany too much while she was still capable of unleashing upon Turkey, whilst İnönü was concerned with needing Soviet assistance against Germany, which would most likely turn into a Soviet occupation. Still, Churchill believed that Turkey would enter into war in 1943.²⁸⁵

Churchill believed that Turkey had always measured herself against Italy in the Mediterranean. Therefore, when Axis surrendered in Tunisia, Churchill expected Turkey to enter the war since no major factor was left to deter them. Stemming from a strong belief in this idea, Churchill thought that knocking out Italy first would not only deprive Germany of her strongest ally but would eventually force her to surrender. The Prime Minister recalls the example of Bulgaria in the Great War and how the bailing out of a small country culminated in with the defeat of a strong Germany which could no longer deal with a war on two fronts. If Bulgaria had stayed, according to Churchill, Germany could hold the line on the Meuse or Rhine. He also reminded us that the bulk of the Axis occupation of Balkans was administered by Italian troops and their absence would be crucial for the nationalist uprisings in the region. Mainly for this reason, and also for the removal of the biggest factor deterring Turkey from committing herself to war, Churchill labeled Italy as the great prize. Furthermore, according to Eden, Britain did not even have to send troops to the Balkans. The Foreign Secretary believed that they would receive a favorable

²⁸⁵ Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si* , 1:270.

reaction from Turks as soon as they started to constitute a threat to the Balkans.²⁸⁶

Some of these factors would seem to suggest that Churchill and Eden contemplated Turkey's entry to the war once the Italians surrendered, which happened on 3 September 1943. Of course, this did not happen until February 1945.

He was right as it was mentioned that Italy was Turkey's "enemy number one" in 1930s and it was certainly so during most of the 1920s and 1910s. However, Turkey's concerns were soaring beyond the possibility of Italy's retaliation. Germany's destructive power, displayed especially during the Blitz, was frightening enough for Turks, whose air force was not nearly as strong as the RAF, and the buildings of the cities were made of wood on contrary to the British urban districts. Turkey's apprehension over German air power became even more evident when the Dodecanese were occupied by Germany after Italy's surrender. Turkey did not build any airfields opposite the Rhodes, although the Germans had an estimated number of 200 bombers and fighters ready to operate from four air bases, in addition to 7000 troops stationed on the island. Turkey illustrated a rather cautious approach to German power growing under her nose even in September 1943, when the Axis power capabilities were rapidly fading away.²⁸⁷ Although Germany's power was fading away, she was still capable of conducting successful operations and winning important victories. Mantstein's successful spring 1943 offensives, including the Battle of Kharkov can be given as an example to illustrate this point.²⁸⁸

British aims in Adana can be broadly explained by understanding what Britain was ready to offer to Turks in return for their alliance, and the other

²⁸⁶ Letter from Churchill to War cabinet, 18 January 1943, Churchill, *History of the Second World War*, 4: 826.

²⁸⁷ Gary Leiser, "The Turkish air force, 1939–45: the rise of a minor power Turkey's Air Force," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26, no. 3, (1990), 390–91.

²⁸⁸ Citino. *The Wehrmacht Retreats*, 41.

menacing factors which were hoped to deter Turkey from maintaining her abstaining policy. In this case, the offer included the modern warfare equipment, which the Turks were in desperate need of, considering the unguarded air space of İstanbul and Ankara. The deterrent effect, on the other hand, was expected to be delivered through drawing attention to the future condition of the Eastern front. The possibility of being left alone with a strong victorious Soviet bloc without the companionship of either Britain or the US was not a pleasant post war scenario for the Turks.

Churchill, in his speech in the House of Commons after Adana, said:

“Whereas a little while ago it looked to superficial observers as if Turkey might be isolated by a German advance through the Caucasus on one side and by a German-Italian attack on Egypt on the other, a transformation has occurred. Turkey now finds on each side of her victorious Powers who are her friends. It will be interesting to see how the story unfolds chapter by chapter, and it would be very foolish to try to skip on too fast.”²⁸⁹

4.2.2 Dodecanese Campaign

After the fall of Italy, the situation of Dodecanese acquired urgency. Even though Churchill considered leaving the island to Turkey in return for the aforementioned British logistical support, this option was ruled out in Casablanca. The Allies were not comfortable with the idea of leaving the islands to Turkey, which was then a neutral country, instead of yielding them to an ally who has suffered and has been fighting the war on Britain’s side; Greece.²⁹⁰ However, the British staff agreed that it was the most plausible ensuing action for Britain. Britain tried to persuade the Americans but they failed to include American participation in

²⁸⁹ February 11, 1943 the war situation Churchill Speech in House of Commons.

²⁹⁰ *FRUS*, 1940-1949, Volume II, *The Conferences at Washington, 1941–1942, and Casablanca*, 1943, 25.

such operation. It was going to be a purely British enterprise and the Dodecanese campaign was codenamed as Operation Accolade.²⁹¹

British aim of forcing Turkey to enter the war cannot be perceived independent from the British desire of including Mediterranean in their sphere of influence. In this sense, the Dodecanese Campaign, which was referred to as the Island Prizes of Churchill, illustrated how the endless British effort of diverting Allied war effort to Mediterranean in fact caused a sort of vicious circle. No matter how Britain has been consistent in terms of allying with Turkey after 1942, Royal Navy initiated the Aegean operations for the purpose of seizing the Island Prizes regardless of Turkey's support. On November 10, roughly two months after the Aegean operation started, the War cabinet telegraphed the Joint Staff Mission in Washington stating that Turkey was considering entering the war before the end of the year. Britain explained to the Joint Staff that they intended to ask Turkey to join the invasion by capturing the islands and if the answer would be no, then, they would starve out the islands by blockade, and would take the control of them on their own leisure.²⁹² In this telegram, it is clear that Turkey's involvement in the operation was not a sine qua non. Apart from the British strategy in Mediterranean, the control of the Aegean was still indispensable for Britain to fulfill her promises to Turkey. Britain had laid out her plans to Turkey in April 1943 and explained the planned deliveries of armament to Turkey, which mostly consisted of fighter squadrons, anti-air and anti-tank weaponry. In order for these armaments to be delivered, Britain shall freely use the port of İzmir for the shipping, which was impossible to be utilized due to the Axis presence. This logistical issue was another factor cementing the vicious circle. Later, more dramatically, it was shown in the telegram from the

²⁹¹ Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, 1: 287.

²⁹² Denniston. *Churchill's Secret War*, 117.

Foreign Office to Hugessen that Britain's primary objective in initiating Aegean operations was indeed for securing Turkey's entrance.²⁹³

Britain's policy of being active in Mediterranean and allying with Turkey were consistent; yet Britain has sought to achieve one of these self-entrusted tasks without completing the other. Turkey's contribution in terms of allowing RAF to use their air bases, which were constructed by Britain alongside the dockyards to supply the Royal Navy, were crucially important for the British who faced a surprisingly solid defense by both Italians and Germans. In fact, the Foreign Office concluded before the operations that complete air superiority must be reached in the region through keeping Luftwaffe busy. This aim was going to be fulfilled either by using Turkey's airfields or by keeping German planes busy elsewhere, otherwise this operation would not be feasible.

This situation urged Britain to be more willing for the Turkey's alliance. Churchill's desire for Turkish belligerency could then be said to spread to other high ranked officers with some exceptions; the Commander in Chief of the British Mediterranean fleet Andrew Cunningham, for instance, believed that Turkey's participation by itself would not solve Britain's problems since the reach of Turkey's air bases were not covering the necessary distance that would enable RAF to support the operations being conducted on the Aegean islands. Considering the Turks did not build air bases on the Aegean basin, with the fear of German retaliation, Admiral Cunningham was not wrong in his assessment and it turned out, for the same reason, that Germans could hold the leverage in the Aegean thanks to their dreaded air force. Furthermore, the promised American aid was overshadowing any prospective advantage that Turkey could provide Britain.

²⁹³ Denniston. *Churchill's Secret War*, 133.

Alan Brooke had major concerns. He believed that Churchill's ambition for the island prizes turned the Prime Minister blind. According to Brooke, the operation was not feasible without the US naval assistance and he believed that overcommitting to *Accolade* would peril the decisive success in Italy which would upset the Americans.²⁹⁴

The importance of the Turkey's prospective contribution was further realized when Britain was denied of the material assistance from the US. After Britain failed to make progress in the Aegean, they found themselves in yet another vicious circle. They were in need of bringing Turkey into war in order to break through Axis resistance on the islands. However, bringing Turkey to the war was not probable without a decisive British success. This dilemma was explained by the Foreign Office as: "... we have no chance whatsoever of getting anything serious from the Turks until we have the Dodecanese... in fact we missed the bus when we allowed 30.000 Italians on Rhodes to capitulate to 7.000 Germans."²⁹⁵²⁹⁶

Britain's failure of achieving success in the Aegean struck a huge blow at the big prize: Turkey. It showed Turks that a weak and doomed to fail Germany could still win victories against allies in the Aegean, despite a lack of naval superiority. Germany could take Cos and Leros from Britain via successful amphibious and airborne attacks, respectively in two and five days. This incident proved German military capabilities to be still effective and deterred Turkey to a great extent. The fact that Germany relied on her air force while defeating Britain has sent a vital message to Turkey. Despite losing the initiative and getting weaker each day, German air wings in the Aegean region were active, and the Royal Air Force was not

²⁹⁴ Bryant, *Triumph in the West*, 47.

²⁹⁵ Jeffrey Holland. *The Aegean Mission*. (New York : Greenwood Press, 1988), 25.

²⁹⁶ Denniston. *Churchill's Secret War*, 120.

a match for them. This situation certainly did not help Britain in the process of making Turkey ignore the possibility of a German retaliation. Luftwaffe's might in the air seemed unshaken and it made Turkey's main excuse to be seen credible. Proving this point Lord Ismay accounted that: "... recent events in the Aegean had evidently done nothing to erase their [Turkish] fears of the German power to take the reprisals or increase their confidence in our ability to protect them."²⁹⁷ If the Turkish belligerency was the lock that Britain wanted to unlock, the Aegean operations were the key, and Britain broke the key.

The US had not been pressuring Turkey to join the war and especially after the Dodecanese Campaign, some of the US officials considered that *Accolade* was the last chance offered to Turkey to join the war, and they refused it.²⁹⁸ After the First Cairo conference, President Roosevelt disapprovingly revealed to his son that Turkey wanted a land-lease, instead of being actively involved in the war, by using the materials to maintain her superiority in Eastern Mediterranean after the war was over.²⁹⁹

4.2.3 Second Cairo Conference

The Dodecanese Campaign was a costly attempt for Britain, and indeed, it significantly harmed the Anglo-Turkish relations. However, Turkey still sent supplies with small boats to the British troops trapped on the islands. Turkey carried a total 3.500 tons of food supplies to the British troops, and at the end of the campaign, the remnants of the British troops in Samos Island took refuge in

²⁹⁷ Hastings Lionel Ismay, *The memoirs of General Lord Ismay*, (London : Heinemann, 1960), 331.

²⁹⁸ Roosevelt later instructed his staff in January 1944 to only state the official American policy which was to welcome Turkey into the war. Edward Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1943-1945 Small State Diplomacy And Great Power Politics* (Baskerville: Princeton University Press, 1973) , 222.

²⁹⁹ Elliot Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, (New York: Dual Sloan and Pearce, 1946), 148-49.

Turkey.³⁰⁰ These little acts helped ease the turbulence in Anglo-Turkish relations. Turkish Foreign Minister Menemencioğlu and his British counterpart Eden met in the First Cairo meeting in November 1943 before the Dodecanese campaign had been officially ended. The overall tone of the meeting was unfriendly, compared to the good chemistry between Churchill and İnönü in Adana. Nevertheless, it was agreed that Britain would continue to supply Turkey to prepare her for the war. More importantly, on Eden's request, Menemencioğlu got permission from his party group after the meeting and this signified an official change in Turkey's neutrality policy.³⁰¹

İnönü boarded Roosevelt's plane flying to Cairo with that permission in his pocket. He was pressured by Churchill and Roosevelt and was said that Turkey would have lost the chance to be present among the members of the United Nations if she was not going to enter the war. Churchill also reminded the Turkish president that the Soviet Union was getting too powerful and Turkey, if she was going to be alone in her region, would be vulnerable to threats coming from her north-eastern neighbor. İnönü, as a response, reminded the Anglo-Saxons of Turkey's loyalty to her British allies even when Germany reached the El Alamein.³⁰² Having made his reminder, İnönü explained that Turkey could enter the war if the necessary material and aid were sent to her. Therefore, it was agreed to send all the necessary material to Turkey in a short period of time, in six weeks.³⁰³

İnönü insisted that Turkey should be treated as an equal ally. The Turkish President did not want his troops to participate in the operations which he had not taken part in their planning. However, this constituted a problem because Britain

³⁰⁰ Denniston. *Churchill's Secret War*, 183.

³⁰¹ Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, 1: 295.

³⁰² *FRUS*, 1940-1949, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, 695.

³⁰³ *FRUS*, 1940-1949, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, 698.

could not disclose all their plans and intentions about Balkans to Turks fearing to antagonize the Soviets. Because, Britain's plans for Balkan front were made in order to prevent Soviet influence from that region.³⁰⁴ When Churchill brought the idea of using the air bases in Turkey to attack German occupied south-east Europe without using a considerable amount of Turkey's troops, İnönü again objected because according to him, this was a violation of Turkey's position as an equal ally. İnönü's firm attitude and reluctance pushed Churchill to switch his strategy. The Prime Minister then gave Turkey a deadline to accept the offered aircraft and armament. According to Churchill's plan, Turkey was going to be supplied until February 15, and after this date, Turkey will be asked to allow British air fleet to land on her soil. If Turkey responded negatively, then everything would change, he said. Churchill believed that bullying his way to achieve Turkey's entry would work out well. Even though İnönü did not show any sign of irritation to Churchill, İnönü, through his political staff, rigorously criticized Churchill's tactics.³⁰⁵ After the meeting, Menemencioğlu declared that Turkey would not hesitate to reject Britain's offer, despite its consequences.³⁰⁶

4.3 Churchill's last ditch effort to actualize the Balkan front

After his attempt failed with Turkey's negative response, Churchill was searching to find other ways to continue fighting in the Mediterranean region. Without Turkey's participation, it was not feasible to open the Balkan front from Thrace. Therefore, Churchill, by opening a new front in Yugoslavia, aimed at putting his troops to use, increasing Britain's war participation, and preventing the Soviet Union from establishing its control over the region.

³⁰⁴ Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, 1:295.

³⁰⁵ He kissed Churchill on the cheek before boarding the plane. Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, 1: 311.

³⁰⁶ Tekeli and İlkin, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*, 1: 311.

However, the US was reluctant to embark on such an adventure. The idea was that having played the game according to Britain was already causing disturbance among military staff. The difficulties of an operation in the Mediterranean were also mentioned by General Eisenhower. Americans were afraid of new liabilities, mostly concerning the new supply lines which would disrupt the existing order.³⁰⁷ Churchill was now trying to win the Americans. He advocated that a new front in the Balkans either in or via the Adriatic thrust would shorten the war. It can be claimed that the Prime Minister's efforts were falling on deaf ears since Marshall did not even know where Ljubljana was located at.³⁰⁸ Apprehensions regarding the Soviet control of the parts of Europe were other soft spots used by Churchill to persuade Americans. "Stalin is an unnatural man" said Churchill "There will be grave troubles."³⁰⁹ It was made explicitly clear that the British did not want the Soviets in Balkans; Churchill wanted to get there first. However, Roosevelt did not think that Russians desired to take Balkan states.³¹⁰

During the First Cairo Conference, despite Marshall and Admiral Leahy advised against it, Roosevelt opened up the possibility of sending a large army to the Balkans.³¹¹ Churchill immediately capitalized on this and adopted that idea. Even in his own book, while mentioning the Adriatic thrust, he frequently used phrases such as "in accordance with the President's idea".³¹² Nadeau brilliantly sums up this situation by stating: "Adroitly, Churchill had made Roosevelt the author of a Balkan invasion plan, thus hoping to spike up U.S. or Soviet suspicions of British imperialist

³⁰⁷ McNeill, *America, Britain, & Russia*, 701.

³⁰⁸ Remi Nadeau, *Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt divide Europe*, (New York : Praeger, 1990), 82.

³⁰⁹ Nadeau, *Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt*, 76.

³¹⁰ *FRUS*, 1940-1949, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, 499.

³¹¹ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 780.

³¹² Letter from Churchill to Eden, 20 October 1943, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 5:353.

strategy in the Mediterranean.”³¹³ Churchill also mooted the available forces that were ready to action. He complained that they were staying idle “rather than fighting the enemy with the greatest vigor alongside its American allies.”³¹⁴

Churchill said that the United Nations were out there, producing the combined Axis industry. This was one of the reasons why Churchill was so enthusiastic about putting his idle troops to use. Also from his own words: “...the strength of one of our divisions was almost double that of a German division which little more than a glorified brigade group was. With such forces in our hands it would be bad indeed if nothing happened between August or September and the following May (1944).”³¹⁵

Churchill’s insistence on Mediterranean was too strong that both Soviets and Americans showed their disturbances. Stalin asked Churchill directly if he really believed in a cross-Channel operation, whereas Henry Stimson accused Churchill of wanting to kill the cross-Channel operation in order to carry out the Mediterranean campaign.³¹⁶ “Pulling the Americans into the Mediterranean was more than a means to Mr. Churchill; it was an end in itself.” states Higgins, in order to explain how much Britain really wanted to operate in the Mediterranean.³¹⁷ He was not proven fully wrong considering Churchill was still strategizing about gateways to Europe through Norway and Turkey in February 1944. However, this time he was stating that these options may need to be realized in case Overlord failed. For him, the Allies had done a great blunder for not embarking upon a possible Balkan front, eventually allowing Germans to transfer troops to West making a crucial difference on the

³¹³ Nadeau, *Divide Europe*, 79.

³¹⁴ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 5:450.

³¹⁵ Winston. *The Second World War*, 4:1000.

³¹⁶ *FRUS*, 1940-1949, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, 551.

³¹⁷ Higgins, *Second Front*, 78.

balance of power. Therefore, if Overlord would have failed, it would have been because of the lack of foresight.³¹⁸

Apart from stating his discomfort to his allies regarding the Mediterranean campaign, Churchill had a remarkable amount of correspondence with his War cabinet and generals concerning the same issue. In fact, the bulk of his correspondences in his *Closing the Ring* is about Churchill's irritation towards the neglected Mediterranean and the idle soldiers waiting to participate in active combat. Therefore, he explains to the readers of these telegrams by again underscoring that the sole aim was to shorten the war by aiding Soviets and the Cross-Channel operation.³¹⁹



³¹⁸ *In the event of "Overlord" not being successful or Hitler accumulating forces there quite beyond our power to tackle, it would perhaps be necessary to adopt the flanking movements both in Norway and from Turkey and the Aegean in the winter of 1944-45.* Letter from Churchill to Eden, 19 December 1944, Churchill, *The Second World War*, 5:846.

³¹⁹ Churchill, *The Second World War*, 5:254.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Britain's Mediterranean policy has been the determining factor in the Allied quest for the Turkey's belligerency. Britain's attitude towards Turkey's entry into the war was influenced by the major turns of events in the Mediterranean region. Italian aggression, the fall of France, and the 2nd Battle of El Alamein were major factors influencing the probable effects of the Turkey's entry. However after Operation Husky, Britain's insistence on Turkish belligerency started to stand out as a part of Britain's post-war imperialistic aims, for the benefit of opening a Balkan front would not massively impact the general course of the war. Germany was weak in strength and in industrial capacity, she lost her strongest ally Italy, Japan was on the back foot in the Pacific, and Germany was surrounded by major powers in all fronts. Under these circumstances, the US, which had been opting for a decisive cross-Channel operation since 1942, started to show its reluctance towards supporting further operations in the Mediterranean. This all became evident when Marshall did not despatch the promised naval flotilla to the Aegean to support Operation Accolade which was a British enterprise. After the failed British attempt in the Aegean, Churchill's hopes of bringing Turkey into the war took a blow but the Prime Minister did not give up trying. Finally at the Second Cairo Conference Churchill tried to bully Turkey into entering into the war. Although Roosevelt was present at the meeting and he seemed to agree with Churchill, he was only paying lip service. Having failed to produce an effect, Churchill's method of bullying only backfired

and it killed the hopes for Turkey's belligerency on Britain's terms along with a Balkan front which had been planned to be opened in Bulgaria.

Afterwards, Churchill's desperately tried persuade his allies into opening a Balkan front through Yugoslavia; however, he failed to appeal to the combined interests of the US and the Soviet Union. Therefore his plans for including Mediterranean into the British sphere of influence in the post-war period failed.

Turkey's condition before the war necessitated her to undertake series of diplomatic attempts to consolidate regional collective defense pacts in the Balkans. Mussolini's open antagonism in the Mediterranean was the key factor in Turkey's pre-war considerations. In this sense Britain's short lived appeasement policy towards Italy prevented the Anglo-Turkish alliance from being formed earlier. After Britain's appeasement policy was terminated and the war started, Italy remained as the determining factor in Turkey's calculations. Having abandoned irredentist claims with the founding of the new republic, Turkey did not see any significant gains from a full belligerency. On top of it, Turkey's weak air force and her major cities within the striking range of the Luftwaffe further cemented Turkey's loyalty to her neutrality. This situation indicated two major criteria for Britain to achieve Turkish belligerency. In order to materialize this aim, Britain first had to carry out the material deliveries consisting of fighter planes and modern anti air weaponry while constructing new air fields on Turkish soil. Secondly, Britain had to demonstrate her force in the Eastern Mediterranean to convince Turkey and neutralize the Axis elements in the region which would deter Turkey from joining the war on the side of the Allies. While the demands of total war prevented Britain from sending the material deliveries to Turkey, the failure of the Operation Accolade kept the German

threat alive for Turkey. This was a major setback in Churchill's quest to win Turkey's participation in the war.

The British desires in the Mediterranean predate the WWII. From the opening of the Suez Canal the importance of the sea has greatly increased especially when the British Far Eastern colonies are considered. The Far Eastern part of the Empire will carry its significance during the WWII. As it was mentioned, after the fall of France Britain's sole hope for survival depended on her connection with her colonies. Therefore Britain's Mediterranean strategy between the summer 1940 and December 1942 was mainly driven by a survival instinct.

After the American involvement Britain realized that she was going to lose her weight in the decision making concerning the Allied strategic planning. With its massive production capability the US was dwarfing Britain. Nevertheless, Britain had greater number of soldiers who has been fighting against the Axis, and the US couldn't level up the war participation until 1943. This situation allowed Britain to impact on major decisions defining the next moves of the Allied war effort. However, there was a great difference between the Anglo-Saxon allies in terms of perception. While Britain wanted to slowly suffocate Germany by surrounding Europe, the US opted for a decisive assault at the heart of the enemy. The difference in the perception also affected Turkey's situation in the war. The Americans sounded their concerns on the possibility of Turkey's belligerency several times. The US generals believed Turkey's involvement would only burn out valuable Allied supply and resources which were needed elsewhere (*Round-up*) and it wouldn't contribute to a remarkable change in the general course of war.

In order to highlight both Britain's Mediterranean desires predating WWII and the different perception of the Anglo-American alliance my thesis firstly brought out more general and structural factors which influenced Britain's choice of grand strategy. By briefly mentioning the nations' experience of the Great War in order to show how the grand strategies and the perceptions of the nations were started to shape before the WWII broke out.

The British strategy to win the Turkish participation needs to be analyzed through Britain's bureaucratic framework. Churchill was the Prime Minister and he had assumed the office of Minister of Defence. Although he seemed the sole decision maker, his war cabinet had influential voices and his military staff often had disagreements with him. The Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden could be given as an example to the former as he argued against Turkey's entry at the late stages of the war. The Commander in Chief of the Imperial General Staff and later the Field Marshal Alan Brooke is a good example for the later since he fiercely argued against the Aegean operations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A.Primary Sources

Archival Sources and Published Documents

Foreign Relations of the United States

1940-1949, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943.

1940-1949, Volume II, The Conferences at Washington, 1941–1942, and Casablanca, 1943.

Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Office of the Historian Bureau of Public Affairs, 2018.

Great Britain War cabinet. *Principal War Telegrams and Memoranda, 1940-1943*. Nendeln: KTO Press, 1976.

Konyar, Levent. *S.S.C.B. Dış İşleri Bakanlığı: Stalin, Roosevelt ve Churchill'in gizli yazışmaları'nda Türkiye (1941-1944) ve ikinci Dünya Savaşı öncesi Sovyet barış çabaları ve Türkiye, 1938-1939*. İstanbul: Havass, 1981.

Soysal, İsmail. *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları*. Vol. 1, 1920-1945. Türk Tarih Kurumu Basım Evi: Ankara, 1983.

Stark, Harold R.. Stark to Knox- CSO to SN. 12, 1940 “Memorandum for the Secretary.” Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington. OP-12-CTB.

Memoirs and Personal Papers

Churchill, Winston. *The Second World War*. Vol. 1, *The Gathering Storm*. New York: Rosetta Books LLC, 20020.

Churchill, Winston. *The Second World War*. Vol. 2, *Their Finest Hour*. New York: Rosetta Books LLC, 20020.

Churchill, Winston. *The Second World War*. Vol. 3, *The Grand Alliance*. New York: Rosetta Books LLC, 20020.

Churchill, Winston. *The Second World War*. Vol. 4, *The Hinge of Fate*. New York: Rosetta Books LLC, 20020.

Churchill, Winston. *The Second World War*. Vol. 5, *The Closing the Ring*. New York: Rosetta Books LLC, 20020.

Churchill, Winston. *The Churchill War Papers: at the Admiralty*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1993.

Eisenhower, Dwight D.. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*. Vol. 3, *The War Years*. Baltimore; Johns Hopkins Press, 2001.

Eden, Anthony. *The Eden memoirs: the reckoning*. London: Cassell, 1965.

Ismay, Hastings Lionel. *The memoirs of General Lord Ismay*. London: Heinemann, 1960.

Karabekir, Kazım. *Ankara'da Savaş Rüzgarları*. İstanbul: Emre, 2000.

Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*. London,: J. Murray, 1949.

Roosevelt, Elliot. *As He Saw It*. New York: Dual Sloan and Pearce, 1946.

Sherwood, Robert E.. *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An intimate History*. New York: Harper & Brothers. Epub.

Newspaper Articles

“U.S. Trade Picture is Redrawn by War,” *New York Times*, Oct. 20. 1940.

Çakırhan, Nail V.. *Tan gazetesi yazıları/1942: Harbin eşiğindeki Türkiye*. İstanbul : TÜSTAV, 2003.

B. Secondary Sources

Atabey, Figen. *1939 Türk-İngiliz Fransız İttifakı*, İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2016.

Ataöv, Türkkaya. *Turkish Foreign Policy*, Ankara: Ankara Üniv., 1965.

Barlas, Dilek. “Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Opportunities and Limits for Middle-power Activism in the 1930s” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 no. 3, (2005), 441-464. doi: 10.1177/0022009405054565.

Bryant, Arthur. *Triumph in the West 1943-1946*. Suffolk: Richard Clay and Company, 1960.

Buchanan, Andrew. *American Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean during World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Charmley, John. *Churchill, the end of glory: a political biography*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1993.

Citino, Robert M.. *Death of Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007.

Clayton, Anthony. *The British Empire as a Superpower*, London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1986.

Delaney, Douglas E. "Churchill and the Mediterranean strategy: December 1941 to January 1943," *Defence Studies*, 2 no: 3, (2002), doi: 10.1080/14702430208405038

Deniz, Muzaffer. "Afyon-Antalya Railway Project in Official Documents (1924-1942)", *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3, no. 4, (2011): 24-32.

Denniston, Robin. "Churchill's Diplomatic Eavesdropping And Secret Signals Intelligence As An Instrument Of British Foreign Policy, 1941-1944: The Case Of Turkey," PhD diss. Department of History University College London.

Denniston, Robin. *Churchill's Secret War*, Stroud, Glos: Sutton Publishing, 1997.

Deringil, Selim. *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War: an active neutrality*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Deutscher, Isaac. *Stalin a Political Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Doenecke, Justus Drew. *From Isolation to War: 1931-1941*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1968.

Faulkner, Marcus. *The Great War at Sea: A Naval Atlas 1914-1919*. Barnsley: Sea Publishing, 2015.

Feiss, Herbert. *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*. Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1957.

Fox, Annette. *The power of small states: diplomacy in World War II*, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.: University of Chicago Press, 1959.

Fromkin, David. *Peace to end All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989.

Garrett, Thomas A., and David C. Wheelock. "Why Did Income Growth Vary across States during the Great Depression?" *The Journal of Economic History* 66, no. 2 (2006): 456-66.

Güçlü, Yücel. *The Question of The Sanjak Of Alexandretta*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001.

Guillebaud, C. W.. "Hitler's New Economic Order for Europe," *The Economic Journal*, 50, no. 200, (1940), 459, doi: 10.2307/2226204.

Halpern, Paul G. "The Anglo-French-Italian Naval Convention of 1915." *The Historical Journal* 13, no. 1 (1970): 106-29.

Halpern, Paul. *A Naval History of World War I*. Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1994.

Hammond, Richard. "An Enduring Influence on Imperial Defence and Grand Strategy: British perceptions of the Italian Navy, 1935–1943," *The International History Review*, 5 no. 4, (2017), doi: 10.1080/01402398208437133.

Harrison, Gordon A. *United States Army in World War II: The European Theatre of Operations: Cross-Channel Attack*. Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D.C., 1993.

Higgins, Trumbull. *Winston Churchill and the Second Front*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Hinsley, F. H., and Richard Langhorne, *Diplomacy and Intelligence during the Second World War: Essays in Honour of F.H. Hinsley*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Hinsley, Francis H.. *British Intelligence in the Second World War Its Influence on Strategy and Operations*. Vol. 1, London: Government Bookshops, 1979.

Holland, Jeffrey. *The Aegean Mission*. New York : Greenwood Press, 1988.

Holwitt, I. Joel. "*Execute Against Japan*": *The U.S. Decision to Conduct Unrestricted Submarine Warfare*. Texas A&M University Press College Station 2008.

Van Hooft, Paul. *Grand Strategy*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Hough, Richard, *The Great War at Sea: 1914-1918*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

İşçi, Onur. *Turkey and the Soviet Union: Diplomacy, Discord and International Relations*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2020.

Jones, Matthew. *Britain, the United States and the Mediterranean War, 1942-44*. London: Macmillan Press, 1996.

Keith Jeffery, "The Eastern Arc of Empire: A Strategic View 1850–1950," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 5 no. 4 (1982), 531-545, doi: 10.1080/01402398208437133.

Kennedy, Paul M. "The Relevance of the Prewar British and American Maritime Strategies to the First World War and its Aftermath, 1898-1920" in *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power Britain and America in the Twentieth Century*, ed. John B. Hattendorf and Robert S. Jordan, 165-189. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Kirk, Tim. "Nazi plans for a new European order and European responses" in *A New Nationalist Europe Under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945*, ed. Johannes Dafinger, Dieter Pohl, New York: Rutledge, 2019.

Koll, Johannes. "From Greater German Reich to Greater Germanic Reich: Arthur Seyss-Inquart and the racial reshaping of Europe" in *A New Nationalist Europe Under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945*, ed. Johannes Dafinger, Dieter Pohl, New York: Rutledge, 2019.

Langer, William L.. *The undeclared war, 1940-1941*, New York: Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Harper, 1953.

Leiser, Gary. "The Turkish Air Force, 1939-45: The Rise of a Minor Power." *Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 3 (1990): 383-95.

Matloff, Maurice and Edward Snell. *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, Vol. 1 1941-1942. Center of Military History United States Army, Washington, D.C, 1999.

Matloff, Maurice and Edward Snell. *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, Vol. 2 1943-1944. Center of Military History United States Army, Washington, D.C, 1999.

McNeill, William Hardy. *America, Britain, & Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-1946*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.

Medlicott, W. N. "The Mediterranean Agreements of 1887." *The Slavonic Review* 5, no. 13 (1926): 66-88.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. *History of United States naval operations in World War II*, Vol. 3 *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948.

Nadeau, Remi. *Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt divide Europe*. New York: Praeger, 1990.

Özmel, Nur. *Rauf Orbay'ın Londra Büyükelçiliği*. İstanbul, Bağlam Yayıncılık: 1999.

Schreiber, Gerhard, Bernd Stegeman and Detlef Vogel, *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol.3, *The Mediterranean, South-east Europe, and North Africa*

1939-1941. Translated by Deasn S. McMurry, Ewald Osers, Louisie Willmot. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Simpson, Michael. "Force H and British Strategy in the Western Mediterranean 1939–42," *The Mariner's Mirror*, 83, no. 1, (1997): 62-75, doi: 10.1080/00253359.1997.10656629.

Simpson, Michael. "Superhighway to the World Wide Web: The Mediterranean in British Imperial Strategy, 1900–1945", In *Naval Strategy and Policy in the Mediterranean: Past, Present and Future*, ed. John Hattendorf, 51-78. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

Simpson, Michael. *A Life of Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham: A Twentieth-Century Naval Leader*. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004.

Smith, Gaddis. *American Diplomacy During the Second World War, 1941-1945*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985.

Sondhaus, Lawrance. *The Great War at Sea: A Naval History of the First World War* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Stoler, Mark A. "The 'Pacific-First' Alternative in American World War II Strategy." *The International History Review* 2, no. 3 (1980): 432-52.

Stoler, Mark A. *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance and U.S. Strategy in World War II*. The University of North Carolina Press: London, 2000.

Tamkin, Nicholas. *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union, 1940–45: Strategy, Diplomacy and Intelligence in the Eastern Mediterranean*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2009.

Taylor, A.J.P. *The Second World War: An Illustrated History*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975.

Tekeli, İlhan, and Selim İlkin. *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*. vol. 1, *Dış Siyaseti ve Askeri Stratejileriyle*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014.

Tekeli, İlhan, and Selim İlkin. *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si*. vo2. 1, *İktisadi Politikaları ve Uygulamalarıyla*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014.

Vali, Ferenc A. *Bridge across the Bosphorus: the foreign policy of Turkey*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.

Waller, Douglas. *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011. Epub.

Weber, Frank. *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain, and the quest for a Turkish alliance in the Second World War*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1979.

Weigley, Russell Frank. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

Weisband, Edward. *İkinci Dünya Savaşı 'nda İnönü'nün Dış Politikası*, Translated by M. Ali. Kayabal. İstanbul : Yeni Gün Haber Ajansı Basın ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2000. Epub.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1939

April 7-12, 1939 — Invasion of Albania

May 12, 1939 - June 23, 1939 — Anglo-French-Turkish Treaty

August 23, 1939 — Molotov Ribbentrop Pact

1940

June 25, 1940 — Fall of France

1942

October 23 - November 11, 1942 — 2nd Battle of El Alamein

November 8, 1942 — Operation Torch

November 19, 1942 — Start of the Soviet Counter Offensive

1943

January 14-24, 1943 — Casablanca Conference

January 30-31, 1943 — Adana Conference

September 8 - November 22, 1943 — Dodecanese Campaign

December 4-6, 1943 — Second Cairo Conference